

Event Credits

Thank you to our speakers for donating their time to make this an unforgettable event!

Kelly Jahner-Byrne, Enrique Velázquez, Ted Stephany, Bree Johnson, Laila Miller, Dr. Alfred Dodini, Daud Khan, Melissa Fors Shackelford, Dr. Kimberly Harms, Ryan Reichert, Heather Poduska, Dayna Del Val, Lucie Amundsen, Dr. Andrew Mazz Marry, Adam Lane Smith, Katie Mednick!

Thank you to our executive team!

Star Gump | Organizer & Marketing Director

Kadie Knudson | Co-Organizer & Operations Coordinator

Mark Leutgeb | Volunteer Lead

Christian Koelling | Event Lead

Thank you to our marketing team and host!

Jillian Wavra | Graphic Designer & Photographer

Cole Kleven | Blogger & Backstage Manager

John Kratz | Event MC

Thank you to our community outreach groups and speaker coaches for supporting the event!

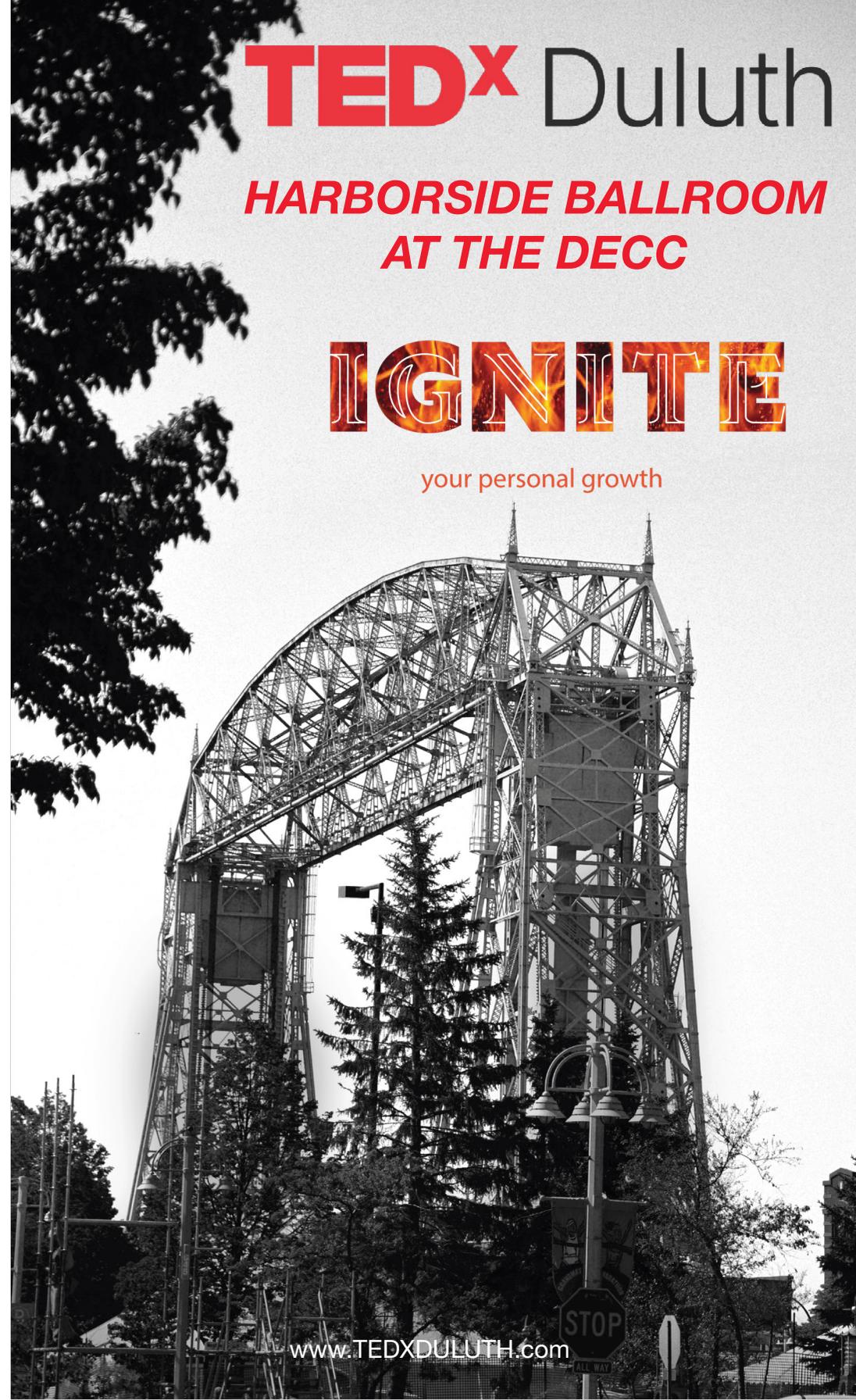
TEDx Duluth

**HARBORSIDE BALLROOM
AT THE DECC**

IGNITE

your personal growth

www.TEDXDULUTH.com



What is TED?

TED is a global nonprofit organization devoted to spreading ideas that matter. Best known for its powerful talks, TED brings together thinkers, creators, scientists, and storytellers to share new ideas across technology, education, design, science, culture, and beyond. Through TED Talks, TED Conferences, and independently organized TEDx events, TED aims to spark curiosity, inspire action, and foster deeper understanding around the world.

What is TEDx?

TEDx is a program of local, independently organized events that bring the spirit of TED to communities around the world. Organized by volunteers under a free license from TED, TEDx events feature live speakers, recorded TED Talks, and shared conversations designed to spark connection and new ideas at the local level. While independently run, all TEDx events follow TED's mission of spreading ideas worth sharing.

What is TEDxDuluth?

