**Kathryn Brennan receives 2010 Studenski Award**

_by Douglas Smith, Studenski Committee Chair_

Kathryn Brennan ’12 will be working in Malawi this summer as the recipient of the 2010 Studenski Award. The award, given annually in memory of Caltech undergrad Paul Studenski, is intended to help a student at a crossroads in life explore his or her options during some time away from Caltech. In Kathryn’s case, it’s a choice between mechanical engineering and medicine — both in the context of a Third-World economy.

In a novel twist, Kathryn will be working for Mark Manary, M.D., the father of fellow Darb Micah Manary ’11. Dr. Manary, a professor of pediatrics at the school of medicine at Washington University in St. Louis and an expert on childhood malnutrition, is the founder of Project Peanut Butter, headquartered in Blantyre, Malawi. Malawi is among the poorest nations on Earth and, in 1999, Dr. Manary began spending the summers there to try to develop an energy dense, storable nutritional supplement that didn’t need to be cooked and could be given in small amounts to severely malnourished children. As might be surmised from the group’s name, this miracle substance proved to be heavily fortified peanut butter — “chiponde” in Chichewa, one of Malawi’s two official languages. Of course, this being an officially sanctioned Non-Governmental Organization, or NGO, the stuff is officially known as a Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food, or RUTF. Project Peanut Butter now manufactures over 1,000 tons of chiponde a year, buying as many ingredients as possible from local farmers and distributing it through networks of clinics.

Kathryn will be helping distribute the food at the clinics and monitoring the children’s weight gain, and will also be looking at the country’s infrastructure with an eye toward what a mechanical engineer could be doing to improve the lot of people living in such poverty.

Currently enrolled in the premed program while majoring in mechanical engineering, she hopes that this experience will help her decide between the two, while at the same time discovering whether she’s cut out for life in the Third World.

Paul Studenski (BS, MS ’72 EE) was killed in an automobile crash in Kansas in the summer of 1973, en route to graduate school at Cornell after having taken a year off to travel through Europe and the United States while figuring out the future course of his life. The Studenski Fund was endowed by his parents, Jeanette and Eugene — both of whom, incidentally, were MDs.

**Winter Friends Dinner features stimulating presentations**

_By Christina Weng ’11, Y ExComm [photos by DK Lim]_

The Winter Friends Dinner on March 4 featured both a report on the Caltech Y RISE tutoring program and a talk by Professor Harry Gray regarding his work on solar energy.

The RISE program matches at-risk middle and high school students from the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) with Caltech undergraduates and graduates. David Doll and Faith Shuker-Haines are two RISE tutors who talked about the rewards of their work. They have found many of the PUSD students have been stimulated to take initiative in their courses and actively pursue higher understanding.

Thanks to the RISE program, the majority of enrolled students, who were originally at risk of not graduating from high school, have moved on to pursue college degrees.
Winter Friends Dinner (continued)

Professor Gray, introduced by his advisee Debbie Tseng ‘11, brought two of his students to talk about their research in the “Gray Lab” – undergraduate Carolyn Valdez and her mentor, graduate student Jillian Dempsey. Professor Gray envisions one day installing solar tiles onto wasted roof-space such as parking garages – covering the LAX airport parking garages with solar panels could generate as much power as a nuclear plant.

Solar energy appears to be a promising source of alternative fuel, but there are still many problems left. Professor Gray has assembled an expansive international “Solar Army” that incorporates participants all the way from leading researchers at international universities to local high school students, all actively engaged in the effort of finding a sustainable and cost-efficient means to harness the sun’s power. Professor Gray hopes to bring the brightest minds of our time into science, and his incredible support of student researchers in our own community reflects his genuine care for students.

Winter Decompression highlights Winter Olympics

By Michelle Jiang ’13, Y ExComm
[photos by Debbie Tseng]

With the Winter Olympics in full swing in Vancouver, BC, the Y ExComm brought the festivities to the Caltech campus for a night on March 13.

Hosting Decompression yet again, we had a wonderful turnout of volunteers and were able to finish set-up well ahead of schedule. It was a night of exciting finishes as undergrads and grads flocked in to watch events such as figure skating, snowboarding and men’s hockey. There was more than enough food to go around and we even had green St. Patrick’s Day bagels to boot!

