Announcements

Caltech Y Board Retreat

Y Board report
by Carolyn Ash, Board Chair

Almost 50 members of the Caltech Y Board met for our annual day-long retreat on November 9. The agenda included an interesting and informative report from Molly Jones (former Y staff member, now at Princeton with her husband, Bill [PhD ‘05], and daughter McKinsey). Over the summer, Molly interviewed more than 40 people to identify the Y’s strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the future. She analyzed responses and made several recommendations that will guide the future of the Y and the Board. Small groups of members forged action plans in several areas to follow up the report recommendations and created an impressive agenda for this year.

Molly Jones at the podium

ExComm members Ilia Shadrin, Abdul Ahad, and Leon Liu testified to the great value they place on their Y experiences as they reported on the year’s plans for programs and events. Board members felt great pride in their investment of time, effort, and money in helping the Y provide such rich experiences for our students.

The Board enthusiastically endorsed holding the second annual golf tournament next fall. (Save the date – Saturday, October 9, 2009!) It will be another fun day on the links made even more competitive and interesting with prizes and contests. Following golf, the evening will bring a reception, dinner, and auctions for golfers and non-golfers alike. Plan now! This event is a great way to introduce new friends and help raise funds for the Y!

The economic downturn has affected the Caltech Y, as it has all other organizations and, now more than ever, we need your support. Please consider a gift to the Caltech Y to ensure that our students will continue to have the remarkable opportunities the Y affords to help them grow into well-rounded citizens of the world.

Y ExComm report
by Ilia Shadrin, ExComm President

On the morning of November 9, student Y ExComm representatives gathered with the rest of the Y Board members to hear and discuss an Endowment Campaign Feasibility Report presented by Molly Jones. With an overview of the summer-long feasibility study, Molly summarized her impressive 54-page report and provided recommendations for the Y. In the discussion that followed, there was some concern over the large number of long-distance Y trips, such as those to Guatemala, Washington DC, and New Orleans, etc. However, as a representative voice for the Y ExComm, Ilia explained that these are the trips students enjoy the most. Despite the rising costs of travel and lodging, trips that take students far from the Caltech campus allow them to experience a type of culture and volunteer work that is not available in the Caltech community. Students typically return from the trips with the satisfaction of having helped an outside community, in the meantime learning about novel traditions and policies that truly make them responsible citizens of the world.

The Y ExComm representatives discussed these and other issues with fellow Board members during the lunch that followed the presentation. After lunch, everyone broke out into group sessions to brainstorm the ways of materializing Molly's four recommendations for the Y's Endowment Campaign. With heavy student input regarding the Y's mission of becoming more proactive in its Caltech relations, the ExComm considered ways of increasing faculty, graduate and undergraduate student involvement in the Y's programs. Following an early evening wrap-up and a course of hors d'oeuvres, a very informative and productive Board Retreat drew to a close.

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**Announcements (continued)**

**In memory of Professor George Housner**

by Nancy Lan, Y Board
With great sadness, I would like to inform you that Professor Emeritus George Housner passed away peacefully at his Villa Gardens Apartment on November 10. Dr. Housner was a generous supporter of the Y. In addition to his Y endowment in 2007, that has been used to fund the Life Skills Series and ACT (Advocating Change Through service) Fellowships, Dr. Housner’s Student Discovery Fund endowment to the Dean’s office has also partially supported other Y programs including the Washington DC and Guatemala trips.

![ACT recipient Joey Koehler with a low cost wheelchair product](image)

Dr. Housner was a great man. Below are links to two articles on his scientific achievements that appeared recently in the Los Angeles Times and Wall Street Journal, respectively. He was also a connoisseur and collector of Asian Arts and rare books as well as an enthusiast of chamber music. He will be deeply missed.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122731402392049703.html

by Athena Castro, Y Executive Director

The Caltech Y has benefitted greatly from the generosity of Dr. Housner, who leaves behind a great legacy. Dr. Housner has positively impacted student life at Caltech in so many ways, and, as noted above, his gift to the Y endowment allowed the ExComm to dream a little and create new student programs or expand current ones. Friends of Dr. Housner are invited to support these programs by giving to the Caltech Y in his memory. Contributions can be designated to the Caltech Y George Housner Endowment or to the Y annual fund.

