RISE Program has great fall term
by Alycen Chan, Y Outreach Program Director

The RISE Program is closing the fall term with our fastest enrollment to date. We have over forty dedicated tutors and sixty Pasadena School District students already enrolled. RISE will continue to enroll students through January 15, when we expect to be at full capacity.

This year, we are looking forward to piloting an Algebra Foundations class.

We have five dedicated returning tutors who have generously given their extra time (yes, this is in addition to tutoring) to help plan this pilot program. The class will target a small group of students and will be instructed in a group lesson setting by our tutors. This is an exciting venture for the program and we hope that it will provide the much needed foundation that our students deserve. The class will run once a week from January until May.

Studenski recipient reports to the Y Board
by Athena Castro, Y Executive Director

On November 2nd, Sarah Hunt reported her Studenski experience to the Caltech Y board at their monthly meeting.

Sarah showed pictures from her summer experience in Guatemala and discussed her project, which was testing the efficiency of locally produced cooking stoves. In addition, she talked about what she learned and how this experience made an impact on her.

A more detailed story will be included in the upcoming 2008-09 Caltech Y Annual Report.

Stay tuned!

End-of-the-year Giving
by Chris Kealey, Y Marketing & Development Director

Your contributions go a long way to sustain our student programs at the Caltech Y. Visit:

www.caltechy.org/support

to make your gift today or to find out more about giving to the Caltech Y. If you choose not to make your donation online, you can still print out the donation card on the website, fill it in and send it to the office with a check made out to: The Caltech Y.

Thank you for including the Y in your end-of-the-year giving.
**Recent Events (November)**

**Jazz Concert enlivens lunch hour**

*By Athena Castro, Y Executive Director*

The Caltech Jazz Band, directed by Bill Bing, performed at a noon concert on Friday, November 6, on the Caltech campus. Two different groups, consisting of students and Caltech/JPL community members, performed a wide repertoire of jazz favorites to an appreciative audience. Students ventured out of their rooms and the labs as students and staff alike enjoyed the music and the beautiful weather during the lunch hour. There was much head bobbing and toe tapping along with the music! It was a wonderful way to spend the afternoon. Thanks to Bill Bing and the jazz band for jazzing up everyone’s Friday!

[Photos by Athena Castro]

**Great discussions at Fall PALAC event**

“Dendritic Cells: Messengers of the Human Immune System”

*by Christina Weng ’11, Y ExComm*

This season’s Caltech-PALAC connection was held on November 5 at the Caltech Y. There were about thirteen attendees from Caltech and the community, and there was great participation in the session. The paper discussed was a 2008 *Immunity* publication, “Mechanisms and Consequences of Dendritic Cell Migration” by David Alvarez, Elisabeth Vollmann, and Ulrich von Andrian. The paper itself was an advanced review of dendritic cell function and molecular regulation, and highlighted the growing role of dendritic cells in modern medicine and their many functions in the adaptive immune response.

In the second half of the session, Christina talked about some of her own work on dendritic cells in David Baltimore’s laboratory at Caltech. Specifically, she is attempting to characterize dendritic cell migration and cell surface marker regulation as a function of the maturation signal received. In addition to adding to the basic biological knowledge base, this research can help target immunotherapy treatments to specific diseases by eliciting the optimum immune response against the antigen.

The technical details of the article were not the focus. Rather, the article was a great springboard for questions from the participants and explained that, while great advancements in dendritic cell research have been made in the past decade, there are still many questions to be answered.
SASS event depicts “Tumult in Iran”

by Xida Zheng ’12, Y ExComm

Roger Cohen’s presentation on Nov 4 about Iran was his personal story of what he witnessed in the days surrounding the June presidential elections in Iran. Over two hundred attendees listened as he described meeting people in a diverse, multifaceted country, contrary to Iran’s branding as an axis of evil.

A few days before the election, the streets of Tehran were festive, with neighbors exchanging friendly debates about the candidates, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the incumbent, and Mir-Hossein Mousavi, a moderate opponent. There seemed to be a chance for a fair election. On Election Day, Cohen noted how different the atmosphere was. Police were rounding up anyone who loitered on the block outside Mousavi’s campaign office. In the days after the election, it became obvious that there was massive voter fraud. The Iranian government was taken off guard and unprepared. The assertion that Ahmadinejad had won 20 million votes seemed unrealistic compared to his 5 million votes in the previous election. Cohen reported on the massive demonstrations by the opposition, who just wanted their votes to be counted. He witnessed the clashes with police, one of which led to the ingrained image of a young dying girl named Neda. It was difficult, even for a seasoned reporter like himself, to remain unmoved by these events.

