

## New Years Eve fest geared toward families

### Nels brings families together

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FOR THE NORTH COUNTY TIMES

At most kids' concerts there's an area up in front that's cleared away for kids while adults tend to be pushed to the back. But not at a Nels concert.

Nels, who uses only his first name professionally, wants families to stick together when he performs.

"There's a strengthening of the bond when parents and children share their love of music," said Nels, whose music is tailored for the 2 to 10 years old set. "That's why they should sit together."

Nels certainly knows about that bond. This Encinitas resident began his career as a children's performer after his second child was born. That daughter is now 15, but his career has continued to skyrocket over the years, with regular tours around the country and several recordings available.

Even when he plays without his band, the Peanut Butter Cookies Band, Nels is able to reach children in a way that has them clapping and singing along. He believes encouraging that kind of participation is the key to reaching his audience.

"Children aren't good at sitting and watching like adults do," he said. "They want to be involved. You need to provide things for them to do to keep their focus."

A former teacher, Nels also writes songs about everyday items and activities that kids love.

"They like songs that speak to them about their lives," said Nels, who has songs about sandwiches and pointing, for example. "That's the trick that many adults don't catch. I guess I have the knack."

But most importantly, he loves to celebrate the parent-child relationship.

"It's a magical thing," Nels said. "I want to celebrate that love and that bond."

#### ■ NELS & PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES

#### BAND

**When:** 6 and 9 p.m.

**Where:** Grand and Kalmia Children's stage



Nels performs songs for kids.