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# WILMETTE LIVING



TEDxWILMETTE 2022  
All In

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*Photos by Sari Pina*

# TEDxWilmette Illustrates the Power of Local Women Working Together

By Paul Clements | Photos courtesy Marci Blunk



Heather Hehman, Ami Campbell

Heather Hehman has been a Wilmette resident for more than 20 years. She loves the sense of community she feels here and she readily donates her time and energy to causes that make a difference. After a successful career in corporate marketing, she started her own company, Efficiency Marketing and Publicity, to help local businesses grow. She is part of the team that put the Wilmette-onomics campaign together pro bono, but her work didn't stop there.

In 2019, with two teenagers at home, her concerns began to grow for the future. Even though it was pre-COVID that year, hot-button issues included the border wall, immigration, bipartisan cooperation, the Mueller Investigation, the economy, healthcare costs and climate change. And while some of these issues were time sensitive, most were the types of problems that are passed down from one generation to the next.

Hehman said, "my daughter is a freshman in college now and my son is a sophomore in high school, but at that time, they were at the ages when I was starting to think what kind of adults are they going to be? They will be voting soon, am I raising them to be leaders? Can they help craft the kind of world we need?"

Then I thought, wait, these kids have so much to do, and they aren't ready, or really all that interested in changing the world at this point in their lives, so I shouldn't be thinking they are going to have to do it when they grow up, I should start doing it now so they have positive role models.

So I just tried to think of what I could do and I decided that holding a TEDx would be great. TED always focuses on big, good ideas, and it's forward thinking, and I was most interested in, not just in the talks, but bringing together all the volunteers that would be needed. That's because ever since I've been in Wilmette, I've been so impressed by the people here. It's felt like every time I've met somebody, they were more capable and interesting than the last person, and if you're on a volunteer board with people here, it's like it was always twice as good and done in half the time. So, I had always kind of wanted to harness that, and so I thought doing this, we could harness some of that for something that would be bigger and it may possibly make a little positive light in the world."

TED videos and conferences are all about "ideas worth spreading." Conferences have been held annually since 1990. TEDx events are local speakers presenting to local audiences, but the talks are still archived on the TED website and YouTube channels for the world to see. Some of the most popular TED Talks have been Amy Cuddy's Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are, which has garnered 63 million views, and Brené Brown's The Power of Vulnerability, which has garnered 56 million views.

This year's TEDxWilmette event will feature six strong women leaders from the Chicagoland area on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at 1 p.m. at Regina Dominican High School. Each speaker will share their vision for our community encompassing this year's theme of "All In". The organizers and volunteers of TEDxWilmette believe in the power of individuals to create positive change with their ideas, passions and skills, and to garner the power of community to scale those individual ideas for maximum impact. They ask, "What can we do when we're All In together?"

## Here are the speakers and ideas:

### Lindsay Avner

Lindsay Avner Kaplan is the Founder and CEO of Bright Pink, a non-profit venture philanthropy fund focused on high-impact breast/ovarian health education for young women. Through Bright Pink, Lindsay has shifted the national conversation from one focused on breast and ovarian cancer awareness to one centered on tangible, life-saving action and helped more than 1.8 million women understand their personal cancer risk and develop a customized prevention plan.

**IDEA:** Adopt a mindset shift that your health is something you proactively tend to every day.



### Laura Coy

Laura is the Head of Philanthropy Strategy and ESG Integration at William Blair, where she built the firm's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) initiatives to meet the growing need for social and environmental change and multigenerational purpose. Laura also leads William Blair's community engagement teams and the William Blair & Company Foundation, aimed to inspire the next generation of philanthropists through its employee-centered matching and global signature grants programs.

**IDEA:** When all capital has impact, all resources are activated for positive change.



### Jennifer Fondrevay

Jennifer Fondrevay is the Founder/Chief Humanity Officer of Day1 Ready™, a consultancy that leads forward-thinking business owners and executives through the people challenges of business transitions, particularly Mergers & Acquisitions. Awarded Entrepreneur of the Year in 2019 by Northshore Women in Business, Jennifer is the bestselling author of "NOW WHAT? A Survivor's Guide for Thriving Through M&A" and a frequent keynote speaker and contributor to Harvard Business Review, Fast Company, Inc., Forbes and Thrive Global.