Most recently, the Y was honored to receive some items from the Housner estate, which have now improved the Y offices and meeting rooms. We will remember Dr. Housner with great fondness and much appreciation, surrounded by some of the furniture from his estate and as students continue to benefit from his generous gift to the Y endowment as well as those to the Institute.

**Supporting the Y**

by Athena Castro, Y Executive Director

In my mind and I’m sure in many others, Thanksgiving heralds the beginning of celebrations, among them family and the holidays. As you approach your celebrations and as we look forward to a new year, we at the Caltech Y want to send you our best wishes.

In addition, we understand that, with the current state of the economy, many of us are personally impacted. The Caltech Y is no exception, and individual giving now takes on a greater significance. We are doing what we can to reduce costs without sacrificing what is at the heart of our mission, student programs.

The ExComm has evaluated the slate of programs for the year and instituted several cost cutting measures while still maintaining core programs. In addition, some board members have volunteered to take on a few additional tasks such as providing transportation for local programs, stuffing envelopes for mailings and even such mundane tasks as washing sleeping bag liners.

While all of this helps to relieve the Y budget, we still rely on individual donations to help us continue to provide programs that not only enrich student life, but stretch student limits and challenge them to grow into responsible citizens of the world.

As we end the year, please remember the Caltech Y in your year-end giving.

Below are some wonderful ideas for supporting the Y. All gifts in any amount make a difference and help us continue the programs that enhance the student experience at Caltech and serve the community.

**Great tips for Y giving**

by Christopher Kealey, Y Marketing & Development Director

Here is important news for anyone supporting the Y.

**Tax-free rollovers from IRAs.** The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, signed into law on October 3, renews a temporary provision that allows donors, age 70 or older, to make a direct, tax-free rollover of up to $100,000 from a traditional or Roth
Supporting the Y (continued)

IRA to a qualified charitable organization such as Caltech Y – but only in 2008 or 2009. A direct rollover will be much better for most donors than a taxable IRA withdrawal followed by a charitable gift. The many tax benefits associated with this giving opportunity are detailed at:
http://www.caltechy.org/support/planned_giving/IRA_rollover

On-line transactions. We also have a new feature on the Caltech Y website we want to share with you. It has taken us a while to prepare, and you would think in this day and age it’s not a big deal, but we can now accept credit card transactions on-line. We are starting with donations, which can be made at:
http://www.caltechy.org/support

We will follow with on-line registration for the upcoming Friends Dinner on February 19, which can be made at: http://www.caltechy.org/support/events

Safety and privacy are a major concern for us when it comes to on-line transactions. You will notice when you make your donation on-line that you move to a secure site hosted by Authorize.net. This measure gives our donors peace of mind knowing their card numbers are safe. Many of you send your donations in the traditional manner by mailing your checks. Now you can use our easy new service and save your stamp for something else. Give it a try!

Search for the Y. What if the Caltech Y earned a penny every time you searched the Internet?

Well, we have been doing just that with everyone who uses the GoodSearch web site. As a matter of fact, we earned $103 since we signed up in 2007. That’s free money with endless possibilities over time.

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it’s powered by Yahoo! – So you get great results. Just go to:
http://www.goodsearch.com

and be sure to enter Caltech Y as the charity you want to support. Just 200 of us searching twice a day will raise about $1500 in a year without anyone spending a dime! Be sure to spread the word!

Recent Events (Nov)

Caltech Y-Outdoors

A great Grand Canyon Hiking and Camping trip

By Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

Looking for a great way to kick off the year, 46 graduate and undergraduate students joined us on a weekend trip to Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona the weekend of November 7-9. For some it was a first camping and hiking experience, and for most it was a first time to the Grand Canyon. The deep canyon and fall colors make Grand Canyon one of the most spectacular natural places in the world at this time of year.

After a night of camping, the group divided into three teams to head into the Canyon for a day of hiking. Most traveled down the Bright Angel Trail, one of the most famous in the Grand Canyon. One of the challenges of hiking in the Grand Canyon is that you descend first – so many are caught by surprise when they turn around to ascend out of the valley. The leaders of the trip warned the participants to be prepared for this, and our group chose a variety of turn around options – depending on the difficulty level they wanted. Most continued on to Indian Garden, a well know landmark, before returning to the rim. A second group chose a loop, descending on the South Kaibob Trail before crossing over to meet the other group and ascending on the Bright Angel Trail. The last group of hearty adventurers went all the way to the Colorado River and back – a major hike for a single day.

