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**Speak Cafe** is the new television edition of an Urbana open-mike poetry gathering which enables artists to share their work and experiences with the public.

According to producer Aaron Ammons, "Speak is an acronym for Song, Poetry, Expression, Art and Knowledge. The idea for Speak Cafe was first conceived in Dr. Will Patterson's [University of Illinois] class entitled C.R.E.A.M (Cash Rules Everything Around Me). The objective of the students was to create a venue that used elements of Hip Hop to engage the community, satisfy the requirements of the civic engagement initiative from the University of Illinois office of the Chancellor, and revisit the purpose and progress of the Black Power Movement. That idea was then taken to Kathleen Harleman, Director of Krannert Art Museum, in an attempt to forge an alliance with the African American Studies Department, and she loved it."

As a live event now in its fifth year, Speak Cafe takes place once a month during the months of September-November and February-April, always on a Thursday night from 7-9pm, in the Palette Cafe of Krannert Art Museum (500 E. Peabody, Urbana). "Speak Cafe is not a contest," says Ammons. "There is a live disc jockey (DJ E-Dub) and the host and coordinator is Brotha A-Dub. Oh yeah, we always have a slice of sweet potato, or bean pie, for the first twenty people!" As a television program, **Speak Cafe** can be seen beginning this month on UPTV Thursdays at 11:30pm, with a rebroadcast Mondays at midnight.

Aaron Ammons is a local activist, husband, father, published poet, co-founder of CU Citizens For Peace and Justice, and a contributing member of Urbana Public Television. UPTV is the television service of the City of Urbana, providing governmental, educational and public access television to, and by, the local community. It is available on Comcast Channel 6 to over 40,000 homes in Urbana, Champaign, Savoy, Bondville, Philo, Ogden and St. Joseph, as well as in Springfield, Decatur and Danville on ATT U-Verse Channel 99. The complete program schedule is at [www.urbanaininois.us/uptv](http://www.urbanaininois.us/uptv). Membership is free and entitles volunteers to free video and editing training and equipment use. For more information, contact UPTV at 217-384-2452 or at [uptv@urbanaininois.us](mailto:uptv@urbanaininois.us).

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