



SATURDAY, MAY 9 2026 AT 7:30PM
THE HOCHSTEIN SCHOOL



OUR CAST

Amanda Kernahan * Amy Hatch
David Andreatta * Emily Benson
Erica Beversluis Saran * Fonda Abdoch
Janice Hodgins Spiotta * K.E. Semmel
Leah McGuire * Mary Aman
Meagan Zdep * Pia Moller * Sky Dunn
Sondra Imperati



OUR BENEFICIARY



TEEN EMPOWERMENT
— ROCHESTER —

Since 2003, Teen Empowerment Rochester has provided life-changing opportunities to hundreds of youth in the City of Rochester. Through their involvement, these inspiring individuals have mobilized thousands of their peers, adults, and community leaders to participate in youth-led initiatives that drive change.

EVENT PROGRAM

VENUE

The Hochstein School

PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive Producer: Erin Waller

Producers: Christine Green, Taylor Terrance, & Terri Lee

Assitant Producers: Amy Boyle Johnston & Robert Shelton

PUBLICITY

Jane Knickerbocker

EMCEES

Andrea Holland

Norma Holland





creativity. stories. community.

AT FLOWER CITY WRITERS COLLECTIVE, WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON HAS A STORY AND THAT SHARING THESE STORIES IS HOW STRONG COMMUNITIES ARE BUILT. WE ARE THRILLED TO BRING LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER 2026 TO THE STAGE.

OVER THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS, THE FOUNDERS OF THE FLOWER CITY WRITERS COLLECTIVE HAVE COME TOGETHER WITH MEMBERS OF THE ROCHESTER WRITING COMMUNITY WITH OUR SHARED LOVE OF WRITING AND READING, SHARING STORIES AND BUILDING COMMUNITY. WE HAVE HOSTED CIN CITY READERS AT ROC CINEMA WHERE OVER 50 WRITERS HAVE SHARED THEIR STORIES WITH ENTHUSIASTIC AND SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCES.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE FLOWER CITY WRITERS COLLECTIVE?

WE'RE EXCITED! WE'RE CURIOUS! WE'RE ENERGETIC! WE'RE PASSIONATE! WE'RE EVOLVING! WE WILL CONTINUE TO HOST CIN CITY READERS EVENTS OFFERING A WELCOMING SPACE FOR LOCAL WRITERS. WE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO BUILD ON THE MOMENTUM FROM THIS YEAR'S LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER PERFORMANCE IN MAY 2027.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO BE PART OF THIS GROWING COMMUNITY, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.FLOWERCITYWRITERS.ORG AND FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM.

IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY TO SHARE, YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN US AT ROC CINEMA ON JUNE 11, 2026 FOR THE NEXT CIN CITY READERS. VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SIGN UP TO READ OR COME OUT TO THE EVENT TO HEAR SOME GREAT STORYTELLERS.

WE HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE. WE'RE SO GLAD THAT YOU'RE HERE.

WARMLY,
CHRISTINE GREEN, JANE KNICKERBOCKER,
TERRI LEE, TAYLOR TERRANCE AND ERIN WALLER



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SCOTT AND SANDY @ 98.9 THE BUZZ

DAN & ABBY @ FOX ROCHESTER

KRISTINA @ ROC CINEMA





SUPPORT YOUTH VOICE

TeenEmpowerment (TE) hires young people as **Youth Organizers** to develop and **use their voices** to engage and lead their communities towards positive **social change**.



teenempowerment.org/donate

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~Renée



Thank you

A letter from our Executive Producer

To our audience,

Bringing Listen To Your Mother to the stage is a true labor of love. Flower City Writers Collective was the catalyst that made it possible. In early 2025, a group of us gathered to bring writers and creatives to the stage for live readings. As our readings continued to grow, the community filled us with hope & courage.

Hope & courage was what we needed! Hearing stories from this beloved community is what we longed for. When there is so much that pulls us away, having stories that bring us together is necessary & powerful & healing.

Stories of motherhood - being a mom, a step-mom, having a mom, longing to be a mom, having a mother-in-law, being a mom in the community - are so universal that tonight we can come together in this shared space and all be filled with hope & courage.

Thank you for sharing & holding this space with us.

