

Rhythm
and Intersections
TEDxOcala

September 26, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Reilly Arts Center

TEDxOcala

www.TEDxOcala.com

“Everything in the universe has a rhythm.”

-Maya Angelou



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 12th Annual TEDxOcala!

For twelve years, we have gathered curious minds, courageous voices, and people who believe in the extraordinary power of an idea. Today, we continue that tradition as we come together not simply to listen, but to connect, question, reflect, and perhaps leave seeing something differently than when we arrived.

This year's theme, "Rhythm & Intersections," reflects something deeply human. We each move through life with our own rhythm—shaped by our habits, experiences, relationships, beliefs, and dreams. Some rhythms are chosen. Others are inherited. Some keep us grounded, while others may need to be questioned. And then come the intersections.

A person enters our life. A conversation challenges us. An experience changes our perspective. An unexpected opportunity appears. Or an idea reaches us at precisely the right moment. Sometimes, an intersection changes our rhythm.



That is what makes this theme so fitting for TEDxOcala. Today, thirteen speakers will step into the red circle, each bringing a different idea, perspective, and lived experience. Their subjects may seem unrelated at first, but listen closely. Notice where their ideas intersect with one another, with our community, and perhaps most importantly, with your own life.

TED began in 1984 as a conference bringing together Technology, Entertainment, and Design. Today, it has grown into a global movement devoted to ideas worth spreading.

TEDx events like TEDxOcala are independently organized under license from TED, bringing that spirit into local communities around the world. Our event is made possible by an extraordinary team of volunteers, coaches, partners, sponsors, and supporters who believe that meaningful ideas deserve a place to be heard.

As you experience today's talks, I invite you to do more than listen.
Be curious.
Question an assumption.
Meet someone new.
Notice an unexpected connection.
Allow an idea to interrupt your thinking.

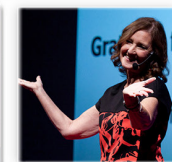
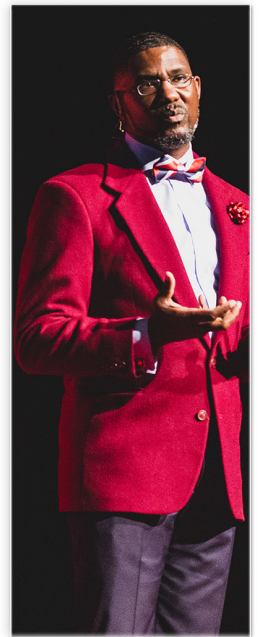
Because sometimes the idea that changes us isn't the one we expected to hear. Sometimes it is simply the right idea, intersecting with our lives at exactly the right time.

Thank you for being part of the 12th Annual TEDxOcala and for sharing this day of ideas, discovery, and connection with us.

May you leave today with a new thought, a new connection, and perhaps even a new rhythm.
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Manal Fakhoury'. The script is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Manal Fakhoury
Licensee and Curator, TEDxOcala



“There are years that ask questions and years
that answer.”

- **Zora Neale Hurston**

SCHEDULE

Welcome & Opening Remarks

In Loving Memory

Norene Thomas-Davoren - The Bridge Builder

TEDxOcala 2026 Selected Speaker

TED Video

SESSION ONE - The Rhythm Begins

Lauren Debick - The Mermaid Mama

Dr. Ariana Fontenot - The 23-Hour Strategist

Dr. Natacha Pierre - The Freedom Alchemist

Shannon Polly - Positive Psychology Author

Networking Break

SESSION TWO - From Reflection to Action

Video

Dr. Maya Assi - Digital Smile Design Expert

Sarah Kassem Elyaman - The Authenticity Architect

Chelsea Kennedy - Nervous System Whisperer

Julius Bryant - The Good Guy

Damon West - The Coffee Bean Guy

Lunch and Idea Exchange

SESSION THREE - From Ideas to Impact

Video

Anya Bradford - Financial Princess

Dr. Erin Tjam - Beauty Obsessed Scientist

Musa Ghanayem - Attorney and Advocate

Richard Reyes - The Momentum Maker

CLOSING REMARKS and PHOTOS

Closing Video



Lauren Debick is a brand strategist, certified life coach, podcast host, and author of *The Mermaid Mama*. Passionate about helping people lead more intentional lives, she blends professional expertise with personal experience to explore the power of presence in a distracted world. Through storytelling and practical insight, Lauren reveals how small, mindful choices can transform the way we work, connect, and live.

TEDxOcala Speakers

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Dr. Ariana Fontenot, PT, is a Doctor of Physical Therapy, founder of Slight Motion PT, and creator of The 23-Hour Advantage, a framework based on a simple truth: most people spend one hour improving a body that 23 hours of daily habits are shaping.

Early in her career, Dr. Fontenot noticed that patients who exercised, stretched, attended appointments, and worked hard still struggled with chronic pain, fatigue, and burnout. She began observing people beyond the clinic in their homes, bedrooms, and workplaces focusing on the hours no one was watching.