**IDEA:** Embrace uncertainty and the opportunity change brings.



### Natasha Miller Williams

Natasha Miller Williams is the Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Ferrara and is responsible for implementing and monitoring programs to promote diversity and foster an open and inclusive work environment. Recognized as one of Crain's Notable DE&I Executives and Diversity MBA Magazine's Top 100 Executive Leaders and Top 100 Women of Influence, Natasha is a key thought leader.

**IDEA:** Challenge the systems that block our success.



### Arielle Nobile

Arielle Nobile is the Founder of Legacy Connection Films where she produces broadcast-quality documentary films for families throughout the world. Arielle won Best Documentary 2019 at the Borderscene Film Festival in New Mexico for her documentary film, "Belonging in the USA: The Story of Michael D. McCarty"; and was named to The Independent Magazine's "10 Filmmakers to Watch" and won a Hugo Television award for her 6-part public television series, "Belonging in Boulder: Unexpected Stories from Your Neighbors."



*IDEA: Revolutionary listening breeds radical empathy which can heal the world.*

### Foram Sheth

Foram Sheth is the Chief Coaching Officer & Co-founder of Ama La Vida, an innovative career, leadership, life, and health coaching company. She has been featured in publications such as CNN, CNBC, and The Chicago Tribune, where she shares her vision of making coaching accessible to people of all ages and socioeconomic statuses.



*IDEA: You don't need to do it alone.*

After the speaker presentations, participants and speakers will engage in breakout sessions to further the discussion. Ticket sales will start on February 28.

Check the website for details at [www.tedxwilmette.com](http://www.tedxwilmette.com).

TEDxWilmette relies on the generosity of sponsors to fund the event, and this year, COMPASS North Shore is the premier sponsor. (Insert IMG9872) Meg McGuinness and Katie Hauser of the Meg + Katie Group, one of the COMPASS Broker Associates in Wilmette, have been personally involved in sponsoring the event since its inception in 2019.

"From the minute we heard about this event, we wanted to sponsor it," they said. "Smart, local women connecting and sharing ideas is right up our alley. We live here, we work here, and we know that innovative, creative, caring women make our community strong. As the Meg + Katie Group, we think the collaborative spirit of TEDxWilmette is a perfect fit for the collaborative culture at COMPASS, and we are very excited that several COMPASS North Shore Wilmette agents are joining us this year. We are truly All In!"

According to Hehman, when they first started, they found that the application process for the license to host a TEDx event was quite rigorous, and the compliance standards for speakers and videos was perhaps even more stringent. So, she knew she needed help and the first person she asked was her new business partner at that time, Emily Spectre. Between them, the two women reached out to the network they had. Emily had gone to college with Ami Campbell, who joined immediately to help find volunteers. Spectre also recruited Campbell to speak at the first TEDxWilmette event, and Campbell was so inspired, she stayed on and became one of the primary event organizers.

In recalling those early days, Spectre said, "it was amazing to be involved with a group of women who are passionate about providing a platform for women thought leaders to gather and share their ideas."

Svetlana Baklanova, another early volunteer, was also recruited to be a speaker. She donated her studio space, which allowed the group to easily meet and connect, whenever they needed. Baklanova says,



Meg McGuinness and Katie Hauser of the Meg + Katie Group at Compass

"My focus is strengthening youth. I immediately knew if Heather was gathering Moms to produce a TEDx, I wanted to support them. Without strong moms, you don't have strong youth." One of the first people to jump on board was Deepti Roy, now the TEDxWilmette Brand Growth Executive. Roy added, "I was the first hand-raiser when it was formed in 2019 by Heather Hehman. I was a total stranger to her, but a huge fan of Wilmette, and as I like to call us, Wilmettians! TEDx seemed like a great place to connect with a lot of them. Fast forward two years, today I work with Heather to drive our brand growth by building on the ideas shared at the talks, long after the talks are over!"