Regardless of the trail chosen or the distance covered, all participants enjoyed a hearty dinner and evening of camping that night before loading back on the bus to return to Pasadena. Temperatures were cool at night to say the least – even dipping into the 20’s – but all stayed warm in their tents (some with a second sleeping bag). With two nights of camping and plenty of hiking available the trip was a great get away.
**Recent Events (continued)**

**Social Activism Speaker Series (SASS) events**

**Sam Childers**  
*“Angels of East Africa Children’s Village”*  
by Peter Liu ’09, ExComm

On November 5, the ExComm, in conjunction with SASS, welcomed Sam Childers, president and CEO of *Angels of East Africa*. Childers founded the Angels of East Africa orphanage over ten years ago in the middle of a conflict zone in Sudan to protect the children caught in the crossfire of the civil war with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Since the start of the orphanage, Childers has developed and maintained the only non-profit organization situated in the middle of a war zone. At the same time, Childers is also the only American to serve in the Sudanese army. As a colonel, he commands over 40 soldiers to resist the LRA and effectively guard his orphanage. His orphanage has never been destroyed and he has not lost a single soldier.

Childers is currently on tour with a bike made by West Coast Chopper Jesse James, raising awareness and donations for the orphanage. The bike, with a myriad of celebrity signatures is valued around $300,000. Childers brought this bike on display during the lunch hour on the 5th outside Chandler Hall, and he stayed for a short talk and extended Q&A with over 30 people. He shared his story, some of his experiences in Sudan and, most importantly, he shared his passion for children and social justice.

**Morgan Simon**  
*“Responsible Endowments”*  
by Ilia Shadrin ’09, ExComm

Morgan Simon, the co-founder and executive director of the Responsible Endowments Coalition, a non-profit organization that supports over 70 colleges and universities managing $150 billion across the country in implementing responsible investment policies spoke at Caltech on November 18, as part of the Social Activism Speaker Series. As an undergraduate at Swarthmore College, Morgan led the filing of the first student-led shareholder resolution since the apartheid era, successfully convincing Lockheed Martin to add sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy and give domestic partner benefits – so she had some fascinating stories to tell. She also has led trainings on responsible investment for hundreds of students across the country, in addition to working regularly with administrators and trustees. Morgan challenged students to become more aware of how Caltech is investing money on their behalf and strategized ways for them to become involved in the process. The audience was very engaged and Morgan stayed for almost an hour following her talk in dialogue with students there.

**Andy Bales**  
*“Not in My Back Yard”*  
by Sunny Chun ’10, ExComm

The third SASS event of the month featured Andy Bales, CEO of Union Rescue Mission, skidrow. It was held in conjunction with *Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week* in Beckman Institute Auditorium on Monday evening, November 24. The event was attended by about 30-40 members of the Caltech community interested to hear about the work and goals of Andy Bales. However, due to a cold, Mr. Bales was unable to give his speech and, instead, showed a documentary film about the organization's over a decade long struggle to establish a transitional housing environment, Hope Gardens, at an abandoned elderly housing project in an isolated area in the foothills.

The film explained the mission of the nonprofit organization Union Rescue Mission – headquartered in our own backyard, the skidrow area of Los Angeles – to protect women and children from life on the streets and equip them with life skills to obtain permanent housing. They especially support women to pursue or continue secondary education up to masters programs in teaching and other fields to secure their futures with their families. The struggle covered in the documentary was between the neighbors in the foothills and the Union Rescue Mission, which turned tides in favor of the Rescue Mission after many years with the support of prominent religious and social activists and the local elementary school, that was more than willing to accept children at the Mission as students. Eventually they won in a complicated legal process and moved about 26 families and many elderly women to Hope Gardens.

The film also explained away many myths about homelessness, such as the idea that homeless people do not want to live in a house or that they are incapable of being normal, that even low-income families have about homeless people, and explained the growing problem of homelessness in Los Angeles. It directly addressed the prevalence of NIMBYism (the "Not In My Back Yard" mindset) in all populations towards bringing transitional housing establishments into communities.