She discovered that the body wasn't broken; it was adapting. Pain was often reinforced through patterns of sleeping, sitting, moving, and recovering. This insight became The 23-Hour Advantage: lasting change comes not from doing more during one hour, but from understanding what the other 23 are teaching the body.

Author of PainProof: How Habits Heal and PainProof Kids, Dr. Fontenot is a keynote speaker and corporate wellness consultant who helps people recognize the patterns shaping how they feel, move, and live.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Dr. Natacha Pierre is a board-certified pediatrician, speaker, and founder of Mind Body Heal, a platform exploring the intersection of health, human behavior, nervous system healing, and personal transformation.

Drawing from her background in medicine, global travel, and holistic wellness, she challenges conventional ideas about what it truly means to heal and thrive in modern life. Through Mind Body Heal, she encourages others to reconnect with their bodies, challenge limiting narratives, and pursue a more intentional, holistic approach to healthy living.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Shannon Polly is one of the first 100 people in the world to get her degree in positive psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. She was honored to be part of the US Army Resiliency training team where she trained over 1,500 soldiers. Her mission in life is to increase the well-being of every person she interacts with – through facilitation, consulting and leadership coaching.

She is an experienced organizational development and coaching professional with a passion for using innovative and empirically-based approaches to create resilient leaders, teams, and organizations. Her experience as a coach and facilitator spans mid and senior level clients across the private, public, and non-profit sectors. She has done keynotes for Google and GE and facilitated workshops in many countries including Morocco, Kenya, Thailand, Haiti and Bangladesh. She is known for using innovative, engaging, and science-backed approaches to create resilient leaders, teams, and organizations. She finds a way to balance the rigor of the research with the warmth and play that make a training engaging.

She graduated from Yale College with honors, has a Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) from the University of Pennsylvania (where she was also an assistant instructor) and a Certificate in Leadership Coaching, Georgetown University.

“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

- **Carl Jung**

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Dr. Maya Georges Assi is a leading certified biological dentist dedicated to delivering holistic, patient-centered care that supports both oral health and overall well-being. With a strong focus on minimally invasive and biologically compatible dentistry, she integrates advanced techniques and cutting-edge technology to provide comprehensive, wellness-focused treatment.



Sarah Kassem Elyaman has spent a decade building a Florida law firm where no one is asked to leave a piece of themselves at the door. As the founder of Absolute Law Group, she leads a 20+ person practice in business, estate planning, and elder law, with a particular passion for protecting seniors and their families. A Triple Gator with three University of Florida degrees, she is a daughter of Egyptian immigrants, a Tampa native, and a believer that being yourself is the most undervalued strategy in any room.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

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Chelsea Kennedy is a certified somatic coach and speaker who believes learning how to feel our emotions is the most important skill we have. Grounded in neuroscience and the mind-body connection, she helps people understand why they shut down, explode, or go numb, and teaches them how to stay present. Her mission is to teach people how Social media handles.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

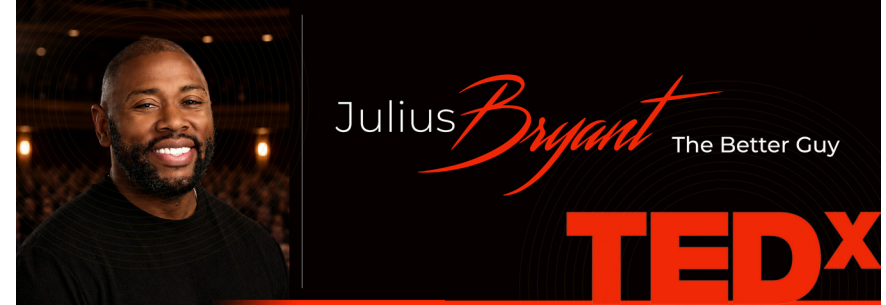
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Julius Bryant, helping people become better is the mission behind everything Julius Bryant does. Most people want to become better. Better spouses. Better parents. Better leaders. Better versions of themselves.

The challenge isn't knowing what to do. The challenge is doing it consistently. Through faith, discipline, community, and daily action, Julius helps people close the gap between knowing and doing.

He is the founder of Better, a movement dedicated to helping people become better spiritually, physically, and personally. Through his weekly publication, The Better Letter, Julius challenges readers to stop waiting for motivation and start building a better life, one decision at a time. He is also the co-founder of MM Ocala Run Club, one of Florida's fastest-growing run club communities. What started with a few people showing up before sunrise has grown into a movement helping hundreds pursue better health, stronger relationships, and personal growth.

For more than a decade, Julius has led high-performing teams, built thriving communities, and helped people achieve goals they once believed were out of reach. His perspective is shaped not only by success, but by failure, adversity, and the hard lessons that come from starting over.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Damon West, M.S. Criminal Justice, is a college professor, internationally known keynote speaker, 4 x Bestselling author and former crime boss in Dallas, who was sentenced to Life in prison for Organized Crime.

USA Today calls him the “modern day Shawshank Redemption and the most in-demand speaker in America.” His storytelling ability is unmatched and keeps audiences riveted. At 20 years old, he was a Division 1 starting quarterback at the University of North Texas, when he suffered a career ending injury and turned to hardcore drugs to cope with disappointments of life.

