



## Tahawus Cultural Center: A True Passion Project

### A True Passion Project

Passion can be many things, a call to action, a “why,” or a reason to jump out of bed in the morning. For those lucky enough to find their passion, it can serve as a guiding light for the direction to take in an otherwise potentially directionless world. For owners Rebecca Kelly and Craig Brashear, the [Tahawus Cultural Center](#) has been exactly that – a true passion project in every sense of the phrase. Interestingly enough, it would be another passion that would lead them to cross paths in the first place. That passion was, and still is, the art of dance. It was from this shared interest that a personal and professional partnership would form and take both around the globe, eventually leading them to put down roots right here in the Adirondacks they have grown to love. *The Tahawus Cultural Center was a labor of love*

#### Blog

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### The Past

Since 1987, Rebecca Kelly has produced, presented and performed high-level dance based activities and performances here in the Adirondacks. Initially, these performances would require a road trip, as both Rebecca and Craig were living in New York City while pursuing their love of dance “when rent was much more affordable.” With each passing trip, a love for the Adirondacks and the people who called it home grew. Naturally, the question of where they would call home arose. In 2009, the Appleby Foundation (Rebecca’s ballet parent company) acquired the three-story former Masonic Lodge in Au Sable Forks, NY. According to Craig and Rebecca, the acquisition did not come without its detractors, with questions like “why this building?” or “how will you fix it?” becoming commonplace.

To their credit, Craig and Rebecca were metaphorically able to see the statue through the

marble and pushed forward. That same foresight would prove useful, as Kelly and Brashear worked to create a home for themselves on 20 acres of woodland and wetland. Together, they dreamed, saved, and were determined to design and build their home, which has since become their year round home and a place they both cherish. As for the Tahawus Center, elbow grease was applied, and a serendipitous “act of god” would occur (a flood that helped transform the basement), and from that, the building became the cultural center that it is today.

*A lot of time and elbow grease went into making the Tahawus Center what it is today.*



## The Present



Today, the Tahawus Center serves as a space for locals and visitors to cultivate and display their talents. On the third floor of the building, you will find the [Cloudsplitter Dance Studio](#). In this studio, Rebecca continues to share her passion for the art of dance and teach the next generation of advanced and intermediate dancers that are hopeful to find the success that Craig and Rebecca had

in the field. An adult class is also offered in a non-judgmental setting for beginners or those who are returning to dance. The adult class is offered in the spring, summer, and fall. Finally, the studio can also be [rented](#) for rehearsals and classes. As you move down the stairs to the second floor, you find yourself in the aptly named [Windows Gallery](#), complete with numerous windows that overlook the Au Sable River and the main street of Au Sable Forks. It's here that artists have the chance to display their work in showcases that are open to the public. A permanent gallery is displayed in between the [artist showcases](#), ensuring that art aficionados have a chance to appreciate art year-round at the Tahawus Center. *The Windows Galley of the Tahawus Center displaying an artist showcase.*

## The Future

Recently, I had the chance to sit down with both Craig and Rebecca, and I'd encourage anyone to do the same. They are incredibly friendly, well-spoken, and very interesting. Their engaging story in itself is worth the visit to the Tahawus Center, and frankly, their story is too intricate to completely fit in a short blog post like this one. After sitting with both of them for about an hour, it became obvious to me that every move they've made since the day they met has been made with foresight and passion. The Tahawus Center is a direct result of that direction and call to action. In that vein, the center has become a venue for those in the Adirondacks to "reveal what they are passionate about" and have that passion brought to the forefront with their help. The struggle now lies in the juxtaposition of the reality they came from in New York City, where people chase their dreams and passions unapologetically, to the Adirondacks, where they believe that many talented people tend to put their passion on the back burner and conversely apologize for that same ability. Craig and Rebecca see the same potential in the community that they saw in their own home and the rundown lodge they acquired, and it seems that their next passion project will involve getting the community to embrace their gifts in the same way that they have. With that shift in direction comes the shedding of cyclic ideologies and an open mindedness from the community in regards to what their own community could actually be. It's Craig and Rebecca's hope that the Tahawus Cultural Center can serve as the genesis point for that cultural shift in the Whiteface Region and beyond in the Adirondacks. Based on their previous projects, I'm confident they will turn their latest passion into their latest accomplishment, just as they have countless times before.



*Rebecca explains the history of the building to visitors from the Cloudsplitter Dance Studio*

See for yourself why Craig and Rebecca fell in love with the Whiteface Region and decided to call it home. After you're done enjoying your time at the Tahawus Cultural Center, it's time to check out some places to [eat](#), some things [to do](#), and the [lodging](#) options the Whiteface Region has to offer!

<https://dev.whitefaceregion.com/living-here/towns-villages/ausable-forks>

### **On the Shopping/ Arts page: Tahawus Cultural Center**

The Tahawus Cultural Center offers a dance studio, art gallery, and rental space. The center serves as a creative pillar in the Whiteface Region Community where one can explore their creative pursuits and appreciate the creativity of... **Location:** Au Sable Forks, New York **Phone:** (646) 734-7151

#### **Stories:**

**[Explore Tahawus Cultural Center](#)** Meet Rebecca Kelly and the team at one of the region's most interesting and expressive arts and culture destinations.