The film was followed be a Q&A session with Andy Bales and all those who attended the event. Currently, because of the instability of the economy, the Union Rescue Mission is experiencing an overflow of transitional families and two-parent families at their skidrow site. The organization itself is in great need of financial assistance, but they continue to operate because there are many people who depend on its assistance. They encourage more volunteers, students or others, to visit either their skidrow site or Hope Gardens to play with or tutor the children, or help out with other activities.
Recent Events (continued)

Fall PALAC event promotes lively discussion

by Leon Liu ’10, Y ExComm

On Monday, November 10, at the Caltech Y, around fifteen members of Caltech and the community participated in a PALAC discussion group, with ExComm member Leon Liu. The topic was Professor Nathan S. Lewis’s article/speech, “Powering the Planet,” which covers future sources of energy (such as wind, coal, solar, etc.) along with associated problems (such as global warming, oil reserves, venture capital for new technology, etc.).

The session started with a brief introduction of each participant. The session then progressed with a combination of a brief summary of the facts and ideas presented by Leon for each section of the paper and a lively discussion and debate about the article’s ideas and questions prepared and raised by Leon. As the participants had read the article beforehand, only points in the article that were unclear or not well understood were examined and explained in detail. And, overall, emphasis was not placed on lecturing of the article, but rather on the expression of each participant’s own opinions and ideas toward the article’s content and the broader issues of energy and climate that it pertains to. The article served as a vehicle for the discussion and the raising of the participants’ own awareness of the bigger issues, which is among the main goals of the discussion group. Many participants were very active in the discussion, and most enjoyed it in the end and hopefully felt that they have become more aware of the issues after the session.

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The PALAC Series Discussion Group events provide for members of the Pasadena area Liberal Arts Center (PALAC) to participate in discussions of selected technical topics led by Caltech students.

Explore LA visits the Zoo

by Elaine To ’10

It was a cold November morning, with twelve Caltech students gathering outside the Y office at the ungodly hour of 9 AM. They were chatting happily, awaiting the signal to leave. Why would such a group of overworked, sleep-deprived students be so joyous at 9 AM on a Saturday? They were going to the Zoo!

This trip to the LA Zoo was one of many in the Y sponsored Explore LA Series, in which Caltech students get a chance to go out and enjoy themselves in Los Angeles, taking a break from sets if just for a couple hours. Driving there was ominous, as the smoke from the fires currently running rampant in LA County could be seen, a thick grey cloud on the horizon. Luckily the zoo was not closed due to air quality, and we arrived, bought our tickets, and separated to explore on our own.

Unfortunately, the Zoo’s highly anticipated Asian elephant exhibit was not yet completed, so there was a large portion of the zoo fenced off. The silverback gorilla habitat was open, however, with misters greeting visitors at the entrance. Zoo employees introduced us to each of the gorillas, including the patriarch, who was enjoying lunch right next to the enclosure wall.

Other highlights included a North American River Otter, who loved doing backflips off the wall of its pond, and a koala that reached out for a eucalyptus leaf, posing, just as we arrived. We witnessed the creation of a social structure between Komodo Dragons, an entire flock of birds taking a bath, and even some foxes which appeared to be in the wrong cages. The Laughing Kookaburra refused to laugh, but it was comical all the same.

In the end, we all had to leave and go back to our problem sets and studying. But it was certainly an exhilarating day spent discovering the wide variety of animals at the Los Angeles Zoo.

International Education Week events

by Elaine To ’10 and Sunny Chun ’10, ExComm

International Education Week, (Nov 17-21) was sponsored by the Caltech Y, the Caltech Women’s Center, and International Student Programs. A series of lunchtime talks, each with free lunch for a limited number of attendees, brought speakers from many areas to talk about diverse subjects to the students of Caltech.

Darfur Crisis. First of the speakers on Monday, Nov 17, were Gabriel Sturting and Katie Jay, from Stop GenocideNow.org, a nonprofit organization that is devoted to the cause of the refugees’ plight in the Darfur region – in a state of humanitarian emergency since 2003 – of Sudan. In addition to continuing an awareness campaign abroad on the social and political concerns in Darfur, they give financial and moral support to refugee camps in the East Chad area. Each video-recorded visit they take to the camps is posted online within 24 hours of its recording.