After graduation, he worked in the United States Congress and trained to be a stockbroker for Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS). One day at UBS, he was introduced to methamphetamines; he became instantly hooked, and the lives of so many innocent people would forever be changed by the choices he made in order to feed his insatiable meth habit.

After a fateful discussion during his incarceration with a seasoned convict, Damon had a spiritual awakening. He learned that, like a coffee bean changing with the application of heat and pressure, he was capable of changing the environment around him. Armed with a program of recovery, a renewed faith, and a miraculous second chance at life, Damon emerged from over seven years of prison a changed man.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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In Loving Memory of Norene Thomas

Born and raised in Bennettsville, South Carolina, Norene Thomas-Davoren learned early what resilience, faith, and determination truly mean. From humble beginnings, she carried a quiet conviction that her life would rise far beyond the fields and small-town roads of her childhood. Every step she took became a testament to what is possible when courage meets purpose.

Norene built a distinguished career in healthcare, beginning as a Registered Nurse and rising to become Director of Nursing for the New York City Department of Correction. In this demanding role, she led clinical teams, elevated patient-care standards, and was honored as Outstanding Director of Nursing at the North Infirmity Command facility, a recognition that affirmed her excellence, leadership, and unwavering commitment to care.

Her journey continued upward as she became Health Services Administrator (HSA) for a federal prison, one of the highest leadership positions in correctional healthcare. In this role, she oversaw medical operations, staff development, compliance, and patient services in a complex, high-stakes environment. She holds a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration, reflecting her dedication to both education and executive-level leadership.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Norene's heart has always been rooted in service. She is the Founder and President of Tip's Place - Total Involved Parenting Services, a federally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supporting young mothers and their children through guidance, resources, and compassionate community care. Under her leadership, Tip's Place has sponsored numerous food and toy drives, touching families across New York with dignity, hope, and love.

Her commitment to community extends into civic and fraternal life. Norene is a proud member of the National Council of Negro Women, where she has also been honored for her contributions. She is a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, continuing a legacy of sisterhood, service, and spiritual grounding.

At her core, Norene is a woman of faith, family, and fierce compassion. She is a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother; roles she holds with deep pride and gratitude. Her life reflects a simple truth: every step, no matter how small, can become a bridge for someone else.



Anya Bradford grew up in Arkansas, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Music Education. Fueled by a passion for the stage, she moved to Orlando, Florida, to work as a character and parade performer, model, and singer for various entertainment companies. While attending First Baptist Orlando, she met the love of her life, and the couple later relocated to Georgia after marrying. Recognizing that opportunities for princess work were limited in her new state, Anya initially taught music. However, experiencing her own financial breakthroughs inspired a career pivot. She has since dedicated nearly two decades to working as a financial coach and advisor. Today, she operates a Primerica firm in Ocala, specializing in client education and holistic financial planning.

Anya credits God for her success and proudly shares that her greatest joy is her family. Her life revolves around her "Dream Come True"—the nickname she has always had for her husband, Kevin—and their three incredible children: Kai (8), Jad (6), and Brea (4). Every day with them is an adventure!

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Erin Yuet Tjam, PhD, is a health scientist, adjunct professor, author, and former Special Advisor to the President at the University of Waterloo (Canada's 28th Governor General). She previously served as Director of Research at St. Mary's General Hospital.

Known as the "Beauty-Obsessed Scientist," Erin spent nearly 40 years pursuing skin health and beauty through products. She later uncovered their hidden harm, and challenged those beliefs through collaborative research. She is the co-author of *Skin Sobering*, an Amazon #1 bestseller, which examined how skincare practices impact skin health.

A mother of six, 60 years old, and an active lifestyle enthusiast, Erin brings both scientific expertise and lived experience to her work on skin health, beauty, and its public health impact.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Musa Ghanayem is a nationally recognized trial lawyer, writer, and public speaker with over twenty-five years of experience in state and federal courts. He earned degrees in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and graduated cum laude from Michigan State University College of Law.

Musa began his career in complex civil litigation before serving as both a public defender and prosecutor. After trying hundreds of cases, he founded his own New York law practice before returning to Georgia in 2010. His experience ranges from capital offenses to complex financial litigation. Recognized among the Top 10 Trial Lawyers Under 40, he has also been consistently selected as a Georgia Super Lawyer for over a decade.

Beyond the courtroom, Musa is deeply engaged in civil rights, social justice, and public advocacy. For a decade, he served as legal advisor to the American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine, and remains an outspoken voice on issues affecting the Palestinian community.

A Palestinian Christian born and raised in Wisconsin, Musa values his roles as father, son, and brother above professional titles. His writing, speaking, and advocacy reflect his belief that truth, compassion, and justice are inseparable values.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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Richard Reyes is a proud family man, entrepreneur, and motivational keynote speaker known for turning adversity into momentum and purpose into action.