All in all, it was a relaxing night for the Caltech students who came, and another successful Decompression by the Y ExComm.
**Recent Events (continued)**

**Alternate Spring Break (ASB)**

This year, the Caltech Y conducted its ASB adventures at two California venues:

**Wildlife Waystation**  
by Christina Weng ’11, Y ExComm

From March 19-21, a group of nine students went on the ASB trip to Wildlife Waystation in the LA National Forest, led by Alycen Chan and Christina Weng.

Wildlife Waystation was founded over 30 years ago as a refuge for wild and exotic animals. These animals come to the Waystation from a variety of backgrounds all over the world, and the Waystation functions as a 24/7 facility that puts the animals first. Wildlife Waystation is the first wildlife refuge in the nation. It spans 160 acres and is almost entirely volunteer-run, which is an incredible feat. These volunteers devote their lives to helping abandoned and injured wildlife and, until a few years ago, many lived on site in trailers in order to be closer to the animals. The dedication and passion of the volunteers was humbling, and it was a wonderful experience to work with them during our stay. Several of the students on the trip have expressed the desire to go back and become volunteers, and we are working on arranging transportation for the interested group.

On the first day, we were given a tour of the facility and saw tigers, mountain lions, chimps, and a very grumpy brown bear, just to name a few. We met one beautiful white tiger who had a debilitating condition known as “floppy feet,” which results from declawing of big cats. She limped slowly up to the front of the cage when we approached and began rubbing her cheeks against the bars, purring. Sadly, many wild animals undergo mutilating procedures every year for use in the entertainment industry, or simply because individuals wish to have an exotic pet.

Our job was to begin the renovation of the Arena, a huge dome-like structure made of metallic bars, not unlike the jungle gyms from elementary school. The Arena was originally created as a set piece in the 1982 movie “White Dog,” and today it is used as an area in which the big cats can play and exercise. Over the course of three days, we worked on the bottom two tiers and lower roof of the dome. We sanded the rusting bars and repainted them black. Several of us also got plenty of exercise climbing up and down the structure so that we could work on the lower roof! The Arena was conveniently located in full view of many animals. As I painted the bars of the lower roof, I watched a lion yawning 30 feet away, listened to monkeys chattering from the other direction, and coaxed a peacock strutting around the trees a few paces away to open its tail feathers (which it eventually did!).

I left Wildlife Waystation with a great sense of respect in the face of these sad and beautiful animals who have finally found a haven. We’ve all heard people say things like “monkeys are so much like people!” or “tigers are magnificent creatures.” To be honest, I never fully registered those statements until my experience this spring break. It is a truly humbling experience to look into the great unblinking eyes of a tiger as he stares back unflinchingly from a few feet away. The monkeys in the enclosure would flock to the bars as people approached, grasping the cage bars and chattering loudly at us. There is an incredible sense of purpose and mischiefness in these primates, and they have a propensity for spitting water at people for comedic effect. As we left the Waystation for the last time, one monkey came to the cage corner and sat down calmly, watching us. The monkey’s eyes never left me as I walked down the dusty path and, just before we rounded the bend, I could not resist turning back and giving him a wave goodbye.

![The Wildlife Waystation group](photo by Christina Weng)
Alternate Spring Break (continued)

Yosemite
by Xida Zheng ’12, ExComm
[photos by DK Lim]
This year, we spent five days (March 22-26) at Yosemite for Alternate Spring Break. Yosemite National Park is one of the oldest and most well known in America.
We had a great group, with people from all the houses and classes. The nineteen of us helped the park build ADA accessible picnic benches, clean out their warehouse, and design better ways for storing their equipment. After work, we were free to explore the natural wonder of Yosemite's mountains and waterfalls. One day, we hiked up to Vernal Fall. Another day, we saw Yosemite and Bridalveil Fall, and the final day we took a hike through the snow in Tuolumne Grove. At night, we looked up at the stars, watched TV, and enjoyed exciting games of Apples to Apples and Taboo. All in all, I think we accomplished what we set out to do: spend a little time helping out and enjoying some spectacular views away from the convenience of cell phone reception.