Most of the hour Gabriel and Katie spent with about 40 students was a viewing of their first hand experiences visiting camps, interviewing families and even an instance when they were being shot at by covert Sudanese military (Janjaweed). These video clips were interspersed with words from Gabriel and Katie giving background information on the political and social history of the Darfur region to the current positions of the UN nations and the Sudanese government.

The talk culminated with passing
around artwork of children, both from the United States and Darfur. The US children had drawn happy images such as suns, rainbows, and peace symbols. This was a great contrast to the artwork of the Darfurian children, much of which was houses on fire, soldiers with guns, and helicopters dropping bombs willy-nilly.

Gabriel and Katie expressed their concern for the people of the Darfur region with much passion and spent a good half hour afterwards to answer more questions in depth with interested students. The talk was very moving and, best of all, postcards were provided, which could be filled out and sent to the President of the US, asking him to step in and stop these crimes against humanity.

Himalayan Backpacking. Next was a Magical Mystery Tour, a talk on Himalayan backpacking and life in India given by three Caltech students, Pratayush Tiwary, Nick Stadie, and Aron Varga, who had visited just the past summer. One focus of the talk seemed to be the rickety and unsafe transportation used throughout the country, all of which was presented in a humorous manner. There was even an instance where the driver of the van fell asleep! The highlight of the talk was when the students described their time hiking in the Himalayan Mountains. There were many beautiful pictures of the natural landscape and some of the degraded hut, in which they spent some time to avoid the rain. Even the horse they hired to carry their belongings got its moment of fame in the camera.

Frosh Women’s Lunch. The Caltech Women’s Center led an event aimed at freshman women, part of their Frosh Women’s Lunch Series. This was a quiz to “Test Your Global IQ” with prizes awarded in the end.

Women’s Rights. Rounding off the week was a more informal meeting with local members of Amnesty International. They focused on the current plight of Esha Momeni, a CSUN graduate student doing research for her master’s thesis on women’s rights. She, and many of the other women’s rights activists she was working with, had been arrested and, while Esha was released on bail, she was not allowed to leave the country. The Amnesty International members also focused on letter writing as a major way to make a difference, this time writing letters directly to the political leaders of the country infringing on human rights.

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Each talk had an attendance of interested persons from Caltech—students, postdocs, professors, and more. The speakers informed audiences on world issues and brought lively discussion of non-science topics to a widely receptive audience. Look forward to future International Education Weeks to come!

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Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week campaign
by Pradeep Bugga ’09, ExComm, Elaine To ’10 and Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

This year, the Y participated in Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week and arranged an array of programs stretching from November 15 to Thanksgiving.

The week started with our monthly service project, Union Station Adopt a Meal. A small group of Caltech students making a difference in the lives of others at our local homeless shelter when they helped prepare and serve a meal to the residents there.

The week continued with a pair of enlightening seminars. First, Holly Hight, of Bread for the World and the ONE Campaign, gave a lunch talk about the challenge of raising public awareness to the hunger, poverty, and disease that we find in many parts of the world. She introduced us to the statistics of hunger, and many of the ways in which we could help. While food drives help to ameliorate the problems, they are not reaching down to the roots of hunger and solving the issue. With a new administration set to begin, it is vital that this new era of foreign assistance makes addressing hunger and poverty the cornerstone of foreign policy. She urged all in attendance to make their voices heard. Particularly emphasized was letter writing to politicians and others in positions of power in order to make our nation’s laws fair and more compassionate to people in need.

Next, in an evening talk, Andy Bales, CEO of Union Rescue Mission addressed the challenges of NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) to providing services to the homeless (see full article under SASS events, above).

During the week, The Y also collected donated food and toiletries with proceeds going to the Union Station Homeless Shelter. At the end of the week, a moderate number of canned goods, pasta, and bread among other items were collected.

The week successfully ended with our annual Thanksgiving Dinner-in-the-Park, for which we had 30 Caltech student volunteers set up and commandeer face painting, volleyball, soccer, Frisbee, and parachute game stations for the Pasadena community at Central Park. Each year thousands from the local community are served a meal for Thanksgiving in the park.