He is the founder of Operation Positive Vibes and The Blue Bag Project, a mission dedicated to delivering hope, encouragement, and practical support to individuals and families impacted by cancer treatment and serious mental health challenges.

In business, Richard built a nationwide financial services platform centered on retirement education, leading retirement workshops across the United States to help families plan ahead, avoid surprises, and make confident decisions. He has spoken nationwide, sharing a message grounded in resilience, preparation, and personal responsibility.

Richard's message is deeply personal. After facing stage 4 colorectal cancer and later entering remission, he now challenges audiences with urgency and clarity: stop waiting. Get scanned, get screened, get checked. Prepare in advance. Lead with intention.

His keynotes move people from motivation to action because the best time to take control of your future is before life forces it.

IDEAS WORTH REMEMBERING

Capture the thoughts that sparked something in you.

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The Journey of an Idea

From a global idea to our local stage
The journey to TEDxOcala

**IDEAS
WORTH
SPREADING**

*Different
People.
Shared
Possibilities.*



A GLOBAL MOVEMENT
MEETS OUR COMMUNITY

1984

TED BEGINS

The first TED conference brings together Technology, Entertainment & Design.



1984

1990

TED FINDS ITS RHYTHM

After a six-year pause, TED returns and becomes an annual conference.



1990

2001

A NEW CHAPTER

TED transitions to nonprofit ownership under the Sapling Foundation, with Chris Anderson becoming curator.



2001

2006

IDEAS GO GLOBAL

The first TED Talks are released free online, dramatically expanding TED's reach beyond the conference stage.



2006

2009

TEDx IS BORN

TED launches TEDx, empowering communities to independently organize local TED-style events under license.



2009

NOVEMBER 2015

TEDxOCALA BEGINS

A global movement intersects with our community.
TEDxOcala brings the spirit of ideas worth spreading to Ocala, creating a local stage for ideas, voices and conversations that can reach far beyond Central Florida.



2015

2026

12 YEARS OF TEDxOCALA

Rhythm & Intersections
13 speakers take the stage.
14 were chosen.
Countless intersections are still to come.



2026

IDEAS
PEOPLE
COMMUNITIES
A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

OCALA, FLORIDA
AND BEYOND







TEDxOcala Team



Manal Fakhoury
Organizer/Curator



Wajdy Hussain
Web Developer & Graphic
Designer



Tania Bartolini
Audience Engagement



Rasha Elmallah
Sponsor Fulfillment



Jeanne Lowrey
Audience Engagement



Leda Pérez
Speaker Coach
Coordinator



Yeralin Feliciano
Support



Laurel Lapane
Student Relations



Diane Irwin
Support



TeSha Jackson
Logistics Director



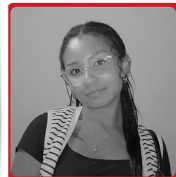
Xochi Jacques Smith
Photography



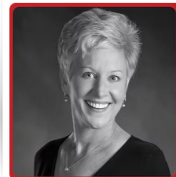
Kim Martsof
Student Relations



Maria Roman
Support



Aysia Byres
Support



Lisa Reilly
Marketing Support

Speaker Coaches



Katie Nall



Michael Annen



Robert Wood



Cher Kretz



Lisa Reilly



Barbara Fitos



Colette Smith



Ike Anderson



Cheri Villa



Tiffany Edith



Janan Sarwar



Daniel Gentry



Thomas Puketza



Tanya Gasciagone



Aakeem Bennett



Melanie Klein

Emcees



Ibrahim Awad



Neeta Jain



Richard Corey



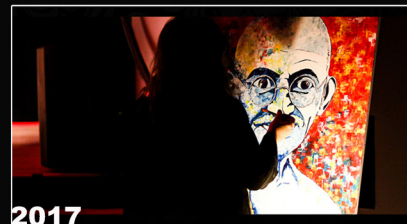
Jessi Miller

*Saving the world,
one graphic design at a time.*

Jessi is an experienced visual communicator with over 25 years experience in the roles of Creative Director, Art Director, Designer and Fine Artist. Her career has spanned advertising agencies and publications as well as branding design for a host of individual clients. Jessi has won over 30 ADDY and FMA awards in all of these facets of visual communication and has left a trail of happy clients and high quality work.

Jessi graduated from the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale with a degree in Advertising Design, after which she spent a decade in South Florida doing advertising agency work. She then shifted into publication/magazine work, relishing the storytelling aspect as well as the ability to promote people and companies who are doing great things.

In addition to her design and fine art work, Jessi strongly believes in contributing to community and giving back to the world. She is always active in the arts and as a champion for world peace. Currently she sits on the Executive Committee for Ollin Women International and is the Board President for the Magnolia Art Xchange, among many other volunteer efforts.