TEDxDuluth is an independently organized TEDx event that brings bold ideas and powerful stories to the Duluth community. Produced by a team of local volunteers under a TED license, TEDxDuluth features speakers from the region and beyond who share ideas worth spreading across science, culture, business, art, and community impact. The event creates a space for connection, curiosity, and conversation while amplifying voices that inspire action both locally and globally.

Canal Park After Party

4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Show your name badge to receive the following offers!



\$5 14oz pours



Happy Hour Menu

\$3 Off Select Cocktails
\$2 Off Select Snacks



\$5 off of \$25



Happy Hour Specials

\$1 Off Drinks
\$3 Off Appetizers



10% Off Purchases

Event Partners

The Spark Tier



Rotary International has 1.4 million members globally supporting service projects, charitable initiatives, and fellowship that brings people together to promote goodwill, support community needs, and live out a mission of “Service Above Self”. Skyline Rotary chartered 52 years ago to serve the community on top of the hill in Duluth. We are a casual, fun, and active club who meets Friday at noon. Learn more at skylinerotary.org and come be our guest!

**University of Minnesota Duluth
Kirby Student Center**

The central hub for student life, bringing together campus events, student organizations, dining, and gathering spaces in one place. Often called the “heart of Bulldog Country,” it’s designed to foster community, connection, and involvement beyond the classroom.

The Moving Air Tier



Harbortown Duluth, MN

Hay and Gump Family

In-Kind Tier



UMD Stores

Table of Contents

Session 1 - Become Your Own Fuel	4 & 5
Session 2 - Unleash The Phoenix Within	6 & 7
Session 3 - Fireproofing You	8 & 9
Session 4 - Sparks of Success	10 & 11
Lunch Menu	12
Venue Map	13
Event Partners	14
Event After Party	15

General Information

Event Breaks

10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
2:15 p.m. to 2:45 pm.

Speaker Q & A

Available to VIP ticket holders only, line-up near panel table next to the stage.

Four speakers for 15 minutes following each session.

Session 1 - Become Your Own Fuel

9:00 a.m.

