

## OCTOBER 2016 DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER



Dear **TechStars** Families,

Thank you for choosing **TechStars** for your child! As the Owner/Director of **TechStars by Computer Explorers of New Castle County** since 1993, my staff and I are dedicated to providing your child with an outstanding technology experience during each and every weekly class. Our curriculum is written by educators and approved by Computer Explorers corporate headquarters. My staff attends monthly in-service training and is committed to delivering technology lessons that are both fun and educational for our students. We also pride ourselves on our regular email communications with our **TechStars** families. Just as you have been receiving weekly updates about your child's technology class from your child's teacher, you can also expect to receive a monthly newsletter from me. If you have questions or need more information about **TechStars**, do not hesitate to contact me directly by email at any time.

Coding is a skill that is fast becoming equally as important as reading, writing and arithmetic in today's world. In 2015 New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio stated "A computer science education is literacy for the 21st century" and announced that he will work to require teaching of computer science in all grades for all students in NYC. This year **TechStars** students will be introduced to coding in many fun ways, both on-screen and off-screen. Students will be introduced to computational thinking with Hello Ruby, Adventures in Coding, a children's book by Linda Liukas. Hands-on work to program child-friendly robots like BeeBot and his bluetooth enabled big brother, BlueBot, will pave the way for learning the basics of block programming with snap together coding puzzle pieces based on MIT's Scratch Jr introductory programming language. Our students will continue to build their programming skills as they work with coding apps like Osmo Coding and Lightbot Jr Coding Puzzles. Preschool and kindergarten is not too early to begin to build a solid foundation for coding and programming success in future years. Read Anya Kamenetz' short article, "Coding Class, Then Naptime: Computer Science for the Kindergarten Set" at <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/09/18/441122285/learning-to-code-in-preschool>.

At **TechStars** we understand that "un-plugged" activities are important for healthy and happy family relationships. The season of Fall is a great time to pick apples and pumpkins, navigate your way through a corn maze, enjoy a hayride, meet barnyard animals, marvel at the changing colors of the leaves and more. Check out one or more of these local resources with your family soon.

Farms & Orchards:

- **Fifer Orchards and Country Store, Camden-Wyoming, DE** Sat, Oct 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, 9 am – 6 pm. Corn Maze Fun Park and Fall Fest: Visit on Saturdays for the most fun extras including hayrides, tractor train, pony rides, U-Pick apples and U-Pick pumpkins. <http://www.fiferorchards.com/>
- **Linvilla Orchards, Media, PA** Check Linvilla's event calendar for details about Pumpkinland, Jack-o-lantern Exhibit, Hayrides to the Witch's House and Autumn Hayrides. Oct 30 (1day only!) All the pumpkins you can carry for \$29.99. <http://www.linvilla.com/calendar/>
- **Milburn Orchards, Elkton, MD** Fall Festival Weekends, October & November, Saturdays & Sundays, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Hayrides, Corn Maze, Boo Barn, Bale Trail, MilkySway Tunnel, Cycle Circle, Straw Jump, Tractor Tunnel, Obstacle Bounce, Giant Spider Web, Rope Maze Family Challenge, Tractor Tire Tower, Farmyard Playground, Barnyard Buddie's Zoo, GroundHog Hill and more mini-family fun events. Admission \$10/ages 3-59, \$5/ages 60+ and Free/2 and under. <http://www.milburnorchards.com/fall-festival-parties/>
- **Mr. Pepper's Pumpkin Patch, Laurel, DE** Hours through Oct 31, Sundays-Fridays/12 noon-dark & Saturdays/10 am-dark. Unfortunately for the first time in 27 years, this farm's pumpkin crop has failed but pumpkins purchased from other farms will be available for selection in the bins in which these pumpkins were shipped. Gourds, mums, other Fall produce, the corn maze, hayrides and snack shack are available as in past years. <http://www.mrpepperspumpkinpatch.com/>
- **Ramsey's Farm, Wilmington, DE** Hours vary, check website calendar for specifics. This farm is an outdoor event and closes in adverse weather; call voicemail at (302)477-1499 and choose mailbox option 4 to check on farm closings/late openings due to weather. Travel around the world an 8 acre corn maze. Learn about agriculture, farmers, and food around the world as your family travels (by foot) from continent to continent and country to country. Learn how new technology and modern farming practices help fewer and fewer farmers feed more people every day! Visit many locations along the way and learn about the agriculture in that country or state! Choose from corn maze, sorghum maze, hay maze, pumpkin painting and hayrides. Hay play area is free. All activities wrist band \$10/ages 6+ years or \$6/ages 5 and under. <http://www.ramseysfarm.com/>

#### Museums, Parks and More:

- **Delaware Nature Society's Coverdale Farm Preserve, Greenville, DE** Sat, October 1 & Sun, October 2, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. RAIN OR SHINE. Pony rides, hayrides, straw bale maze, farmers market, food trucks, artisan demonstrations and many children's activities. Members free. \$7/non-members ages 5 and older. [www.delnature.org/HarvestMoon](http://www.delnature.org/HarvestMoon)
- **Brandywine Creek State Park, Wilmington, DE** Fri, October 9, 23 & 30 at 7 pm and Sat, October 10, 24 & 31 from 2 – 6 p.m. Autumn Hayrides: Bring your friends and join the crew for good old-fashioned fun on a hayride around the park followed by a cozy campfire. Bring a blanket, food and beverages (non-alcoholic) and settle in for a 45-minute trip; rides leave on time. Pre-

registration and pre-payment are required by noon on the day before the hayride. Call 302-655-5740 to register and reserve your spot. \$7/person.  
<http://www.destateparks.com/park/brandywine-creek/>

- **Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE** Sat, Oct 15, 10 am - 5pm & Sun, Oct 16, 10 am – 4 pm. Hagley Craft Fair: This artisans' marketplace brings talented artisans from the Mid-Atlantic area to display and sell fine arts, crafts, and gourmet items. This premier show will feature works in wood, pottery, jewelry, fibers, metal, and other media. The fair will include a specialty food market. Admission is \$5 and free for Hagley members and children five and under. Use Hagley's Buck Road East entrance off Route 100. <http://www.hagley.org/>
- **Brandywine Zoo, Wilmington, DE** Fri, Oct 21 & Sat, Oct 22, 5-7 pm. Boo at the Zoo: Kids can trick-or-treat through the zoo as it gets dark in their Halloween costumes! Members are free. Non-members pay \$5/person for ages 3+. Advanced tickets available online. <http://www.brandywinezoo.org/>

Wishing all the best to you and your family for the month of October!

Sincerely,

**Roni Deely**

Owner/Director

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