2017



2018



2019



2020



2021



2022



2023



2024



2025



TED's curation approach

TED's mission is to discover and spread ideas that spark imagination, embrace possibility and catalyze impact. At a time of growing divide, we invite a broad range of speakers to our events to share ideas and to seek deeper understanding. We believe that it's possible to learn something from speakers even when disagreeing with aspects of their work or beliefs, and we are committed to being a place where people with differing viewpoints can come together and participate in meaningful conversations. We will always welcome people from every discipline and culture who seek both a deeper understanding of the world and connection with others. We recognize that not everyone will agree with all of our curation decisions, which are based on our guidelines. Two important core principles guiding TED's curation are:

Inclusion

Ideas are for everyone. They can't be fenced off by borders, whether of geography, religion, politics or culture. And no single origin, race, gender, identity or class can claim preferential ownership over them. TED is committed to a global mindset. We seek to source ideas from everywhere and to make them widely and freely accessible. Powerful ideas, expressed and distributed with care, can bring different groups together and create a shared vision of a future worth pursuing.

Debate

Our content isn't the final word on anything. Skeptics are welcome, and may play a key role in improving an idea or revealing its flaws. Others may find that conversation after a talk is the best path to clarity or figuring out what to do with it. We strive to provide a neutral, open space for vigorous discussion and debate both online and face to face. The tone should, of course, stay respectful. Bigotry and hate speech have no place on our platform. But constructive conversations can be a powerful antidote to division.

About TEDx, In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TED has created a program called TEDx. TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. Our event is called TEDxOcala, where x = independently organized TED event. At our TEDxOcala event, TED Talks, video, and live speakers will combine to spark deep discussion and connection in a small group. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events, including ours, are self-organized.

About TED

TED is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. Meanwhile, independently run TEDx events help share ideas in communities around the world. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Benoit Mandelbrot, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Isabel Allende and former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Two major TED events are held each year: The TED Conference takes place every spring in Long Beach, California (along with a parallel conference, TEDActive, in Palm Springs), and TEDGlobal is held each summer in Edinburgh, Scotland.

TED's media initiatives include TED.com, where new TEDTalks are posted daily; the new TED Conversations, enabling broad conversations among TED fans; and the Open Translation Project, which provides subtitles and interactive transcripts as well as the ability for any TEDTalk to be translated by volunteers worldwide.

TED has established the annual TED Prize, awarded to a leader with a fresh, bold vision for sparking global change; TEDx, which offers individuals or groups a way to host local, self-organized events around the world; and the TED Fellows program, helping world-changing innovators from around the globe to become part of the TED community and, with its help, amplify the impact of their remarkable projects and activities.

For information about TED's upcoming conferences, visit

www.ted.com/registration

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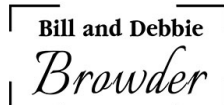
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Our Partners



“You are not here to fix anything, because nothing is broken, but everything is continually changing and expanding. Release your struggle, and seek joy and fun, and in doing so, you will align with the fantastic expanding rhythm of this Universe.”

- Esther Hicks

Special Thanks

- Wajdy Hussain - Graphic Designer & Web Developer
- Marion County Public Schools and Teachers
- Toastmasters International
- Lamar Advertising
- MANHATTAN Gyros & Subs
- Mojos Restaurant
- Dale Toney - Belleview High School
- Donald Ray - Marion Technical College
- Jennifer Hunt Murty
- Patrick Deshaw
- Amy Keel - Got Schwag
- Laurel Lapane - Student Services Coordinator
- Kim Martsolf - Assistant Principal - Marion Technical College (MTC)
- Bert Smith - Music
- Woodly Oralus - Backstage Video
- Lisa Reilly - Marketing Support
- Nubianz Farm LLC - TeSha Jackson
- Joe Levasseur - Hotel Hospitality
- Royal Crown Enterprises, LLC - Documentary sponsor
- West Port High School Drum line - (Westport Wolf Pack Band)
- North Marion High School JROTC
- Anthony Marino - Lights
- Florida Credit Union - Swag
- Stan Creel - NCFM

“Our biological rhythms are the symphony
of the cosmos.”

- *Deepak Chopra*

Student Testimonials

WEST PORT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR ★★★★★

This event will offer a multitude of new perspectives, and the benefit of observing outstanding public speakers. I watch TED talk or TED-ed when I get ready every morning. I have learned so much from them and would love to learn even more from watching them in person. I would love to use this opportunity to absorb the lessons in person and meet others who are also as invested in ted talks the way that I am. I should receive this scholarship seat, because of how badly I want it. This event as I said before offers so many chances for new beneficial experiences. I am reliable, and those who know me know that when I commit to anything I follow it through. I am the most dependable person I know, and if you select me, I will be there. I am incredibly enthusiastic about the potential of attending this ted talk. If chosen nothing could stop me from going but I am not going for the perks, I want to go to learn and observe the ted talks.

WEST PORT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR ★★★★★

Due to my growing fascination in various topics, I believe that my attendance to this event would not only grow my knowledge, but also broaden my interests as a student. Allowing me to further explore current topics and issues will allow me to explore solutions to these problems. Therefore, making me a well-rounded and educated student of modern-day society in the states. Along with that I am currently enrolled in an AP seminar, and I am learning about new topics that would also benefit me for research-based presentations in that class. Thank you.