Yours in love & creativity,

Erin

PRODUCTION TEAM



show order

Sondra	Imperati	The Persistent Courage to Forgive
Janice	Hodgins Spiotta	Ida
David	Andreatta	Smile, Damn It!
Sky	Dunn	My Baby Boy
Amy	Hatch	What they Tell you
Emily	Benson	French Toast
Erica	Beverluis Saran	The Mother's Journey
Fonda	Abdoch	Come Back, My Children
Pia	Moller	Mother Tongue
Leah	McGuire	To Revive; To Be Alive; A Butterfly
K.E.	Semmel	Her Name is Sue
Amanda	Kernahan	Rooted
Mary	Aman	Breath of Life
Meagan	Zdep	The Last Time

OUR CAST



The Persistent Courage to Forgive

Sondra Imperati is a writer, speaker, stepmom, and grandmother who believes the most powerful stories grow out of the messy, ordinary moments of life. She leads Persistent Courage®, where she coaches and creates courses and workshops that strengthen connection, communication, and community. She also works with business leaders and entrepreneurs navigating change. Sondra wrote about reinvention in the New York Times bestselling anthology *Eat Pray Love Made Me Do It*.



Ida

I was raised in a large family, have been married for forty-six years, and I have three daughters and seven grandchildren. I am a retired school counselor and avid fitness enthusiast. I especially love running and hiking. I'm a creative, outgoing person who enjoys the opportunity to share and learn.



Smile, Damn It!

David Andreatta is a veteran Rochester journalist who writes about culture, power, and interesting people. He's curious by nature, skeptical by trade, and believes local journalism matters.



My Baby Boy

Sky is a poet, a parent, and a dork. Being autistic and having ADHD, she has always struggled with fitting in, but writing gives her a way to express that. Her writing centers around her struggles with her mental health, being transgender and neurodivergent, and parenting. When she's not staring at an intimidating blank page, she likes to spend time with her loved ones and cuddle with her cat.

OUR CAST



AMY HATCH

What they Tell You

For Allie

As the author of the blog *Chicken and Cheese*, Amy shared intimate, honest stories of parenting. Her work has appeared on Babble, The Huffington Post, Baby Center, and more. Hatch also appeared on media outlets as a parenting expert, including *The Today Show*, *NBC Nightly News*, and others. She lives in Brighton with her two young adult kids and her husband and works a day job as a high-tech marketing executive.



EMILY BENSON

French Toast

Emily Benson usually writes poetry, but dabbles in flash fiction and creative nonfiction. She lives near the beach with her husband, two sons, and an elderly cat named Misty. Find her work at emilybensonpoet.com.



**ERICA BEVERSLUIS
SARAN**

The Mother's Journey

Erica Beversluis Saran is a mother of two and most recently worked as a nonprofit grant writer. She studied rhetoric and political science at Calvin University and has a Master of Public Administration from Cornell University. Her family moves between Michigan, India, and Rochester.



FONDA ABDOCH

Come Back, My Children

I am a single mother of four daughters. I substitute as a clerk in the Rochester City Schools. I describe myself as a mother that works, not a working mother. I have always written pieces as a way to explore and understand all sides of my fickle Gemini, and now I'm in the mood to share my mind with others. I'm ready to see if I have a voice to match the words I write.

OUR CAST



PIA MOLLER

Mother Tongue

A native of Denmark, Pia Moller grew up eating eel and flatfish from the fjord. The fjord is also where she took swimming lessons. She works in higher education, has a background in refugee resettlement and has also worked jobs in a psychiatric hospital, a commercial laundrette, and in the fish-packing industry. Education smells better. Her creative interests include writing, beach combing, and photography.



LEAH MCGUIRE

To Revive; To Be Alive; A Butterfly

Leah McGuire received her Bachelor's in Fashion Design at Philadelphia University and her Master's in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway, University of London. Being a West African and Scandinavian American synesthete, Leah uses experimental fiction to explore the uncertainty of racial identity and psychology. Since then, she has been featured in the 2025 Bedford Square Review anthology, written a documentary for Vedavision Studios, and started a writing page on Instagram @siftimbiswrites.



K.E. SEMMEL

Her Name is Sue

K.E. Semmel is a writer and translator of more than a dozen novels from Danish, including Naja Marie Aidt, Jussi Adler Olsen, and Simon Fruelund. His fiction and nonfiction have appeared in Ontario Review, Lithub, The Millions, HuffPost, Electric Literature, The Writer's Chronicle, AARP, Washington Post, and elsewhere. He is the author of the novel The Book of Losman (2024). Find him online at kesemmel.com.