Despite these events, Cohen expressed his opinion that Iran, unlike its neighbors, Iraq and Afghanistan, is ready for democracy. The people there are educated and hold many different views. He wants the US to let things play out in Iran. The election has changed Iran. She is not as stable as before. This is an internal conflict, though, and needs to be worked out by the Iranians. Cohen added that he felt Mousavi had not lived up to expectations in the critical moment. If he had been more defiant, if he had pushed harder, if he had been more visible to his supporters, then maybe he would have been heard. Instead, he allowed the government to silence him.

On the nuclear issue, Cohen mentioned a proposal to remove some low-grade uranium from Iran as a stepping-stone to more detailed talks between the US and Iran. This communication is important. Many young Iranians are fed up of being an antagonist of the west. In his travels in Iran, Cohen was welcomed into people’s homes, an uncommon occurrence for an American in many parts of the world.

Cohen was a moving speaker with a great ability to tell a story. As a student, I appreciated his speech bringing more awareness to Caltech, allowing us to lift up our heads from our papers and examine the world. These are the kind of events that should make us stop and say, “wait a minute”, but are so often not seen. I am glad that the many people who filled the auditorium took the chance to learn more about Iran as well.

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**Adventure 101 Series**

by Pratyush Tiwary, Grad, Y-Outdoors Committee

**Outdoor Photography** – Wednesday, Nov 4, a capacity crowd of over 40 gathered at the Caltech Y for an Adventure 101 Event on Outdoor Photography by Floris van Breugel – Caltech Graduate student in Control and Dynamical Systems.

As avid adventurers and explorers of wild places, we all, no doubt, experience some incredible moments of awe inspiring beauty. Now, often times it can be more challenging to capture those moments on film, or more likely these days, on some digital memory. As a passionate hiker of the California landscape for over 20 years, Floris van Breugel – recently recognized in the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards – talked to us about photographing wild places and wild life.

His presentation concentrated on gear, technique, and the most important aspect: what makes a good photograph, and how to recognize one when the opportunity presents itself.

**Footloose in Himalaya: Peaks, Passes & Pilgrimage** – In the summer of 2009, I, a seasoned backpacker and self-professed Himalayaholic, traveled for 40 days through the high altitude deserts of Ladakh, a Buddhist majority province nestled in the high Indian Himalaya. I was accompanied on my travels by Caltech undergraduates Garrett Drayna and Hamik Mukelyan. Together we climbed 20,000-foot high peaks, rambled across passes, meditated in remote monasteries, got chased by angry Yaks and made a lot of friends (most of whom did not speak English) in Ladakh – which is also called "Little Tibet".

Attendees filled the room on Nov 4, during International Education Week, for this Adventure 101 Event on my Himalayan adventures.

**Full Moon Hike**

by Justin Liu, Avni Gandhi & Arthur Chan, Grads, Y-Outdoors Committee

On Sunday, Nov 1, the Y organized a hike to Echo Mountain for a full Moon hike. The 12 of us hiked up to old hotel as the sun was setting, and got an excellent view of Los Angeles. On our way down, the Moon came out and we were able to hike down in some moonlight. It was a nice adventure, and everyone had fun.
Recent Events (continued)

Community Service Events

Annual Community Service and Advocacy Fair
by Alycen Chan, Y Outreach Program Director

The Caltech Y’s Annual Community Service and Advocacy Fair was held on Friday, November 6. The Y hosted over twenty community and nonprofit organizations from around the Southern California region, which shared their work and opportunities for involvement.

Some agencies in attendance were Reading to Kids, Hands for Hope, and the Boys and Girls Club. Nearly two hundred members of the Caltech Community attended the event and, as an added bonus, many attendees received free food and had the opportunity to enter the iPod and movie ticket raffle.

If you missed the event this year, please join us next year to learn more about the opportunities to make an impact on our community.

Annual Diabetes Walk at Dodger Stadium
by Chris Kealey, Y Marketing & Development Director

Every year, thousands of people gather at Dodger Stadium for the Annual Diabetes Walk. This year, Caltech freshman Josh Tollefson joined the masses and put together a group of Caltech walkers to help support the cause. The weather was great and Dodger Stadium was really exciting. Nearly 12,000 walkers came together Sunday, Nov 8, moving to closer finding a cure.