WEST PORT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR ★★★★★

I think this event is a wonderful opportunity for listening to the perspectives and thoughts of professional speakers. Among the list of Ted Talks for this year, there are a lot of personal empowerment topics involved with the speaker's own stories. These kinds of talks are important to hear as the ability to grow and develop your own knowledge, emotional intelligence, and understanding of other perspectives is irreplaceable. I should receive this scholarship seat because I am extremely driven to learn and expand my knowledge and I know that these Ted talks are an invaluable opportunity to do so. For me, the power of broadening my perspectives and hearing the stories and views of others is key to my growth as a person.

WEST PORT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR ★★★★★

Since I started high school, I have watched TED talk videos in the classroom. The universal lessons that each of these ted talks taught fueled my obsession with TEDx. It was always a passing thought whenever I would have the opportunity to attend one of these events. After hearing about the event happening in Ocala in passing conversation with a teacher at my school, I was ecstatic that our school was offered a chance to be seated at this event. The speaker would be able to shape minds, and, in turn, we would be able to pass this knowledge onto others. I would be grateful to be seated at this event.

WEST PORT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR ★★★★★

As I grow older the more my mind wanders in search for any inspiration that will give me a passion and new understanding, I did not know about myself. As I envelop on this journey of self-discovery, Ted talks have become my best friend. I would be so grateful to be able to attend the new upcoming event being held in Ocala. The inspiration that Ted talks give me comes from the individuals that show their journey they went through to discover their passion or a challenging event they faced that led them to discover their passion.

ACCELERATION ACADEMY ★★★★★

This event is an opportunity that I was lucky enough to be invited to. I gave up entirely in school, but now at my new school, I am trying my best this time. I now realize education is one of the most important things to have and any help given to me would be very appreciated. Thank you very much!

VANGUARD HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR ★★★★★

I would like to attend this TED showcase because I think this is a great opportunity to branch out. TED videos have always been interesting and being present at this event would be a huge honor. This is a rare event, and I would hate to miss out on it. I feel like I can learn many things by attending.

FOREST HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR ★★★★★

I attended TEDx last year and loved it! I look forward to the ideas that will be presented this year. In previous years, I've left with new insight and a different perspective on things. I believe I can provide the speakers with exceptional feedback that will help them in their future endeavors. Being able to attend this year will give me the knowledge I need about public speakers and hopefully be the next speaker in the future.

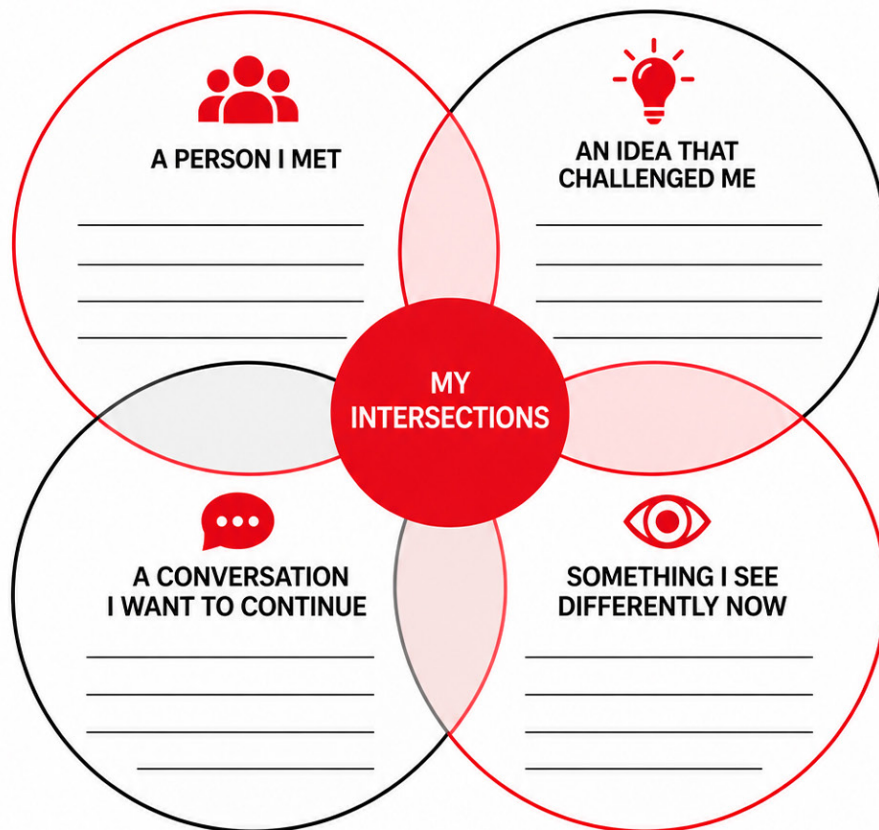
MARION TECHNICAL COLLEGE JUNIOR ★★★★★

I would love to attend this event because as an individual I would like to see and hear people talking about their lives and their ideas on Power. I am an open-minded person so I would love to hear everyone out and eventually use the knowledge I have gathered from this event and apply it to my own life.



My Intersections

Today, ideas meet people. Conversations create possibilities.
Use this page to capture the intersections that matter to you.