AMANDA KERNAHAN

Rooted

Amanda writes about all things grief, love, and hiking related. The project of her heart is her forthcoming memoir, PATCHED, about processing grief and loss during her long trek to complete the 46 Adirondack High Peaks with her husband. While she navigates the publishing landscape with her manuscript, she continues to publish smaller pieces in both literary and commercial outlets. When she is not writing she is likely at the hospital working as a sign language interpreter, or planning her next adventure. She lives in Fairport with her husband, teenage son, and their oversized german shepherd while her daughter is off living her best life in college outside of Boston.

OUR CAST



MARY AMAN

Breath of Life

Mary (Keefer) Aman's passion and life's work is being a mother to five adult children and one son-in-law. She teaches English as a New Language in Fairport. Mary is also a yoga instructor and has owned and operated her yoga business for more than twenty-five years. Mary serves on the board of directors at Camp Stella Maris where she was a camper and counselor before co-founding the Day Camp in 1990.



MEAGAN ZDEP

The Last Time

Meagan Zdep is a local theatre artist with a BFA in Theatre Studies from Niagara University and a BA in American Sign Language Interpreting from RIT/NTID. Her main role these days is Mom to her three children and two dogs. She is currently developing a new work for the stage woven from women's birth stories.



OUR PRODUCERS



Erin Waller, born and raised in Rochester, NY, works for an asset manager, supporting municipal bond funds. When she is not working or writing, Erin spends her time volunteering in the community.

She wrote and performed 4 one-woman shows at the Rochester Fringe Festival based on her life. Erin was in the 2018 Listen to Your Mother Rochester cast and served as a producer for 2019, 2021, and 2022. She was in the 2021 class of Leadership Rochester, inducted into the Monroe Community College Alumni Hall of Fame in 2022, and a Client Applause winner in 2023.

Erin is married and a step-mom to two amazing kids. She practices yoga, loves to travel, and recently discovered a love of cooking.



Christine Green is the managing editor for Rochester's (585) magazine, (585) Kids magazine, and Upstate Gardeners' Journal. She was also the founder and host of the popular reading salon, Words on the Verge. Christine grew up in San Jose, CA and holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology from U.C. Berkeley and an MA in anthropology from the College of William and Mary. Christine was a member of the Listen to Your Mother 2017 Rochester cast. She was also a member of the Listen to Your Mother 2020/2021 Production Team.

Her essays, articles, poetry, and creative nonfiction appear in several literary journals and magazines.

Her debut book, Sweet Tooth, is available now from Zaftig Press.



Taylor Terrance writes Lunatics Lounge, the humor column in (585) magazine, and takes her column live with a three-year run at Rochester Fringe Fest. Her short plays were featured in the local Place Projectors Project and 2 Pages/2 Voices playwriting competition. Taylor was the commercial writer for the Section V Sportsmanship Campaign. She was a 2019 Listen To Your Mother cast member and producer/scriptwriter in 2021 and 2022. Taylor is a graduate of the Second City Chicago comedy writing program and a founding member of the Flower City Writers Collective. She thanks Uncle Gil and Camille Perlo for teaching her to read and write, and her family for being the butt of her jokes. But please remember they deserve it.



Terri is a lifetime resident of Rochester, an avid reader and a writer. She was a member of the 2019 Listen to Your Mother cast, and on the production team for two additional Listen to Your Mother performances. She is one of the founding members of the Flower City Writers Collective, working on growing our local writers community. She is a newlywed and newly retired from a 40-year career in the legal field. She's currently working on her first book and reimagining what life looks like in this next season.

OUR PRODUCERS



AMY BOYLE "BONK"
JOHNSTON

Amy Boyle "Bonk" Johnston is a 2004 graduate of Visual Studies Workshop. She has been published in The New York Times, LA Weekly and The Philadelphia Inquirer and other national outlets. She is on the board of the Rod Serling Foundation.



ROBERT SHELTON

Robert Shelton is a writer and reformed technologist who studied English in Northfield, MN. His work has appeared in South 85 Review, Lilac Magazine, and in data infrastructure automation programs from here to Omaha. In 2024 he finished second in the Senior class at SDR Motorcycle Raceway in Belden, NY, and in 2020 was cast in what turned out to be the 2021 edition of Listen To Your Mother Rochester.

FLOWER CITY

writers

collective

creativity.
stories.
community.

The bottom section features a background of faint, overlapping cursive handwriting. The text "FLOWER CITY" is in a white, sans-serif font. "writers" is written in a large, purple, cursive script. "collective" is in a white, sans-serif font. To the right, a white-bordered box contains the words "creativity.", "stories.", and "community." stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font.