Two years ago, Josh Tollefson was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, sometimes called juvenile diabetes, a chronic disease which effects one's ability to produce insulin and get necessary sugars into the body's cells. In the Caltech Y office, Christopher Kealey’s five year old son, Caiden, also has Type 1 diabetes. The Caltech team consisted of Josh, Nerissa Hoglen, Supriya Iyer, Vivian Zhang, Chenxi Qiu, Christopher Kealey, his wife, Heather, and son, Caiden.

It was a great event and a fun way for Caltech students to see a special part of Los Angeles. All of the participants walked around Dodger Stadium, which, including the parking lots, is about a three-mile walk. Most of the Caltech team did two loops, although Caiden opted out after one. After the walk, everyone entered the Stadium outfield and did a celebratory loop around the track. Being on the grounds of Dodger Stadium is fairly impressive to say the least. To round off the afternoon, the team went to Philippe’s downtown for French dip sandwiches. None of the students had been to Philippe’s before, and they all agreed it was the best sandwich they ever had.

Also in attendance at Dodger Stadium was Josh Rubenstein, Kristen Stewart, Sugar Ray Leonard, LA City Councilman Ed Reyes, LAPD Captain John Incontro, Dorian Gregory and DJ Smalls. If you are interested in learning more about the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, visit their home page: http://www.jdrf.org

Vivian Zhang, Nerissa Hoglen, Chenxi Qiu, Josh Tollefson, Supriya Iyer
Community Service (continued)

The Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week this year kicked off with the showing of a composite video of documentary clips on homelessness Thursday night, Nov 19.

On Saturday, Nov 21, graduate student Lisa Mauger and undergrad ExComm member Elaine To led a group of Techers to cook meals for 30+ people at the just remodeled kitchens of the Union Station Homeless Services Adult Center in Pasadena.

On Sunday morning, another group of Techers participated in the outreach event to the homeless at Skid Row.

During the next day (Monday, Nov 23), a lunch panel was held at the Caltech Y with three speakers, a journalist reporting on the issues of homelessness, a representative from an organization that provides housing to impoverished families, and a representative from the organization Common Ground. The panelists gave presentations about their work and answered the audience’s questions. Common Ground is an organization that targets the problem of chronic homelessness in urban centers by systematically surveying and tracking homeless individuals and prioritizing them to provide the ones who are at the highest risk of fatality with housing. This approach has worked very well in the Times Square district in New York and is now being applied in many parts of the US, including Los Angeles.

The next evening (Nov 24), UCLA Law Professor Gary Blasi spoke at the Beckman Institute Auditorium about the current status of homelessness in Southern California and approaches to combat it. In particular, he acknowledged the work of Common Ground and stressed the need to provide housing, not shelter, to the chronically homeless. He expressed that this approach is not only more acceptable to the homeless and more morally acceptable to the society, but it is also less expensive compared to the high cost of emergency medical care that would be incurred by the chronically homeless on the streets, where they are at a higher risk of getting sick.

To conclude the week of events on hunger and homelessness, a group of Caltech students participated in the annual Thanksgiving Dinner in the Park organized by the Union Station Homeless Services at the Central Park in Pasadena on Thanksgiving Day (Nov 26). The participants enjoyed face-painting and playing sports with the many children present at the event.

Last but not least, a campus-wide food drive was started at the beginning of the Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week and will run until the end of the term. So far, much food has already been collected from various members of the Caltech community. Eventually, they will be donated to homeless service organizations like the Union Station to be provided for the homeless and poor in the community during this holiday season.

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Explore LA Series provided two entertaining events - A movie and an opera

“A Christmas Carol”  
by Sara Ahmed ’12, Y ExComm

On November 6, there were 24 of us who went to see the movie “A Christmas Carol” at the El Capitan Theater.

The event went really well – most of the people showed up on time and we also had good transportation arrangements. Everyone had a good time and enjoyed the movie. Also, there was a really nice live show before the movie, which everyone had fun watching. We went at around 5:30 and came back about 9:30.

Everyone at the Caltech Y, especially Greg and Kevin, helped a lot in arranging everything, including the tickets, the sign ups, etc. Tom Mannon arranged a very comfortable bus for us. Also, frosh Joshua Tollefson was co-leader in preparing for the event.

The event was really good!

“Tamerlano”  
by Sara Ahmed ’12, Y ExComm

About 25 people attended the opera “Tamerlano” on November 25 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, including five professors and their guests. Everything went well.