Meet the ExComm
Each month the Caltech Y News interviews a member of the Y Student Executive Committee (ExComm)

Sunny Chun ‘10
by Kevin Nguyen, Student Activities Coordinator
Sunny Chun is a senior Chemistry major who lives in Blacker house. She is originally from New York City, NY. Her parents moved to San Diego a few years ago and she decided to apply to Caltech. We have been very fortunate for her decision! She has been involved with the Caltech Y for four years, serving as the ExComm Vice President and now is the main coordinator for MAD Day this month.
Sunny was exposed to the Caltech Y when she was a freshman and participated in the orientation service trip. She also met a senior her freshman year who encouraged her to volunteer and be involved with the ExComm. Sunny has a strong passion for political issues and news whether it be foreign, domestic, social, health, etc. When asked what she enjoys most about the Y, she found that the most useful and enriching experiences she had were the SASS talks and the Alternative Spring Break programs.
Greetings from an Ex ExCommer

Voices of the Y Board

Sunny Chun (continued)

She took part in the Mexico Trip a couple years back and reflects the enthusiasm and camaraderie that she felt. She liked seeing other Caltech people outside of the academic environment and involving themselves in service and social justice.

Before Sunny is done with her undergraduate career, she is in anticipation of MAD Day and seeing her efforts in motion. She will be graduating soon and is looking forward to seeing the other classes becoming more involved with the Caltech Y. She is currently applying for some research positions in Los Angeles and Boston. Her other goals are to run a half marathon, playing the piano again, and pursuing drawing.

Marcus Sarofim, MS ’00

I have fond memories of the Caltech Y – helping out with Decompression, leading trail-maintenance trips up into the mountains, monthly trips taking giant dining hall trays worth of food to Union Station and, in general, lots of good times. I always looked forward to ExComm meetings and Y social events – BBQs with grilled corn on the cob were often a favorite.

As a graduate student, it was a neat peek into undergraduate life – several Y members were from Blacker House and occasionally invited me to ballroom dances and once even pulled me in to help build a back-up Ditch Day stack (it was a Tower of Hanoi puzzle – only the Towers were 10 foot tall poles and the disks were giant wheels of concrete). It was also a good way to remember that there was more to life than my chemistry experiments.

Since graduating from Caltech, I’ve wandered through Salt Lake City and Boston (where I got my PhD from the Caltech of the East) to end up in Washington DC, where I currently am in the second year of a AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship placed in the Climate Change Division at the EPA. It has been a great experience – I still get to think and talk about the science that I love, but it is much closer to the environmental policy applications that give me job satisfaction.

I have really enjoyed being a stop on the Caltech Y DC Science Policy Trips the last two years – it has been great to see Athena and the current crops of Caltech Y members. Alas, I don’t see many other Caltech Y alumni – except, occasionally, for Donna Ebenstein ’96, who was profiled in a recent newsletter (both the newsletter and the DC Science Policy Trips are great additions to the Y stable, in my opinion). I’m glad to see that the Caltech Y is still going strong, and I look forward to visiting and seeing how things have changed the next time I’m in Pasadena.

John and Barbara Gee

The Friends of the Caltech Y came into existence in 1966 to replace some of the support that had previously come from the YMCA. By attending Friends Dinners and other activities, Friends have the opportunity to meet students and hear about their activities on campus and with the Y. Numerous Friends have served on the Y Board and its committees. The strong support of the Caltech Y by the Friends for over 40 years thru their contributions, both in financial terms and in voluntary activities, have benefitted the students, Caltech and the Pasadena community.

Now entering its 93rd year and looking forward in a few years to its 100th anniversary, the Y’s mission has been and continues to be the enrichment of student life at Caltech and to challenge students to become responsible citizens. Though many programs are repeated each year with variations, the students originate new programs and at times revive older programs that have been inactive. The Y staff and student leaders work closely together to make programs and events challenging, interesting and fun. The new quarters for the Caltech Y have been helpful to expand student use and participation.
John and Barbara Gee (continued)

The Y has expanded its programs and activities in recent years with more student participation. This is especially notable for mentoring students from Pasadena schools and Make-A-Difference Day (MAD Day). Each year in April, MAD Day attracts 100 or more students to work in small groups to help individuals at numerous locations to youths at Hillside, to help elderly clean up around their homes, locations and to assist in numerous other community service activities.

With the coming of the recession, the Y Student Executive Committee recognized the need to examine their programs and events, and applied good judgment in cutting back while maintaining the most important activities. Today, the Caltech Y is in an excellent position to continue its good work and to plan for an expansion of programs and events of interest to the students. Over the next few years, the Caltech Y will be making a major effort to increase its endowment. This will be necessary to provide for expansion.

What have Barbara and I enjoyed most about the Y?

