

2014 Speakers and Performers



Amy Bush

Amy Bush received her Bachelor of Arts in Dance from SUNY Brockport, and currently owns and operates the dance studio Dancer's Alley in Horseheads, New York. She will celebrate 20 years in business this year. More recently, she completed certification through EastWest Somatics. She is also a registered movement therapist and educator through ISMETA, as well as a registered 500-hour yoga therapist through Yoga Alliance. She now teaches Shin Somatics® retreats and workshops worldwide through EastWest Somatics. Amy attended her first TedxChemungRiver last year, and is honored and excited to share her experience in Somatic work at TedXChemungRiver 2014.



Gregg Caruso

Dr. Gregg D. Caruso is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Corning Community College and Editor-in-Chief of the scholarly journal Science, Religion and Culture. He received his B.A. in Philosophy from William Paterson University and his M.Phil and Ph.D. in Philosophy from the City University of New York, Graduate Center. He is the author of "Free Will and Consciousness: A Determinist Account of the Illusion of Free Will (2012)" and the editor of "Exploring the Illusion of Free Will and Moral Responsibility (2013)" and "Science and Religion: 5 Questions (2014)." An active member of the local community and a believer in the power of idea, Dr. Caruso welcomes the opportunity of this year's TEDxChemungRiver event to share his work on free will with the community he loves. In his free time he fancies himself an amateur paleontologist, collecting fossils with his daughter, Maya, and fossil hunting the Devonian rock of central New York state.



Joey Foster Ellis

“Born in America, made in China and alive in Doha” has become a personal motto for TED Fellow and artist Joey Foster Ellis, who grew up in Auburn, New York. He prefers many names, such as Joey, Zhou-Yi or Yousef, for each one represents a certain identity that developed in the culture where the name evolved. Joey creates works illustrating that within the boundaries of culture, politics and self-expression there are possibilities for individuality – not dwelling on the limitations, but what can be utilized within them. Having lived abroad for almost 10 years, Joey has shared his artistic process on the many roads he has traveled, but never once told his story from where it originated. TEDxChemungRiver provides the perfect opportunity to do so. Joey couldn’t speak until the age of five, was dyslexic and failed French multiple times. How he speaks fluent Chinese confounds him to this day.



Jeremy Grimins

Jeremy Grimins is a native of Horseheads, New York, who currently lives in the Corning area. Only a young 28 years old, he is a self-employed hairstylist at an exquisite one chair salon in Posh Boutique—right here on beautiful, historic Market Street in Corning, New York. He enjoys traveling, camping, learning about different types of cultures and meeting new people. Being a former model and performer, he is honored to speak at TEDxChemungRiver and very eager to share his story.



Michael Hoffmann

Mike holds a leadership position in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University where he focuses on sustainability, in particular responding to the threat of climate change. He leads a Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada climate change initiative, and established an Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture that helps food growers adapt to changing conditions. Hoffmann’s passionate messages about climate change include its impacts on the world around us and its meaning to future generations. He hopes his involvement in TEDxChemungRiver will help spread the word about climate change and how to address this grand challenge now facing humanity.



Brud Holland

Brud Holland has been a chef and business owner in the Finger Lakes Region for more than 22 years. He is a graduate of the New England Culinary Institute and currently owns FINGER LAKES MADE, a small food company that develops unique products from locally grown ingredients and delivers event experiences that feature food and beverages produced exclusively in the Finger Lakes Region. Brud has taught culinary classes at 171 Cedar Arts in Corning for 15 years and is a board member of Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, a non-profit organization that connects consumers with farmers, food producers and restaurants throughout the Finger Lakes Region. He has written articles for Edible Finger Lakes and was recently featured in USA Today's Hunt and Fish magazine with other chefs who hunt and cook game. Brud lives in Watkins Glen with his wife Shari, who teaches art at Corning East High School, his daughter Aran, and sons Casey and Sean.



Austyn Johnson

Austyn Johnson, age 8, started dancing when she was 3 years old. She studies ballet at Rafael Grigorian's School of Classical Ballet in Elmira, New York. For choreography and an intense focus on technique, she also trains privately with Arian Keddell in Elmira. Last summer, Austyn began traveling to Pittsburgh to work with artistic director Chelsea Sebes. This past July, Austyn earned the title "Hollywood Vibe Junior Dancer of the Year" at a national dance competition in Anaheim, California.



Elaine Mansfield

[Elaine Mansfield](#) is a writer and bereavement educator who has lived on land overlooking the Seneca Lake Valley since 1972. She leads bereavement groups and workshops, and writes for Hospicare and Palliative Care of Tompkins County. Her writing reflects her forty years as a student of Jungian psychology, mythology, meditation, and nature. Until 2011, she was a nutrition and exercise counselor. Since her husband's death in 2008, her work has focused on healing, finding meaning, and creating a new life after loss. Elaine's book "[Leaning into Love: A Spiritual Journey through Grief](#)" will be published by Larson Publications (October 2014). The poet Naomi Shihab Nye wrote, "This magnificent, profoundly moving book gives encouragement and solace to all." Elaine writes a weekly blog about life's adventures and lessons at elainemansfield.com/blog.



Ben Placek

Born and raised in West Elmira, Ben Placek is now a physicist working to detect planets outside our own solar system (exoplanets) using data from the Kepler Space Telescope. He began his education at Corning Community College, received his doctorate from SUNY Albany, and is now a physics professor at Schenectady County Community College. Through his involvement with TEDx, he hopes to spark conversation about our place in the universe and stimulate further interest in astronomy and science as a whole.



Brett Powell

Brett M. Powell earned a Master of Science in Experimental Psychology at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia and works as a marketing consultant at Howell Liberatore & Associates in Elmira, New York. He enjoys thinking big, being creative, teaching at Corning Community College, volunteering on the Five Rivers Council Boy Scouts of America executive board, playing drums in the Ithaca band Not From Wisconsin, and being outdoors as an Eagle Scout in his native Finger Lakes Region. Personally, Brett's favorite accomplishment was brokering Superball IX, a three-day music festival featuring the band Phish.



Kayla Talkington

Kayla Talkington founded Sustainable Happy Life, a coaching program aimed at helping women reach their health and wellness goals in a sustainable, step-by-step process. At the program's core is an empowering 20-week Vibrant Life Cleanse that Kayla developed to beat her own fears and fulfill her life goals. She has shared her path to happiness at several outdoor retreats across the country.