The opera was about three and a half hours long, sung in Italian, and told the love story of Timur the Lame, his friend, and the daughter of an Ottoman sultan that he conquered. Placido Domingo was featured as the sultan.

Although this would have been set in the 14th century, the costumes were 20th century except for the sultan and his daughter.

During intermission, we were free to wander through the beautiful opera house. The last act included a dramatic enactment of Domingo's death.
Recent Events (continued)

**Fall Friends Dinner featured Intelligent Mobility International**

An evening with the students and founders of IMI

by Michelle Jiang ’11, Y ExComm

[Photos by Kevin Nguyen and Rolf Hastrup]

On Tuesday, November 17, Friends of the Caltech Y gathered together for our once-a-term dinner at the Athenaeum yet again.

It was great to have such a high turnout because our guest speaker for the night holds a special place both with the Y and around the Caltech campus. Intelligent Mobility International is a non-profit organization formed by former Caltech students who worked with Professor Ken Pickar in his E/ME 105 class, Product Design for a Developing World, to design a wheelchair suitable for low-income people with mobility-impairing disabilities in Guatemala.

With a great introduction by Ken Pickar, himself, and a brief summary of what the class was about, the presentation showed just how far these recent Caltech Alumni have come since their initial design, as they recounted to our Friends the various iterations their wheelchair has gone through to reach its current stage.

In addition, one of the IMI members, Joey Koehler ’09, talked about how he was able to spend a summer in Guatemala working with the Transitions team on manufacturing the wheelchair because of the Caltech Y ACT Fellowship program (which has been on hiatus due to budgetary reasons). The Transitions team is a group of men who have various disabilities requiring the use of crutches or wheelchairs.

A working wheelchair was on display during the pre-dinner reception, and we

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Dan Oliver ’07 at the podium

Front center: Michelle Jiang and Athena Castro; others from left: Ken Pickar, Pinkesh Patel, Rudy Roy, Dan Oliver, Chris Kealey, and Joey Kohler

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Marka Hibbs trying out the wheelchair with Joey and Pinkesh

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were lucky enough to hear a testimony from Marka Hibbs on how much she loved it after she tried it out.

Our Friends were enthusiastically responsive to the talk and we encourage our Friends to visit the website (www.intelligentmobility.org) for more details. ExComm Secretary Michelle Jiang also has IMI t-shirts for sale in which all proceeds will go towards IMI. If you’re interested, please contact her at mmjiang@caltech.edu.

Michelle Jiang is the current ExComm secretary and, among her many activities (and coursework), also volunteers as an intern with IMI. She is currently taking Ken Pickar's E/ME 105 class, and was one of the presenters at the Fall Friends Dinner.

In addition to Michelle and Joey Kohler, co-founder and CEO of IMI, Dan Oliver, also spoke. Other members of the IMI team in attendance included the other co-founder, Rudy Roy, and volunteer intern and current grad student, Pinkesh Patel.

IMI has a bright future, and we were especially lucky to have caught them for our Fall Friends Dinner.
Meet the ExComm

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

Xida Zheng ‘12

by Kevin Nguyen, Student Activities Coordinator

Xida Zheng is a sophomore chemistry major living in Lloyd house. He has quite an extensive background. He is currently from Chicago, but was born in China and lived in England for a while also. He chose Caltech because he saw it as the best academic school opportunity. He also enjoys the rich history of Caltech and deep relationships he has been able to form so far. He really likes the house system that Caltech has, because it resembles the same system that England has and it provides an instant community where others with the same interests and commonalities can convene and enjoy each other’s company.

Outside of the Caltech Y, Xida likes to cook. He says it is very similar to chemistry and he likes integrating what he is learning in class to outside of the classroom. He knows how to swing dance and plays chess. Other activities that Xida participates in at Caltech are interhouse sports, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE), and he is also a tour guide for Caltech. He likes meeting new people, especially freshmen, and being able to guide them through the Caltech experience.

Xida joined the Y ExComm because he wanted to be more involved and gain a sense of leadership. He has been involved in helping and planning events such as Decompression, the Huntington Tea, Explore LA, and others. He appreciates the leadership opportunities that have enabled him to make a difference and make experiences at Caltech more worthwhile and meaningful for other students. He finds all these experiences very rewarding and values his exposure and understanding from also being on the Board of Directors for the Caltech Y. He believes that it gives him a very holistic approach to how the Caltech Y operates and he sees these moments as applicable skills to benefit him after he finishes his undergraduate degree.

