April 10, 2022

Mr. Chris Chambers
Mr. Craig Kramer
Hon. Katherine Forrest (fmr.)
Dr. Larry Thomsen
Hon. Leeland Cole-Chu
Dr. Mary Branch

Road to TEDx
Meet the team

First TEDx at Choate
“An innovator is one who does not know it cannot be done.”

— R.A. Mashelkar —

from the TED talk “Breakthrough designs for ultra-low-cost products”
A wild idea was born in the shower, in the summer of 2021. What if there was a TEDx event at Choate? The image of speakers sharing their “ideas worth spreading” fascinated me. From bullet points on the iPhone Notes App to pages after pages of Google Docs, the ambitious goal became closer to reality every day. In some ways, the process of creating “re:INVENT” was in itself a reinvention — we had a third of the time that a TEDx event typically takes to plan. Through un-defeatable persistence, the Committee has proved how far a whimsical idea could take us. It is with pride and honor that we present to the community the culmination of months of hard work.

Lights, camera, action. This is our moment.

Yoyo Zhang
Founder & Project Director
“re:INVENT” symbolizes a new start and the unlimited possibilities lying ahead. “re:INVENT” defines the zeitgeist of the 21st century, yet also holds importance in all stages of life because change is life’s only constant. As learners and adventurers, we perpetually “re:INVENT” our views, our careers, and ourselves.
Our theme.
Taking place on April 10 in the Ann & George Colony Hall, TEDxYouth@ChoateRosemaryHall is the first ever TEDx event held at Choate.

After four months of planning, the Student Committee hereby presents six alumni speakers to the community to share lessons, experiences, and ideas regarding “re:INVENT.”
Great stories are a key to successful innovation

Chris Chambers is an accomplished Go-To-Market professional. He graduated from D’Amore-Mckim School of Business at Northeastern University in 2017 and has since made a career in solving complex problems for people and businesses globally. Hailing from a Jamaican household in Newark, New Jersey, he attributes much of his success to his family who taught him the art of storytelling at a young age — a skill that helped him reach new heights in his education including acceptance into New Jersey Seeds, The Rectory School, and Choate Rosemary Hall. At Choate, he realized this talent and began to push its limits beyond education. He landed his first sales job cold-calling prospects for home renovations, which taught him that the few people who care about what one has to say will only stay for a captivating story. This lesson stuck with him for years as he continues to motivate actions that will shape a better future.
Craig Kramer is Mental Health Ambassador and Chair in Neuroscience External Affairs at Janssen R&D, a Johnson & Johnson company. Craig leads a team that seeks to raise mental health awareness, reduce stigma, promote research, improve access, and ensure better patient outcomes. Craig is a graduate of Princeton University’s School of Public & International Affairs, University of Michigan School of Law, and Harvard Business School’s General Management Program. He serves the American Brain Coalition, citiesRISE, DMAX Foundation, International Alliance of Mental Health Research Funders, International Schools Services, Mental Health Center of Denver, National (US) Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, One Mind at Work, Project HEAL, Trinity Counseling Services, United Nations Health Innovation Exchange Investor Coalition, United for Global Mental Health, and US National Response to COVID-19.
Is Justice Real When Reality Is Not?
Dispensing justice in virtual environments

Katherine B. Forrest is a partner in Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP’s Litigation Department. She most recently served as a U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York and was the former Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Over the course of her career, Ms. Forrest has been regarded as a leader in legal issues relating to technology, including artificial intelligence, the digital environment and big data. Ms. Forrest is a frequent lecturer and published author in the areas of antitrust, intellectual property, and investigations. Ms. Forrest received a B.A. with honors from Wesleyan University and a J.D. from NYU School of Law, where she is an Adjunct Professor of Law. Ms. Forrest joined Cravath in 1990 and was elected a partner in 1997. She rejoined Cravath in 2018.
Dr. D. Laurence Thomsen (Larry) joined the Advanced Materials and Processing Branch at NASA Langley Research Center (LaRC) in 2000 as a Research Materials Engineer, after a National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Naval Research Laboratory from 1999-2000. He received his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Connecticut in 1999. Larry has been awarded 9 patents, 3 licenses, NASA Government Invention of the Year Honorable Mention “Methods of Making Z-Shielding” and authored/co-authored multiple papers and presentations. He is a U.S. Army War College graduate and has deployed on two contingency operations: Noble Eagle (2003-4) and Enduring Freedom (2011-12).
On living Selfishly