Momentum: The Moment You Decide

Kelly Jahner-Byrne

What if the secret to moving forward isn't motivation, talent, or timing, but a single decision? In this reflective and empowering talk, explore the quiet force that shapes our lives more than motivation or confidence: momentum. Through candid stories a reveal for how momentum doesn't wait for us to feel ready - it begins the moment we decide. Blending lived experience with insights from psychology, this talk reframes progress as a series of small, intentional actions that build belief, restore energy, and change direction. The talk invites the audience to examine where their own momentum is headed and reminds us that even the smallest decision can be the start of meaningful change.



9:20 a.m.

What Happens When Leaders Put People First

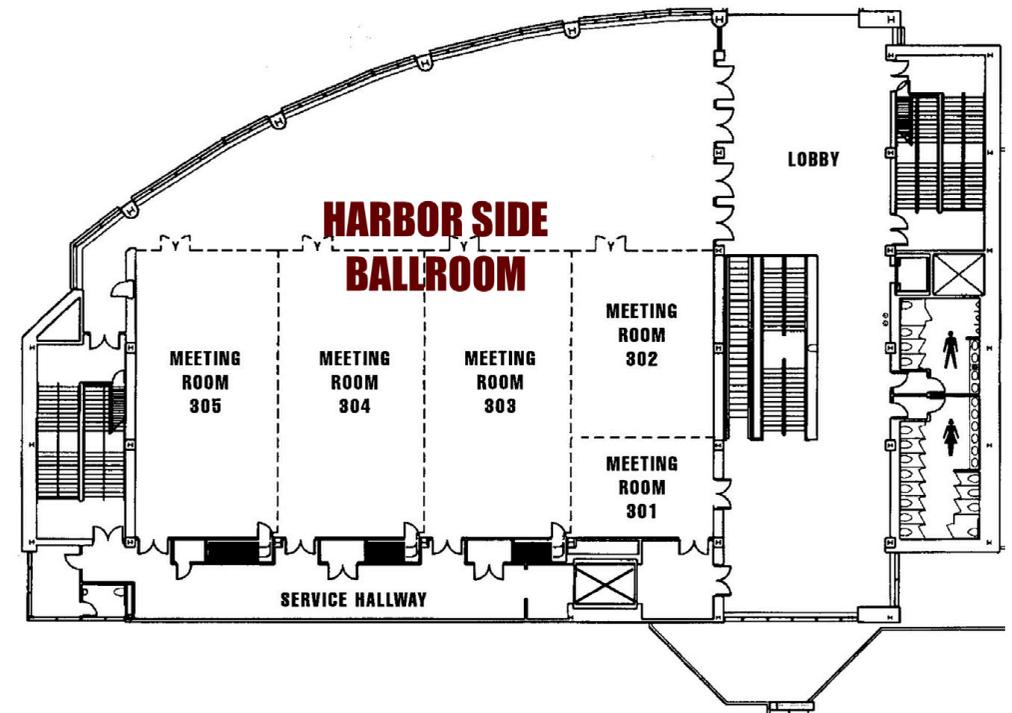
Enrique Velázquez

We're taught to chase metrics - profit, performance, perception - but those are just the fruit of something deeper: how we treat people. This talk explores what happens when leaders, at every level, prioritize people over "X" and focus first on those doing the work and those they serve. Part story, part data, it invites you to rethink leadership as a people-first practice that creates psychological safety, belonging, and better results.



Venue Map

DECC Harbor Side Ballroom



Coat Check, Registration, Restrooms and Vendor Tabling is located directly outside the Ballroom in the Lobby.

**Coat check is available for everyone's convenience. While we do our best, we cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items.

Lunch Menu

Italian Pasta Buffet Menu

Pasta

Jumbo Beef Short Rib Ravioli, Five Cheese Ravioli, Spaghetti Noodles

Toppings

Roasted Red Pepper Alfredo, Pomodoro Sauce, Shredded Parmesan Cheese

Sides

Sautéed Vegetable Medley
Garlic Bread

***Lunch line will be within Meeting Rooms 301/302.
Please exit the ballroom and enter the line through the lobby.
See Harborside Ballroom Floor Plan on page 13.*



Session 1 - Become Your Own Fuel

9:35 a.m.