Exercise your mind

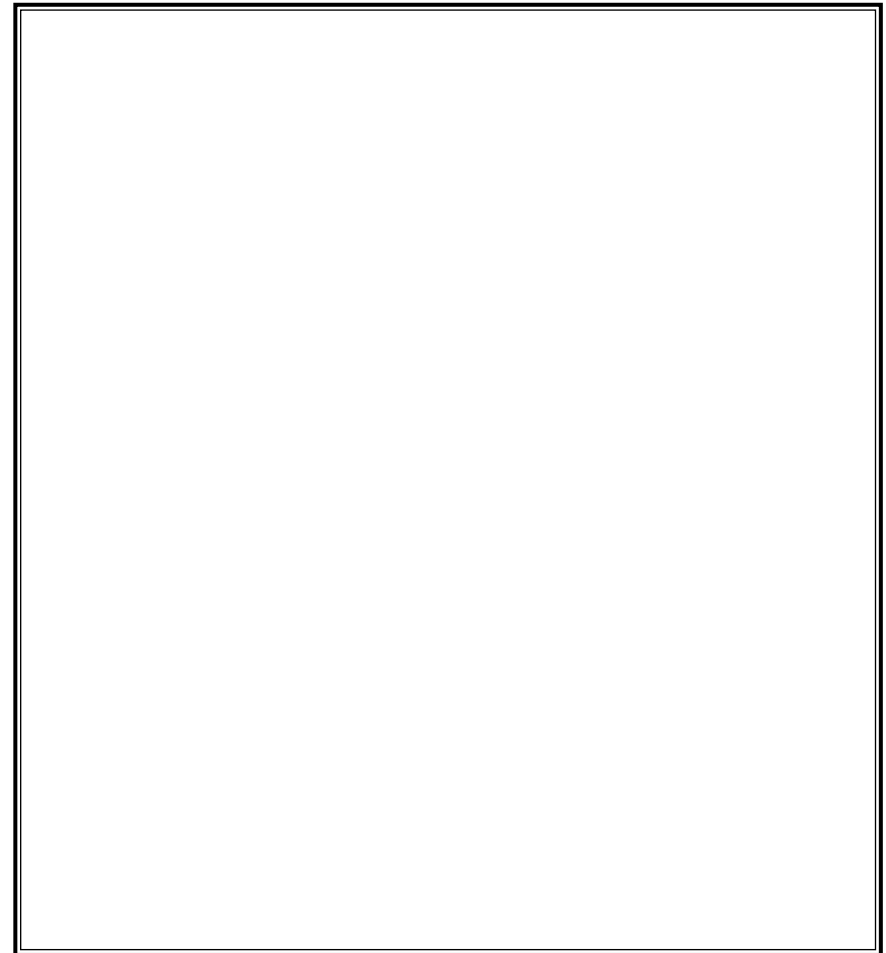
Rhythm & Intersections

COURAGE	POSSIBILITY	JOURNEY
DIALOGUE	COMMUNITY	CREATIVITY
INSPIRATION	IMAGINATION	PERSPECTIVE
CURIOSITY	DISCOVERY	CONNECTION
IDEAS	INTERSECTIONS	RHYTHM

L A I N T E R S E C T I O N S O Z T A K J K C Y
W O L W V G B K U V R D K S S W F X B E B G B P
L E N G Y T B N F Z W R R W G J G D P D R J K I
J H L O T X A P N W E W Z U P N W G H H K D M G
Z V S N I K J U T I O T X F D Z H I E H I A Y G
W O H J N N D F D W J I J I D P K I C F G R L H
H H D U U S Y P O S S I B I L I T Y K I E T J V
Y P Z X M N N O I T C E N N O C X F N V T K H F
W D L Q M N N I J G Q L Q G S W P A O B S P V Y
T Q Q V O W O K M B O R V L B E T C M B D D T G
K S G R C D M I Y X H U U P R I S U S L H I K F
T W Z U I I M J T Y G N L S O I D W F J S W X H
I F J R I A F D T A L O P N D F V R C O W G F M
J Z H L X L B H W L R E E C R E A T I V I T Y C
X B L P E O M E B T C I L Z I A R R I P K Y F Z
C J Z U H G H O Y T I E P R V R U H U U Q B V G
L H O J D U G P I Y W L K S N C L E B P G N Z T
M K Z P C E Y V Z S N E P Z N J F E I V D O X A
K J O Z J D E G T G C L G V T I J P Z I E A O I
R N D R V A N N S N H U F A F C G Z X E X B J U
E U F I O I R P I R G O J O R Q Q I E R B K I M
T V Q F P W U R F U D Q A Z R U L H Y X Y W A I
S I D E A S O E M A M F X N J V O C H Y L B Z C
M H R R V I J H B Z X J D U B Q X C U A B N Z M

