

DECEMBER 2016 DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER



Dear **TechStars** Families,

December is a time for families and friends to gather and celebrate the Winter Holidays. Whether your family celebrates Christmas, Hanukkah or Kwanzaa, we know that children's thoughts turn to giving and receiving gifts. Let your child select a canned good to give to a local food bank for hungry families, contribute a few coins to the Salvation Army kettle or donate a toy to a less fortunate boy or girl. Our teachers donated unwrapped gifts to **Toys for Tots** in place of a staff gift exchange. Helping others is a wonderful way to reflect on our own good fortune and more deeply appreciate the many gifts that we receive now and throughout the year.

We are proud to offer you the opportunity to purchase our **Gift of Learning** for your child. This annual holiday promotion provides 12 weeks of **TechStars** technology classes with all added value benefits at a discounted rate. This offer is available to both new and current students. You may wish to share this opportunity with grandparents and other relatives who ask what gift to give your child. Printed copies of this offer are available at each **TechStars** site this month as well as online at www.computerexplorers.com/de. Watch for more information about the **Gift of Learning** in the weekly **TechStars** newsletter you receive from your child's technology teacher.

Families who are considering gifting iPads or other mobile devices during the holidays should welcome the American Academy of Pediatrics recent update of its screen time guidelines. Read commentary by Alva Noe from the University of California, Berkeley, about new AAP guidelines at <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/11/04/500484900/upshot-of-new-screen-time-guidelines-spend-time-with-your-kids>. The old, more restrictive, guidelines were developed in the 1990s, before iPads and apps were even invented, with the aim of guiding children's television viewing. Today technology is an integral part of our daily lives, and screen time has come to include so much more than just watching television. The new AAP guidelines recommend that parents develop a Family Media Plan to identify and manage responsible screen habits for themselves and their children, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx#home>. **TechStars** applauds the American Academy of Pediatrics for recognizing that technology, when used thoughtfully, can benefit young children. These new AAP guidelines support our time-tested **TechStars** model which delivers quality technology time to our young students in a small group setting with educator approved software/hardware and trained, actively involved instructors.

New Castle County offers these festive and seasonal "un-plugged" activities for your family during the month of December:

- **Holiday Open House at Rockwood Park**, 4651 Washington Street Extension, North Wilmington. Fri Dec 2, 6-9 pm; Sat, Dec 3, 6-9 pm & Sun Dec 4, 1-4 pm. Enjoy holiday entertainment, children's activities, costumed characters, refreshments, and FREE photos with Santa! The event also includes a Youth Entrepreneur's Secret Santa Shoppe selling gifts for the whole family, tours of the holiday display in the museum, and a festive light display in the gardens surrounding the Mansion and Carriage House. No pets please. <https://de-newcastlecounty.civicplus.com/936/Holiday-Open-House-at-Rockwood>
- **Tree Lighting Celebration at Glasgow Park Bank Barn**, US Route 40 & DE Route 896, Bear. Fri Dec 9, 6-9 pm. Holiday Market, 5-9 pm. Tree lighting at 7 pm. The event

includes caroling, music, refreshments, hayrides, and Santa's Workshop with activities and more. Bring your camera and take a picture of your child with Santa. <https://de-newcastlecounty.civicplus.com/938/Tree-Lighting-Celebration-at-Glasgow-Park>

- **Visit Santa & His Pony at Carousel Park & Equestrian Center**, 3700 Limestone Road, Pike Creek. Sat, Dec 10, 12 noon-4 pm. Bring your camera to take a photo of your child with Santa and his pony, visit Santa's workshop, make a craft, and then stay to explore the Kids Corral and take a hayride around the park. <https://de-newcastlecounty.civicplus.com/937/Visit-Santa-and-His-Pony-at-Carousel-Park>

New Castle County is proud to sponsor these FREE EVENTS, however, to help those less fortunate, please bring a nonperishable food item or new mittens, hats or scarves for the Giving Tree.

More local "un-plugged" activities to get families in the holiday spirit follow:

- Bundle up your family and head out to one or more festive annual parades. Consider **Winterfest/Newark** on Fri, Dec 2, **Claymont Community Coalition Christmas Parade** on Sat, Dec 3, **Delaware City Christmas Parade** on Sat, Dec 10 or **Elsmere Holiday Parade** on Sun, Dec 11. Read more details and get parade tips at <http://northdelaware.happeningmag.com/holiday-parades-2016>.
- The Nutcracker is a perennial favorite with many families. Choose from performances by the Wilmington Ballet at the Playhouse on Rodney Square on Dec 3 & 4, <http://www.wilmingtonballet.org/about-nutcracker>; Delaware Dance Company at U of D's Mitchell Hall on Dec 16, 17 & 18, <http://delawaredancecompany.org/nutcracker> or First State Ballet Theatre at the Grand Opera House on Dec 17 & 18, <http://www.firststateballet.com/upcomingshows>.
- Enjoy a fun, upbeat musical experience at Wilmington's World Café Live as Peanut Butter and Jams welcomes **We Kids Rock Band's Holiday Show**, Sat, Dec 17. Doors open 10:30 am & show begins 11 am. Tickets \$10.05/person. This event is for all ages. <http://www.worldcafelive.com/event/1290297-we-kids-rock-band-s-holiday-wilmington>
- **Noon Year's Eve** at the Brandywine Zoo, Brandywine Park, 101 North Park Drive, Wilmington. Sat, Dec 31, 11 am – 12:15 pm. Family activities include a toast of sparkling apple cider when the clock strikes 12 noon. Members Free & Non-members \$5/3 years and older. Registration required. Learn details about this celebration, discover when Santa will visit the zoo and find the perfect holiday gift for your favorite young animal lover - Adopt a Serval for the Holidays at www.brandywinezoo.org.

Whatever holidays you celebrate and whatever traditions you share with your children, treasure this time together and know that you are building memories with your child that will last a lifetime. Warmest wishes from our **TechStars** family to your family for a safe and happy Winter Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

Roni Deely

Owner/Director

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TechStars by Computer Explorers of New Castle County



www.computerexplorers.com/de