Leeland Cole-Chu lives in Salem, Connecticut. He is a graduate of The Choate School, Harvard College, and the University of San Francisco School of Law. He practiced law in San Francisco from 1979 to 1983 and in Connecticut from 1983 to 2012, when he became a Judge of the Connecticut Superior Court. He is semi-retired, with the office of Judge Trial Referee. He writes occasionally on matters of personal and civic responsibility, and spirituality, in a blog entitled “A Friend’s Thoughts,” and on Twitter, @afriendsthought.
Mary Branch is a cardiologist from Youngstown, Ohio. In her career, she strives to improve heart disease prevention in cancer patients and improve healthcare equity for Black Americans, motivated by her legacy of being a fourth-generation African American physician. Dr. Branch received her B.A. from Smith College and M.D from Case Western University, School of Medicine. She has also conducted research at Massachusetts General Hospital, part of the Harvard system, completed her residency training at the University of North Carolina, and is on track to receive a Masters of Science at Wake Forest College in June 2022. In the future, Dr. Branch will complete additional training in cardio-oncology at the University of Pennsylvania and become the Director of Cardio-Oncology at Cone Health in North Carolina.
1. Initial Preparation

On November 30, 2021, applications for the inaugural TEDxChoate Committee were sent to the Choate community. Months prior, Project Director Yoyo Zhang ’24 and Assistant Director Annika Lee ’23 worked behind the scenes to sow the seeds for this pivotal event. The newly selected Committee met for the first time on January 8, 2022 to become acquainted and establish a theme for the event — “re:INVENT”. From there, the group continued to meet regularly and work diligently on bringing this vision to life in collaboration with six, later determined speakers.

2. Getting Things Together

From the second meeting onward, the three departments started to settle into their various roles and responsibilities. The Content team under the Creative Design department began to work on writing weekly progress blogs and member profiles for the publication. The Visual team worked on finding inspiration to create future merchandise and badge designs. The Technology department began sketching and building the website for the event as well as creating plans for the event and the trailer for promotion. In the Outreach department, members of the Communications team drafted a press release for the school and acceptance and rejection letters for the soon to be chosen speakers, a process they would assist in. Throughout the early stages of the process, the Business team selected merch companies to partner with for the event, taking into consideration factors such as price and quantity.

3. Speaker Selection Process

During the first week of the preparation process, an application was sent out to all alumni to apply to become a TEDxChoate speaker. All members of the Communications team helped review the applications in addition to a few volunteers. After this initial review, a Google Form was sent school wide to gauge the community’s curiosity in the potential speakers. Thanks to a good amount of participation in the process, the Committee was able to determine the community’s interest in the speakers, which was very helpful in the final stages of the process. After more careful deliberation, the Committee selected Dr. Mary Branch ’03, Mr. Chris Chambers ’13, Hon. Katherine Forrest (fmr.) ’82, Mr. Craig Kramer ’79, and Dr. Larry Thomsen ’87. The final speaker was not yet determined at the time of writing.
4. BTS Advancement

As the term drew to a close, Yoyo and Annika held a de-stress event in lieu of a normal meeting where Committee members could create TEDx art. Once spring break started, work began for the Committee once more. Each department had deadlines to meet in the two week period. The Creative Design department worked on the publication, progress blogs, merch designs, and website art. The Technology department worked on website building, creating a trailer for the event, and making a schedule for the big day. The Outreach department continued to collaborate with the Creative Design department to review speaker speeches and finalize merch. During break, many individuals within the Committee formed teams to work with the speakers to edit and review their speeches and create visuals for their presentation. As a whole, spring break was a very busy yet productive time for the TEDxChoate Committee.

5. Final Preparations

As spring break came to an end, the Committee worked together to conclude many aspects to ensure a smooth event. Each department has their own task to complete: Creative Design worked on finalizing speaker speeches and creating the publication, Technology published the website, and Outreach produced merchandise.

Welcome to TEDx!

by Semi Obayomi ’23
Meet the Team

Founder & Project Director
Yoyo Zhang ’24

Hailing from Shanghai, China, Yoyo is a proactive member of the Choate community. She is the Features section editor of The Choate News, the founder and Editor-in-Chief of the GirlTech Magazine, and a flute player in the Symphony Orchestra. She is a part of the Science Research Program (SRP) with an interest in computational neuroscience. When free, she enjoys movies, chats with friends, and slow walks. Her favorite TED Talk is “Why tech needs the humanities” by Eric Berridge, which helped solidify her interest in pursuing both STEM and Liberal Arts.

