

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Meet the voices inspiring NISE 2026



Mister Danny

An award winning magician and a regular favorite headliner at The Chicago Magic Lounge. He performs all over Chicagoland for corporate events, private parties, and monthly for the University of Chicago Children's Hospital. In 2024, Mister Danny's solo show, "Magic In Session," premiered at the Chicago Magic Lounge to rave reviews. He has edited books on magic, invented tricks for other magicians, and teaches magic to learners of all ages. On top of all that, Danny is also a high school chemistry teacher in Evanston.



Shelby Hatch

A scientist and educator who connects chemistry, sustainability, and social justice. An Associate Professor of Instruction at Northwestern University, her research explores environmental justice and heavy metal contamination across Chicago communities. Shelby incorporates sustainability and environmental justice into her chemistry courses and teaches through the Northwestern Prison Education Program. She also makes chemistry accessible through interactive presentations about everyday topics like coffee and chocolate. Her work brings together science, community engagement, and education to help learners see how chemistry connects to the world around them.



Shannon Hackett

The Curator of Birds at the Field Museum of Natural History and Co-Chair of the Committee on Evolutionary Biology at the University of Chicago. Her research uses genomic data and museum specimens to explore the evolutionary relationships among birds and understand why they look, sound, and behave as they do. Shannon is passionate about sharing science through museum exhibitions, public presentations, and education. She has developed bird and evolution curricula for middle and high school students, created summer internships for students and teachers, taught undergraduates, and helped lead one of the nation's premier evolutionary biology graduate programs.



Amy V. Gilbert - Xplorlabs

Amy V. Gilbert, Ph.D., has taught secondary and postsecondary students in public education for more than 25 years. Her teaching and research is grounded in the foundations of reform-based science methods, with complementary research interests in sustainable professional development programs that work to support educators in transforming their instructional practices. Learn about UL Research Institutes' safety science education platform, Xplorlabs! Sessions will explore the safety challenges of e-vehicle batteries, the science of fire safety, and using question formulation technique with real lab footage from UL Research Institutes.