Small Fights, Big Life: The Power of a Courageous Ask

Ted Stephany



This talk reveals how our genetic instinct to avoid conflict, once essential for survival, is now the hidden barrier to our careers, relationships, and growth. By redefining conflict, this talk shows how tiny, daily micro-negotiations create massive momentum. Blending research, storytelling, and practical examples to demonstrate why we underestimate our influence and how to reclaim it. Audiences leave with a simple, yet transformative call to action: to choose courage over comfort.

9:50 a.m.

Recovering From Work: The Leadership Revolutions We've Been Missing

Bree Johnson



What if the stress you carry home from work isn't a personal failure, but an unhealed hidden wound? This talk reveals what years on the front lines of workplace conflict taught her and why so many leaders break under pressure: that modern work quietly harms us in ways we rarely name and almost never recover from. Blending science, lived experience, and practical tools, she introduces a new model of leadership centered on recovery, not endurance, to regulate, rewire, and reclaim your wellbeing before real harm occurs. This talk is for anyone who's wondered why "pushing through" keeps making things worse and what to do instead.

Session 2 - Unleash The Phoenix Within

10:30 a.m.

Self-Worth Isn't A Feeling. It's A Decision.

Laila Miller

Most of us believe self-worth is something we feel until life takes away the very things we depend on to feel worthy. In this powerful talk, a journey of loss, heartbreak, and a life-threatening diagnosis led to discovery that self-worth isn't something you feel, it's something you choose. Drawing on personal stories, research, and practical strategies, the audience will learn how to reclaim identity, rise after devastation, and embrace the courage to choose yourself regardless of circumstances.



Session 4 - Sparks of Success

3:20 p.m.

Building Secure Loyalty in the Workplace

Adam Lane Smith



Discover why most workplace loyalty is a deception, driven by dopamine hits that evaporate under stress. Most standard management tactics neurologically train employees to see leadership as a threat. This talk uncovers the Secure Loyalty Equation - a neurological formula that brings secure attachment to work. By implementing these bio-loyalty principles, leaders can build teams wired for trust rather than dependency, turning temporary motivation into longterm commitment.

10:45 a.m.

Sun... moon... or star? Choose wisely.

Dr. Fred Dodini

In order to reach our full potential - individually and collectively - we are faced with one monumental decision: choosing our way of being and the kind of person we want to become. The universe has provided us all with daily reminders of what our options are. The talk touches on relationships between the Earth and the sun, the moon, and the stars to provide powerful metaphorical reminders of choices and what the outcomes will be. It may be the most important decision we make in life, so choose wisely.



3:40 p.m.

The Shove Move: How values - not appearances - define progress.

Katie Mednick



What if what looks like a step backward... is actually the move that propels us forward? In this inspiring talk, see how real progress isn't about appearances - it's about where we put the power. Drawing from experience building software in a legacy industry, the idea re-frames failure, risk, and leadership through the lens of railroad wisdom. With vivid storytelling and sharp insight, the audience learns how values - not fear - define true authority, and why the long game of trust is the only track worth laying.

Session 4 - Sparks of Success

2:45 p.m.

From Date Night to Doing Right: Accidentally Building an Ethical Egg Business

Lucie Amundsen

What begins as a lighthearted date night conversation quickly turns into an unexpected leap into the world of agriculture. With humor, honesty, and a fair amount of chaos, this talk traces how two non-farmers accidentally founded the first pasture-raised egg company in the Upper Midwest - and uncovered a broken system along the way. This is a story about questioning the rules, redesigning systems, and discovering that real change often starts with saying yes to an idea that feels wildly unreasonable.



3:00 p.m.

