

DECEMBER 2017 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 again this year. 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 planning computer gifts for their young children should consider many factors. Are you seeking a device that is portable for your child to take with him/her when traveling outside the home? A tablet is the answer. Are you seeking a home computer that will reinforce mouse/cursor skills to practice and develop hand-eye coordination as well as fine motor skills? A laptop or desktop is the answer. Instead of a gift specifically for the child, a family tablet or laptop/desktop that everyone will use may be the best choice. This option can be more economical in the long run and will grow with your child. When introducing the tablet, laptop or desktop to your child be sure to talk about responsible online behavior and set limits for time spent using the computer. Plan time in your family schedule for using the computer with your child to explore common interests and encourage him/her to show you his/her computer skills. With all types of computers, researching parental controls for your purchase is essential before presenting the gift to your young child. Learn more about parental controls at <http://parentinfo.org/article/what-are-parental-controls-and-how-can-they-help-children-stay-safe-online>.

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 1 & Sat, Dec, 5-9 pm. Tree lighting Fri, Dec 1, 6 pm. Bring your family out for the 17th annual Holiday Open House with exceptional entertainment, fun festive children's crafts, costumed characters, refreshments, food trucks 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. <https://de-newcastlecounty.civicplus.com/936/Holiday-Open-House-at-Rockwood>
- **Tree Lighting Celebration and Holiday Market at Glasgow Park Bank Barn**, US Route 40 & DE Route 896, Bear. Fri, Dec 8, 5-9 pm. Market opens 5 pm. Tree lighting at 7 pm. Celebrate the holidays with holiday music, refreshments and Santa's Workshop with activities and more. Bring your camera to take a FREE picture with Santa! Then shop the Festive Holiday Market featuring gifts, local foods, holiday decorations and more. <https://de-newcastlecounty.civicplus.com/938/Tree-Lighting-Celebration-at-Glasgow-Par>
- Find more information about FREE Santa Visits, FREE Holiday Concerts and FREE Holiday Programs at www.nccde.org/specialevents.

New Castle County is proud to sponsor these FREE EVENTS, however, to help those less fortunate, please bring donations of canned goods or nonperishable food items for the Food bank of Delaware.

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 in northern Delaware: **Winterfest/Newark** on Fri, Dec 1 (rain date Sat, Dec 2), from 6-8 pm, <https://newarkde.gov/743/Winterfest>. **Claymont Christmas Parade** on Sat, Dec 2, from 10 am-Noon, <http://www.claymontchristmasparade.com/>. **Delaware City Holiday Parade of Lights Christmas Parade** on Sat, Dec 10, at 6pm, <https://delawarecity.delaware.gov/events/412/christmas-parade/>. **Elsmere Holiday Parade** on Sun, Dec 10 at 2 pm, <https://www.townofelsmere.com/events/703/town-of-elsmere-holiday-parade/>.
- **Zoo Lights and Christmas Nights!** 3 Palms Zoo & Education Center, 924 Blackbird Forest Rd, Clayton, DE. Fri, Dec 1 through Sat, Dec 30, recurring weekly on Fri & Sat, 6-8 pm weather permitting. Featured displays include: The Goose & the Golden Egg, Candy Land, Christmas Island, Classic Nativity, Rudolph & Friends, Partridge in a Pear Tree and the historic Josephine Fountain. Enjoy a walk through a festive woodland & see the Zoo at night. Evenings are your best opportunity to see our Owl and other nocturnal animals awake and active in their habitats. Roast marshmallows, sip hot chocolate, hark the holiday sounds, visit with Mrs. Claus and whisper your special Christmas wishes in Santa's ear. Stop by the Souvenir Stand for that perfect gift, memento or special ornament! \$5/person. All proceeds go to the care & feeding of rescued animals at 3 Palms. <http://www.visitdelaware.com/event-detail/zoo-lights-and-christmas-nights!/33349/>
- **The Nutcracker** is a perennial favorite with many families. Choose from performances by the Wilmington Ballet at the Playhouse on Rodney Square on Dec 2 & 3, <http://www.wilmingtonballet.org/about-nutcracker/>; Delaware Dance Company at U of D's Mitchell Hall on Dec 1, 2 & 3, <http://delawaredancecompany.org/performances/nutcracker/> or First State Ballet Theatre at the Grand Opera House on Dec 22 & 23, <https://www.thegrandwilmington.org/productions/115-the-nutcracker>.
- **Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory** is the Everett Theatre's 2017 holiday family performance. The Everett Theatre, 47 W. Main St., Middletown, DE 19709. Dec 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 & 10, show times and prices vary. Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka follows enigmatic candy manufacturer, Willy Wonka, as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. Whomever comes up with these tickets will win a free tour of the Wonka factory, as well as a lifetime supply of candy. Four of the five winning children are insufferable brats: the fifth is a likeable young lad named Charlie Bucket, who takes the tour in the company of his equally amiable grandfather. The children must learn to follow Mr. Wonka's rules in the factory... or suffer the consequences. <http://everetttheatre.com/event/willy-wonka-and-the-chocolate-factory/>
- **Noon Year's Eve** at the Brandywine Zoo, Brandywine Park, 101 North Park Drive, Wilmington. Sun Dec 31, 11 am – 12:15 pm. Celebrate Zoo-style by ringing in the New Year at NOON! Enjoy games, crafts, a celebratory atmosphere and a sparkling cider toast as the clock strikes 12 Noon. Program takes place in the zoo so dress for the weather! Guest passes will not be accepted. Members Free & Non-members \$5/3 years and older. 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 Sloth 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,

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Owner/Director

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TechStars by Computer Explorers of New Castle County



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