All in all, it was a well rounded campaign.
Providing healthcare to a Tanzanian tribe

By Erin Flanagan '08

With funding from the Studenski Award, I took a trip to Africa where I worked with local doctors and other American students to bring healthcare to the Maasai tribe in rural Tanzania. For two weeks we hiked to families’ homes in a remote Maasai village and surveyed their health needs, then set up free clinics with doctors from the city to provide prescriptions, referrals, and education based on our assessment of their needs. During this time, we had set up our camp outside the village, sleeping in tents and sharing a single water spigot. It was quite an adventure, and exposed me to the compassionate and sublimely fulfilling aspect of health care.

When I graduated in June, I didn’t know which career was right for me; but, now I am on my way to becoming a doctor. The Studenski Award has really changed my life!

Note: Additional photos from Erin’s trip can be seen at:
http://www.caltechy.org/program/areas/educational/studenski/index.php

Coming Events (Dec-Jan)

Product Design for the Developing World

Student Presentations

by Luz (Luzmi) Marina Delgado, Caltech Staff

This past summer, the Caltech Y collaborated with Prof. Ken Pickar to take a group of students to Guatemala (see October 2008 Newsletter). This partnership was a wonderful collaboration that resulted in a fantastic two weeks filled with cultural and service experiences for Caltech students. For Prof. Pickar’s class, this trip was an opportunity to continue to do some work for the E/ME 105 course, Product Design for a Developing World, which happened first term.

The Caltech community is invited to see the final student presentations for the course with projects ranging from producing clean water from tap, low cost refrigeration, honey separation and filtration, efficient cooking, fruit drying, next generation wheelchairs, to packs for carrying vegetables to market. These projects were generated during our trip to Guatemala this past summer, when students had the opportunity to work with and assess the needs of rural Mayans. When implemented, these cheap and efficient products are intended to create income-generating activities.

Please join us to celebrate the ingenuity and hard work of the students!

Date: Monday, December 8
Time: 1:30 to 4:30 PM
Place: Beckman Inst. Auditorium
Poster Session following the featuring demonstrations of prototypes:

Time: 4:30-6:00 PM
Refreshments will be served.

Other events for A Happy New Year!

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

With winter holidays approaching, we are reminded that the Caltech Y ExCom, Y-Outdoors, Community Service Coordinators, and Social Activism Speaker Series Committee have all put on an impressive array of events so far this year, and have just a few more before a much needed break. And, of course, a new year awaits with some exciting events on the horizon. Coming soon:

- **Y-Outdoors** (Dec 3) – Our leaders from the Y-Outdoors committee have a couple of events as they close out the year. First, an Adventure 101 lunch talk on skiing and other winter sports. *Adventure 101* keeps things close to home with a series of short workshops and presentations right on the Caltech Campus. Skill development sessions, like wilderness safety, great hikes in the local area, and planning a bike adventure, will inspire students to get into the wilderness and provide them the knowledge to start them safely on the path. They are also planning a backpacking trip to Death Valley during the latter portion of the winter break. *Y-Outdoors* programs provide Caltech students, including novices and experienced outdoor enthusiasts, an exciting opportunity to explore with guidance.

- **Decompression** (Dec 6) – as always, *Fall Decompression* will provide students a chance to relax and relieve some stress prior to finals. The grill and the volunteers will be ready to serve up the food while “Out Of Context” and episodes of *How I Met
**Coming Events** *(continued)*

*Your Mother* (this Fall’s theme) entertain. Several hundred are expected to “decompress”.

- **ExComm Leaders Retreat** (Dec 13) – With the economy struggling of late, the ExComm has been pressed into action to tighten their belts – while continuing to offer strong programs. On the annual ExComm Leaders Retreat, they will be looking for ways to stretch their dollars, cut costs, and raise revenue as they plan their events for the coming year. It will be an opportunity to explore possible programs, schedule events, and designate coordinators, start organizing major events (like Make-A-Difference Day), reflect on the past term, consider the Y mission and purpose as it relates to what they are organizing, look at current leadership structure, and hopefully have a little fun as well.

- **Explore LA** (Dec 13) – The Explore LA Series encourages students to join the Caltech Y on an adventure each month – from the mountains to the ocean – exploring museums, shows, cultural experiences, sporting events, outdoor adventures, and more. December will feature an encore of last year’s trip to The Nutcracker at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium.

