

## Fernbank LINKS Offers Exciting STEM Programs for Students



Fernbank LINKS offers middle and high school students a STEM organization based program at Fernbank Science Center. The program is devoted to building robots, developing minds and changing lives. The Fernbank LINKS team is made up of students from 22 different schools in the Atlanta area including public, private and home schools.

Fernbank LINKS is designed to inspire a passion for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in students, with a focus on introducing children and young adults to the possibilities and rewards of the STEM fields through education and hands-on experience, leadership skills and the technical knowledge necessary to pursue careers in these fields and succeed in a global community.

Fernbank LINKS programs include Science Night Out, which offers hands-on STEM activities led by Fernbank scientists, LINKS Robotics high school students, and mentors of the LINKS Robotics team.

The Fernbank Robotics Competition Team 4468 has competed in the FIRST Robotics Competition since 2013. The competition challenges student with strict guidelines with the guidance of volunteer mentors to build and program robots to perform challenging tasks against a field of competitors. Teams must raise funds, design a team brand and perform community outreach. Fernbank Robotics participants are eligible to apply for over \$25 million in college Scholarships.

Since 2004, Fernbank's Georgia BEST Team 97 has competed in Georgia BEST, another competition to challenge mastery in technology and design. The teams are to fill a plywood box with miscellaneous items and a BRAIN (BEST Robotics Advanced Instruction Node programmable platform) to build and design a functioning machine able to perform specific tasks in a six week time frame.

To sign up for the 2017 Season of Science Night Out and find out more visit: [fernbanklinks.com](http://fernbanklinks.com).

## DeKalb Libraries to Extend Operating Hours in 2017

DeKalb County Public Library will be adding more than 100 additional operating hours each week at 17 branches beginning Jan. 3, 2017. Weekend and evening hours cut at many branches due to budget shortfalls in 2011 will be restored thanks to additional funding received from the County. In a news release, Director Alison Weissinger said the Library has been able to hire enough staff to restore 111 operating hours per week to the system because of the additional funds.

Branches with new extended operating hours include Brookhaven, Embry Hills, Clarkston, Covington, Dunwoody, Northlake-Barbara Loar, Stone Mountain-Sue Kellogg, Toco Hill-Avis G. Williams and Tucker Reid H. Cofer.

"We want to thank DeKalb County Interim CEO Lee May and the Board of Commissioners for approving this increase in the Library's budget," Weissinger said in the release. "We look forward to working with the county toward the time when all the hours cut in 2011 can be restored. This is a wonderful beginning."

For more information visit: [dekalblibrary.org](http://dekalblibrary.org).

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## An Acoustic Evening with MATISYAHU

No one can perform raps about traditional Judaism over reggae beats like Matisyahu. In fact, we're pretty sure he is the only musician to have this interesting, but intriguing, musical style.

The famous Jewish American reggae vocalist will be in Atlanta January 7-8. On Saturday, January 7 he will perform at the Marcus Jewish Community Center and at the City Winery on Sunday, January 8.

Seeing Matisyahu perform will challenge your idea of religious music. When Matisyahu first got his start, he dressed like a Hasidic Jew with a black suit, broad-brimmed black hat and a full, untrimmed beard. Yet when he opened his mouth, out came reggae beats and rapping. It may have seemed like a joke at first, but Matisyahu soon gathered a broad audience as well as Grammy nominations and gold record certifications.

From 2005 to 2015, Matisyahu's artistic and personal transformation has been nothing less than epic. He's survived the backlash from the die-hard reggae set, as well as those who saw him only as a "bearded Jewish icon." In 2014, Matisyahu released *Akeda*, his most creative, "self-reflective and purely conceived album" to date. Don't miss this up close and personal evening with the "Hasidic Reggae Superstar".

MJCCA tickets available at online box office at [www.atlantajcc.org](http://www.atlantajcc.org).

Tickets for the performance at City Winery are available on their website [www.citywinery.com/atlanta/](http://www.citywinery.com/atlanta/).

Ideal for all ages.

PRICE: \$45 - \$100, \$1.25 service fee per ticket