Assistant Director
Annika Lee ’23

Annika is a 5th former from Hong Kong. At Choate, she is the president of the Student Committee of Programming and Engagement (SCOPE), the Photography Editor of the GirlTech Magazine, and a member of the Girls JV Basketball team. Annika has a passion for engineering and graphics design and hopes to pursue a career in STEM and business. You can always find Annika eating a bowl of edamame, sleeping with her Boba pillow, or hanging out with her friends in the Dining Hall. Annika’s favorite TED Talks are “The orchestra in my mouth” presented by Tom Thum and “How great leaders inspire action” by Simon Sinek.
Emily Son ’23
Hometown: South Korea
Hobbies: art, traveling, eating, cooking
Activities: Yearbook, Art Club, photography, GirlTech Magazine
Favorite TED talk: “Grit: the power of passion and perseverance” by Angela Lee Duckworth

Chloe Jacobs ’23
Hometown: Santa Monica, CA
Hobbies: theater, tennis, writing for publications
Activities: arts, writing, movie analysis

Nicholas Ng ’23
Hometown: Hong Kong
Hobby: tennis
Activities: Chinese Club, Symphony Orchestra
Favorite TED talk: “The Unspoken Reality Behind the Harvard Gates” by Alex Chang

Semi Obayomi ’23
Hometown: Milford, CT
Hobbies: writing, listening to music, cooking Nigerian food
Activities: Peer Educator, track, dancing
Favorite TED talk: “Sawubona, we see you” by Roche Mambolo from TEDx Mafikeng

Eva Li ’24
Hometown: Hong Kong
Hobbies: rowing, hiking
Interests: environmental issues
Activities: The Choate News, SciTECH magazine
Sunny Vo ’24
Hometown: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Hobbies: art, reading, watching
Activities: Quiz Bowl, Ethics Bowl, Linguistics Club
Favorite TED talk: “The danger of a single story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Isa Turri ’23
Hometown: Beijing, China
Activities: Symphony Orchestra (violin), The Lit

Isabel Maida ’23
Hometown: New York City, NY
Hobbies: traveling, cooking, spending time with her two dogs
Activities: Girls Who Code, computer science, Peer Educator, softball, political science
Favorite TED talk: “My Immigrant Story” by Tan Le

Zoe Plunkett ’24
Hometown: Milwaukee, WI
Hobbies: reading, writing
Activities: robotics, coding
Favorite TED talk: “Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator” by Tim Urban
Peyton Li ’25
Hometown: New York City, NY
Activities: Quiz Bowl, Math Team, Wind Ensemble
Interest: STEM
Favorite TED talk: “Top hacker shows us how it’s done” by Pablos Holman

Kewei Wang ’23
Hometown: Zhuhai, China
Hobbies: running, filming, reading
Interests: filmmaking, music, history

Carson Ling ’24
Hometown: Dalian, China
Activities: Choate Programming Union (CPU), Advanced Robotics Concentration (ARC)
Interests: computer science, robotics, photography

Yuki Zhang ’24
Hometown: Nanjing, China
Hobbies: minecraft
Activities: basketball, orchestra, Science Research Program (SRP)
Interests: STEM, math
Favorite TED talk: “This is what happens when you reply

Eric Yang ’25
Hometown: Canada
Hobbies: making short skits, singing while playing the piano, designing with computer softwares
Activities: choir
Anya Mobarak ’23
Hometown: Hamden, CT
Hobbies: travel, music
Activities: Mixed Heritage Association, tennis, Whims Acapella
Favorite TED talk: “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adiche

Wendy Huo ’23
Hometown: Beijing, China
Hobbies: martial arts, piano
Interests: sociology, psychology, history
Favorite TED talk: “Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator” by Tim Urban

Isabella Wu ’24
Hometown: Long Island, NY
Hobby: visual arts
Activities: Symphony Orchestra, Quiz Bowl, writing for publications
Interests: science, math
Favorite TED talk: “How Your Brain Invents Your ‘Self’” by Anil Seth

Jimena Acosta ’23
Hometown: Mexico City, Mexico
Activities: Gold Key tour guide, basketball, Student Advocating for Gender Equality (SAGE)
Interests: science, math, economics
Favorite TED talk: “Sleepy Teens: a Health Epidemic” by Wendy Troxel
Leyee Dai ’24
Hometown: Shanghai, China
Activities: Debate Team, Model United Nations, Wind Ensemble, Concert Orchestra, Student Committee of Programming and Engagement (SCOPE)
Interests: political science and international relations

Emma Ding ’24
Hometown: Shanghai, China
Activities: Band, Yearbook, basketball
Favorite TED talk: “Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator” by Tim Urban

“Vision begins with the eyes, but it truly takes place in the brain.”
— Fei-Fei Li —

from the TED talk “How We’re Teaching Computers to Understand Pictures”
The process of bringing this event together was filled with many trial-and-errors and learning experiences.

Although certain moments were stressful, the bright memories outshine the challenges. Together, hand in hand, the Committee has overcome countless obstacles and worked through sleepless nights.

We are proud to present the culmination of months of hard work to the Choate community and beyond.

Thank you for joining us for this journey.
special thanks

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