A conference outside the box

TEDx Greenville's fifth year offers inspiration, stimulation

By Amy Clarke Burns
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There are few places in town where you're likely to hear from a Buddhist nun, a female impersonator and one of the inventors of the modern touch screen all in the same day and at the same venue.

Welcome to TEDx Greenville.

"It's completely multidisciplinary. It's purposeful that you bring all kinds of people from around the spectrum together to listen to each other's ideas," said Lisa Marie Corley, curator for the fifth annual event.

"It's all about creating a shift in thinking, having somebody up there that will somehow knock your world around a little bit."

TEDx Greenville, one of hundreds of independently organized conferences built under the banner of the famed TED events, will be held April 11 at the Kroc Center.

"The goal is change," Corley said, to bring together people

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Susan Molnar with Greenville Makers Group uses a 3-D printer to create brooches she designed at the 2013 TEDx Greenville. SUBMITTED PHOTO /IAN CURCIO

TEDX

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who think differently, who have different roles within the community, who work toward different goals — because "you never know where the ideas come from."

The daylong conference is set up in four sessions, each featuring an assortment of presenters ranging from musical performances to technical presentations.

The day's carefully orchestrated schedule is intended to "flow" participants through emotional and intellectual experiences, Corley said.

Buddhist nun Gen Kelsang Nyema will offer a unique perspective on happiness; female impersonator Roxy will raise issues of stereotypes "and why we should throw them out the window," Corley said.

Several speakers will reveal a slice of life that might be heartwarming or shocking in their turn.

Conference organizers received a record 150 nominations for speakers and performers this year, all of whom are local or regional.

"Each of the speakers was chosen because of their potential to create some sort of epiphany in the minds of someone who's listening," Corley said.

Designed to be a completely immersive experience, TEDx Greenville also includes an "interactive team" that engages attendees in activities and games to underscore the messages coming from the stage.

"By the end of the day, you are completely wiped out and exhausted in a good way," said Jake Knight, design team lead for the conference.

Attendance at TEDx Greenville is limited to 350, and the local event has sold out every year, Corley said. For more information, go to www.tedxgreenville.com.

YOU CAN GO

What: TEDx Greenville
When: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. April 11
Where: Kroc Center
Cost: $55
For more: www.tedxgreenville.com