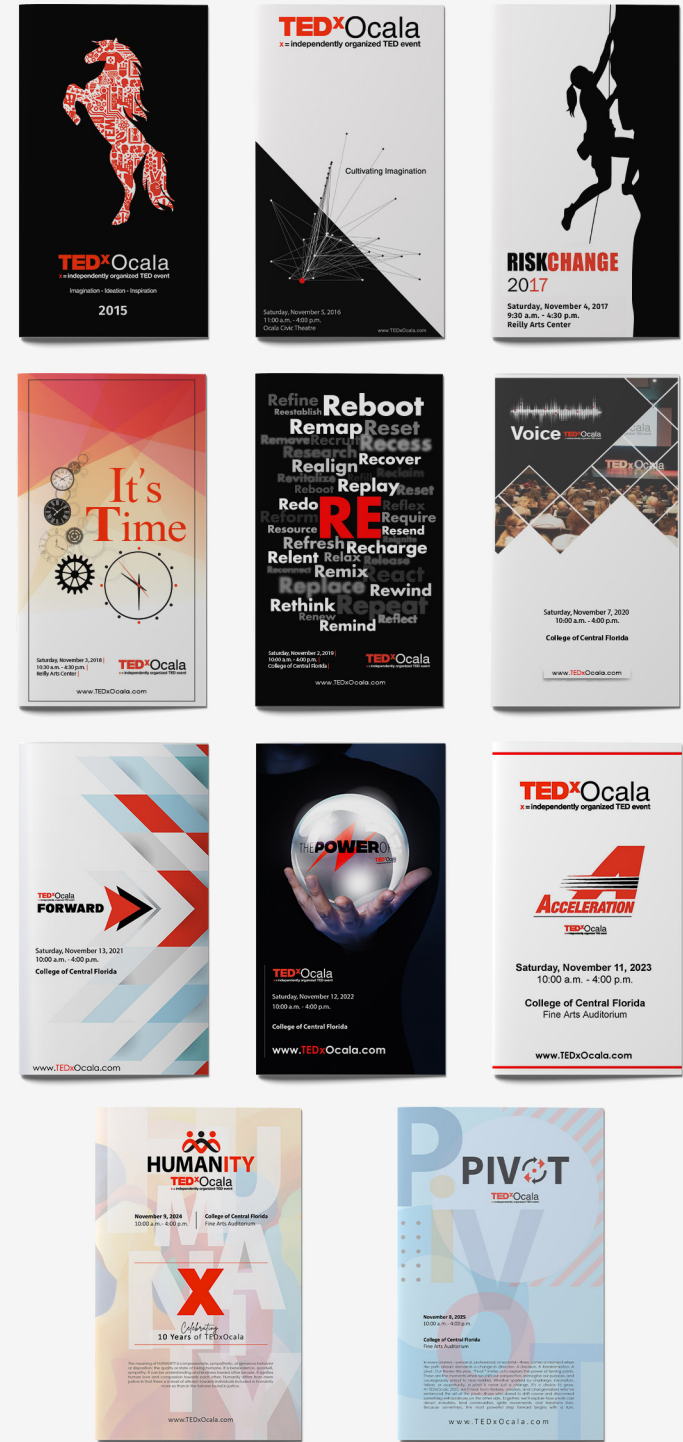
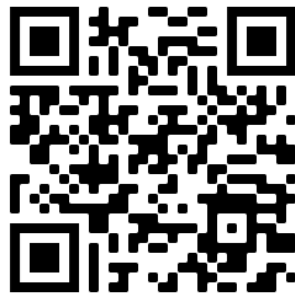
Your best speaker
memorable signature

Put your memorable photo of
this special event here



Would you like to be part of our next
TEDxOcala 2027?
We would love to hear your thoughts!

Scan The QR Code



The ideas you see on stage are only part of the story.

Throughout **TEDxOcala 2026**, we're capturing the moments behind the scenes, the preparation, conversations, challenges, connections, and people who bring the experience to life.

These moments will become part of the **TEDxOcala 2026 Behind-the-Scenes Documentary**, currently in production.

**So if you see a camera nearby
keep being part of the story.**

Coming Soon

SEE YOU AT
TEDxOcala
2027!

QR Code for Marion County
School Students



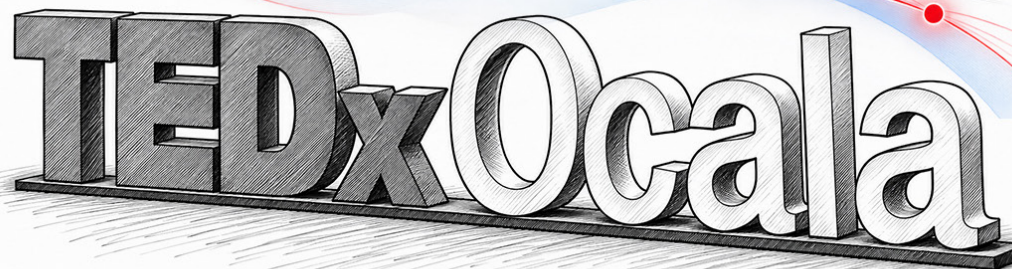
Rhythm
and Intersections
TED^xOcala

TED^xOcala
x = independently organized TED event

September 26, 2026

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Reilly Arts Center



TED^xOcala

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