- **DC Policy Trip** (Dec 15-18) – As students begin their winter break, a group of 25 students and staff will be crossing the country to the nation’s capital in order to participate in the Caltech Y DC Policy Trip. In addition to great excursions to the Smithsonian, the National Archives, Capitol Building and, of course, the memorials on the mall, our group will be taking time to dialogue with those who have played a role in setting science policy, national policy, and international relations policy for the U.S., including science policy advisors, lobbyists, politicians, and scientists, to learn more about the complex ways policies are developed and implemented.

- **SASS** (Jan 15) – To start out the 2009 year, the Social Activism Speaker Series will feature Jim Fruchterman, a technology entrepreneur and former rocket scientist who founded Benetech, where they believe the most powerful force on earth is the human mind, and where they are combining that power with a deep passion for social improvement. The goal is simple: to create new technology solutions that serve humanity and empower people to improve their lives – day by day, helping build a better, safer world. As with all SASS events, it will focus attention on current social and political issues giving students the opportunity to explore how they might shape the world.

- **MLK Week** (Jan 19-24) – The Cultural Programming Group, on which the Y is represented, will be starting the year with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Week. This year’s week will feature speakers, videos and, of course, the wrap-up to the week – MLK Service Day – getting students out into the community to act on the ideals Dr. King espoused.

**Meet the ExComm**

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

**Susan Shen ‘08**

*by Heather Bixby, Student Activities Coordinator*

Current ExComm member, Susan Shen, is a senior double majoring in Biology and English and a member of Avery House from Ames, Iowa. Being involved in the Y for over three years, she has kept busy participating in and leading events such as: Make-a-Difference Day, Huntington Tea, Decompression, MLK Service Day, and the 2007 and 2008 Alternative Spring Break trips to Mexico and New Orleans. Susan really enjoyed co-leading the New Orleans trip. While Susan and her team were installing ethernet cables for the locals, they were also given the opportunity to form valuable reciprocal learning relationships, explore the partialities portrayed by the media, and experience Southern culture.

Along with working at the Y, Susan enjoys playing the piano, swimming, and traveling. She is also an active tutor for ASOSAL, a community center for Salvadorian immigrant families in Los Angeles.

During the summer, Susan performed neurobiology research at Cold Spring Harbor in New York, New York. Most recently, Susan has been applying and interviewing at a number of prestigious medical institutions – wish her luck!

Susan decided to join the ExComm board because she wanted to be a part of the energetic group of students who organize fantastic activities of all types for the Caltech community!

When asked what she likes most about the Y, Susan exclaimed, “I enjoy meeting students and alums, to get a fresh perspective on Caltech!”
### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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

#### December 2008

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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.

#### Contact Information

Phone: (626) 395-6163  
Fax: (626) 395-8890  
Email: caltechy@caltech.edu  
Website: [http://www.caltech.edu](http://www.caltech.edu)

Postal Address:  
Caltech  
MC 5-62  
Pasadena, CA  91125  
SW corner Hill & San Pasqual

Location:  
1350 San Pasqual St  
(West of tennis courts at

#### Y Staff

Athena Castro - Executive Director  
Greg Fletcher - Student Activities & Community Service Director  
Christopher Kealey - Marketing & Development Director  
Alycen Chan - RISE Coordinator  
Heather Bixby - Student Activities Coordinator  
Carmelita Hearn - Administrative Assistant

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Peter Mason - Treasurer  
Ilia Shadrin - Student ExComm President  
Susan Murakami - Vice Chair  
Connie Kofahl - Secretary

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- Richard Beatty  
- Abel Bourgeois  
- Donald Brown  
- Pradeep Bugga*  
- Bill Burrows  
- Marshall Cohen  
- Shirley Cohen  
- Sunny Chun*  
- Frank Dryden  
- Dean Elzinga  
- Daniel Erickson  
- Lee Fisher  
- Samantha Foster  
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- Barbara Gee  
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#### The Caltech Y News

**Editor:** Gunilla Hastrup  
Published monthly Oct-Jun (except Jan). Distributed via email (primary) or hardcopy (upon request).  
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