Breath, Honesty, Courage: A New Model of Leadership

Dr. Mazz Marry

This talk traces a journey from a near fatal health crisis and a medically induced coma to nine years of sobriety and transformative leadership. Through three principles that sustain recovery – take a breath, shift your perspective, and practice radical self-honesty. The audience learns how the tools that save lives can also reshape the way we lead, connect, and rebuild trust.



Session 2 - Unleash The Phoenix Within

11:05 a.m.

From Breakdown to Breakthrough: Redesigning Yourself When Life Fails

Daud Khan



In this inspiring talk, follow a personal crisis into a lesson of resilience and self-design. Faced with cultural adjustment, unexpected challenges, and the loneliness of starting life on your own, the idea discovers that the most complex system to engineer isn't a machine; it's yourself - through Inner Engineering. The talk shares how observing failure, embracing uncertainty, and iteratively redesigning a mindset allows you not just to survive, but to thrive. The talk shows how we can rebuild ourselves after life's breakdowns and in the process, create systems that empower not only ourselves, but others around us.

11:25 a.m.

How to Make Purpose Your Lifeline When Life Gets Hard

Melissa Fors Shackelford



How knowing and living your purpose can keep you grounded through loss, burnout, and change. In this steady and deeply human talk, this idea explores why purpose is not something we chase when life is working, but something we lean on when it is not. What it offers is something solid to hold onto when everything else feels uncertain. Through personal storytelling, research, and real-world leadership experience, the talk re-frames purpose as practical and human. Through stories of loss, recovery, leadership, and empathy in action, the talk shows how purpose becomes an anchor that helps us stay steady when life feels overwhelming.

Session 3 - Fireproofing You

1:00 p.m.

We're Not Dead Yet: How Aging Boldly Can Change the World We Leave Behind

Kimberly Harms, D.D.S, GC-C

In this unforgettable, life-giving talk, the idea blends humor, wisdom, and courageous honesty to reframe aging as our most powerful season and most important calling. Drawing from a story shaped by resilience, deep loss, and fierce reinvention, the talk equips the audience members from every generation to live boldly, prepare wisely, and pass on a legacy of emotional wealth that strengthens families long after we are gone.



1:20 p.m.

Kindness: The 6-Step Method to Transform Our Lives

Ryan T. Reichert

In this moving and practical talk, the idea challenges us to rethink kindness - not as a personality trait, but as a daily practice anyone can learn. Drawing from experience to create a simple six-step method that transforms ordinary moments into opportunities for connection. Through powerful personal stories and quiet insights, the audience learns how small acts - often lasting only seconds - can interrupt isolation, repair relationships, and sometimes even save lives. This talk invites the audience to see kindness as a repeatable habit, one that strengthens mental health, builds resilience, and reminds us that presence, not perfection, is where real change begins.



Session 3 - Fireproofing You

1:35 p.m.

Developing A Diva Mindset: How To Go From Stuck & Stymied To Unstoppable In The Spotlight

Heather Poduska



In this dynamic and playful talk, the idea shares how anyone can go from stuck and stymied to iconically unstoppable. Many people delay their dreams and downplay their greatness. As a result, they rarely reach their full superstar potential. It's time to flip the script and give the audience the tools and support needed to unlock the magnetic authority of their true voice. With the signature DIVA method, this talk shows dream-seekers how to stop pumping the brakes and step into the spotlight with confidence.

1:50 p.m.

THE POWER OF SILENCE: HOW DISRUPTION FUELS TRANSFORMATION

Dayna Del Val



In a world overflowing with noise, distraction and constant "doing," we rarely pause long enough to hear ourselves. This talk shares a deeply personal story to confront discomfort, silence, and stillness. Intentional disruption can unlock clarity, creativity, and personal transformation. The idea introduces The Silence to Spark Framework - a simple, actionable approach to creating intentional pauses, embracing stillness, and letting your inner Spark guide the next chapter of your life. The audience learns how small, deliberate interruptions in daily rhythm can ignite profound insight, innovation, and change.