The results of the initial recruiting efforts were 25 people at the first meeting of TEDxWilmette and within a short time they were up to 40 volunteers.

"Everybody was phenomenal," Hehman said. "I mean, that first year was crazy. It was way more work than anyone would ever think to put one of these things on, especially the first time. And, when you're recruiting volunteers to do things and you don't even know what it is that needs to be done, it's like a miracle that we were able to do it. The volunteers were just super. From the beginning, I told everyone that I wanted the process of creating it to be as impactful as the end result, because I wanted this to be about the community coming together. The people who were involved in it will tell you they definitely felt that way too. The process was really bonding. We really liked connecting with each other. It was hard, but it was rewarding."

The first event was called BOLD+BRILLIANT. Ami Campbell spoke on Radical Generosity is a Way of Living. Not an Act of Giving. Campbell was born in Saigon during the VietNam War, and is the daughter of a local woman, who was 19 at the time of her birth, and an American military contractor. Estimates are that there were about 100,000 children born from relationships between local women and American soldiers, and that as the war ended, only 2500-3000 of these children were evacuated to the United States. Campbell was one of them. Her talk centers on her sponsorship of a baby girl in Tanzania and her first trip there to meet the child, but found that it was the child's mother who would dramatically change her life through the strong bond of generosity they would develop. It's a moving story and it is available on the TEDxWilmette website under Videos.

According to Campbell, this year's All In is a two-level event. "First,

as an individual, am I All In on making change, and secondly, are we collectively All In together? I have my fingers crossed that we will be able to meet in person on April 9. We have 100 seats, six speakers giving 8-10 minute talks and then three different breakout sessions with a facilitator.

The program will be excellent. We had 49 applicants for the six speaker slots, so the selection process was no easy task, but we looked for different angles on the All In theme. So for example, Jennifer Fondrevay, who has navigated through three huge corporate mergers, is speaking on All In on Uncertainty. Lindsay Kaplan, who is a Wilmette resident that opted for life-saving breast and ovarian health interventions and founded the organization Bright Pink, will speak on All In on being radically proactive with your health. There are so many fantastic women who just need a platform."

Campbell started as one of the first volunteers, and because she was volunteer-centric and knew so many people who were active in Wilmette, she was the key to getting the first Board together. When Spectre and her discussed her speaking, she decided to apply, and when she was accepted, she temporarily put down the volunteer mantle to take up the speaker's mantle.

"I talked about radical generosity being a way of living not an act of giving, because I do feel like generosity is more of a posture," she said. "I want generosity to really be the spirit that people approach, not just their money, but their time, their relationships and their talents with. And that's part of why I love TEDxWilmette, because that is the spirit of this group. Generosity is contagious, and I really feel like Wilmette is a hotbed of generosity.

It's my passion because of where I came from. I should have lost the birth lottery but by the grace of God, my father married my mother and brought her to the United States. My mother received

the equivalent of a second grade education, but I was able to go to school in the U.S. and I have an MBA. There's nothing I did to have caused that miracle in my life. So, part of why I'm so committed to and passionate about generosity is because I feel like I've been given so much, and shame on me if I don't pay it forward. I also say that gratitude is the birthplace of generosity, and I'm just so grateful for all the opportunities I've been given. And I'm really grateful to live in Wilmette. I mean, what a fantastic community of people."

One of the rules of TEDx is that it is not for profit or for fundraising purposes. Tickets are sold to cover the cost of putting on the events and producing the videos. Speakers do not receive payments or honorariums. The TEDxWilmette community has grown to over 500 volunteers, speakers, sponsors and others. TEDxWilmette is also producing mini events to maintain the momentum it generates in the community after its main event. They strive to continue to share conversation and content. They have also divided the community into "blue zones" so women can network with each other by proximity for grassroots activities.

"TEDxWilmette is my friend who has become my home," Roy said. "It is where, as today's woman, I find my inspiration, my balance, my trusted support and my solutions to live a fulfilling life."



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