Helping on MAD Day by providing transportation to work locations, and Barbara baking coffee cakes and dessert cookies for students at the start and at the end of MAD Day.

Getting to know the students from board and committee meetings.

Seeing some of the students – present and past – at the annual brunch on the Sunday after Alumni Seminar Day, and hearing of their plans after graduation or what they have been doing since leaving Caltech.

Seeing the students work on their plans for Caltech Y events and how they grow toward becoming young citizens wanting to make a difference.

Serving on the Y Board has been a wonderful experience for Barbara and me. Part of this is working with students, staff and other board members. The other part is hopefully helping all of us working together to assist the Caltech Y and the students to “Make A Difference.”

Coming Events (April)

Spring Fever
by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

As Spring Term begins, the Y ExComm, Y-Outdoors, Community Service Coordinators, and Social Activism Speaker Series Committee are still working feverishly to make sure that April showers campus with more exciting programs. Coming soon:

Make-A-Difference Day (Apr 10) – The Caltech Y is proud to announce Make-A-Difference Day on Saturday, April 10. All members of the Caltech community are invited to participate in one of a variety of community service projects. Each project is led by a student and will be 3½ to 7 hours, including travel, depending on the project. Meals, transportation, and t-shirts are provided, and the event will conclude with a barbecue between 4-6 PM at the Caltech Y. We are hoping for around 200 students to be out volunteering in the community.

Pre-Frosh Weekend (Apr 15-17) – The Caltech Y ExComm will be gathering the Pre-Frosh for the annual Pre-Frosh Movie – this year again showing one of the episodes of “Curious,” a documentary that introduces some of Caltech’s exciting research to the world. Following the documentary, a question and answer period is scheduled with one of the featured professors. Of course, the event is also designed to introduce Pre-Frosh to the Y, and an ice cream social will help facilitate some interaction with current ExComm members.

Social Activism Speaker Series (Apr 20) – SASS will continue with a talk in Beckman Institute Auditorium on Tuesday, April 20, by Kalayaan Mendoza, a field organizer with Amnesty International. He will be speaking on the use of social networking sites and the use of other new technologies in today’s advocacy and activism efforts.

WorldFest (Apr 19-23) – WorldFest features a week of talks by students focusing on some of the countries of the world represented at Caltech and, of course, the annual International Food Fair and Culture Show on Friday, April 23, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM. Over 15 student clubs will be represented sharing samples of the food, culture and talent of their home countries.

Y Outdoors – The Y-Outdoors Committee is also planning some exciting events as well. A Day Hike to Sturdevant Falls and a Full Moon Hike are currently on the list of upcoming trips.

Adventure 101 – As a part of the ongoing Adventure 101 Lunch Series, a video, set in magnificent Denali and showing the effects of altitude, will be shown.

Life Skills (Apr 7) – A Life Skills Series Luncheon is bringing the Caltech Y’s own accountant to campus to meet with students and talk with them about taxes – the when and how of it all. College is often a time when students begin to file taxes on their own, but many have questions that will be answered in our quick overview.

Of course, there will be all the ongoing community service projects and RISE tutoring, as well, when the students have time.
## Calendar of Upcoming Events

*Note: See [Caltech Y website](http://www.caltech.edu) for Jan 2010, additional information and schedule updates*

### April 2010

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## The Caltech Y

The Caltech Y is an independent 501c3 organization formally affiliated with the California Institute of Technology. The Y mission is to enrich student life and challenge students to grow into responsible citizens of the world.

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### Y Staff

- **Athena Castro** - Executive Director  
- **Alycen Chan** – Outreach Program Director  
- **Greg Fletcher** - Student Activities & Community Service Director  
- **Kevin Nguyen** - Student Activities Coordinator  
- **Christopher Kealey** - Marketing & Development Director  
- **Carmelita Hearn** - Administrative Assistant

### Board of Directors

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- **Susan Murakami** - Chair  
- **Peter Mason** - Treasurer  
- **Christina Weng** - Student ExComm President  
- **Frank Dryden** - Vice Chair  
- **Connie Kofahl** - Secretary

#### Members (* indicates Student Executive Committee)

- **Sara Ahmed**  
  - Lee Fisher  
  - Gretchen Leonard  
  - Robert Nathan  
  - Fred Shair  
  - Debbie Tseng*
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  - Samantha Foster  
  - Tony Leonard  
  - Robert Perpall  
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