Greetings from an Ex ExComm

Patricia Neil ‘06

What the Caltech Y Has Meant to Me

The first event I ever did with the Caltech Y was a three-day backpacking trip in the San Gabriel Mountains during the winter break following my very first year in grad school. That first quarter had been a difficult transition: moving to a place where I didn’t know a soul, facing the most challenging academic environment I’d ever known, and no money to visit my family for the holidays. Desperate to do something that’d get me out of my tiny apartment, I signed up.

I’d never gone backpacking before – hiking and camping, sure, but never backpacking – and I was a little hesitant because I didn’t know anyone else going on the trip. What I gained from that trip was a love of backpacking, some great new friends, and an introduction to an organization that was a huge source of support and friendship for my remaining six years at Caltech.

Loitering during winter backpacking
and every year since. From that trip forward, the Caltech Y was more than just a place to rent camping gear or to eat burgers during Decompression – it was a place where I learned how to take charge, try out new things, meet new people, and learn how to find that tricky balance between work and personal life, relaxation and social responsibility. And one of the most wonderful things of all about the Caltech Y was how – somewhere along the way – it became more than just a place where I could go for backpacking trips, or burgers, or lectures, but rather a place where I could bring my ideas, my passions and see them come to fruition in a supportive and stimulating environment.

It’s been several years now since I graduated and moved on from Caltech, but the Caltech Y will retain a special place in my memories of that time. Whenever I find myself on campus, showing friends and family the landmarks of my time at grad school, I always make a point of coming by the Caltech Y – where I always feel as welcome as I did on that very first backpacking trip.

**Coming Events (December - January)**

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**A Preview of Student-Led Programs – Happy Holidays!**

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

The winter holidays are fast approaching, and with it a much needed break for the Caltech Y ExComm, Y-Outdoors Committee, Community Service Coordinators, and Social Activism Speaker Series Committee.

There are a few more programs for December – and, of course, a new year awaits with some exciting events on the horizon.

**World AIDS Day** (Dec 1) – The Y, working with the Cultural Programming Group, will be coordinating a lunch discussion with Caltech Professor Bjorkman and undergrad Grayson Chadwick whose research idea has spawned some new thinking and further research directions in the fight to defeat the disease.

**Fall Decompression** (Dec 5) – As always, 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. This fall’s theme is “Up,” after the recently released movie. The new MOSH has been invited and will be bringing the movie to provide the entertainment. Several hundred are expected.

**DC Science and Policy Trip** (Dec 15-18) – For the fourth year in a row, a group of 24 students and staff will be crossing the country to the nation’s capital, as other students begin their winter break, in order to participate in the Caltech Y DC Science and 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 and national policy for the United States, including science policy advisors, lobbyists, politicians, and scientists, to learn more about the complex way policies are developed and implemented.

**Y-Outdoors Events** – Our leaders from the Y-Outdoors Committee have a couple of events to start out the year.

First, an Adventure 101 Lunch Talk on “Great Hiking in the Greater LA Area.” 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 Photography Hike, where students can have a little slower pace to try out some of their nature photography skills. Y-Outdoors programs provide Caltech students, including novices and experienced outdoor enthusiasts, an exciting opportunity to explore with guidance.

**MLK Commemoration Week** – 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 MLK week will feature speakers – including a keynote by Rev. Eric Lee (President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles) – videos and, of course, the MLK Service Day – getting students out into the community to act on the ideals Dr. King espoused.

**SASS Events** – The Social Activism Speaker Series has one last-minute talk December 8 on the case of JPL plaintiff vs. NASA, Caltech, and the Department of Commerce, fighting HSPD-12, which requires background investigations of employees.

On January 26, SASS will be continuing with their Series on Iran: Struggle of a Nation featuring Abbas Milani – the Hamid and Christina Moghadam Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford University and a visiting professor in the department of political science.

They have also confirmed two speakers, with dates to be determined in January or February: TR Reid, author of “The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better Cheaper, Fairer Care,” speaking on the current health care debate, and Kalaya’an Mendoza, Field Organizer – Western Region of Amnesty International, speaking on social media strategies for direct action organizing.
### CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

**Dec 2009**

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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**

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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**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
<th>Members (* indicates Student Executive Committee)</th>
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| Susan Murakami - Chair | Sara Ahmed*  
  Richard Beatty  
  Abel Bourbois  
  Donald Brown  
  Bill Burrows  
  Veena Chavakula*  
  Sunny Chun*  
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