



# The Caltech Y NEWS

"Making a World of Difference"

Since  
1916

## Announcements

### Happy Holidays!

by Carolyn Ash, Y Board Chair

Days shorten, temperatures cool, classes end. First term is over and students head home for the holiday season. At the Y, fall was filled with great activities, all of them planned and coordinated by the Student Executive Committee, or ExComm – the undergraduate and graduate student leaders of the Caltech Y. As you read the newsletter, I think you will be impressed with the wide range of opportunities available to our terrific students. It takes strong and dedicated leadership to implement such a rich array of events.

The Y depends upon the generosity of

its many, many supporters to build a robust financial base to enable the activities and events that enhance student life and help students prepare for their futures. Think of the Y as you make your year-end contributions! Gifts of all sizes are important.

Consider becoming a "Friend of the Caltech Y" with a contribution of \$150 or more. Friends gather each term for delicious dinner at the Athenaeum followed by an interesting and dynamic program. Friends also take field trips. In January, Friends will journey to Cachuma Lake for a tour led by naturalist, Liz Mason (daughter of Y Board member Peter Mason) – we hope to see Bald Eagles! Lunch and

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wine tasting at local wineries will follow. Join now, and you can participate in this wonderful experience!

Also, save this date! The first annual Caltech Y Golf Tournament will be held at Brookside on Friday, October 10, 2008.

Best wishes for a joyful holiday season! And Happy New Year!

### Successful RISE Program expands

by Alycen Chan, Y RISE Program Coordinator

It's really been a great fall quarter for the RISE Program. With the strong support of over 20 tutors from the Caltech undergraduate and graduate community, the RISE Program is cur-

rently helping 50 students of Pasadena Unified School District improve their math and science skills and become better candidates for college.

We've also expanded to include 8th grade and now offer tutoring to students from grades 8 through 12. At the

beginning of winter quarter 2008, we hope to increase our capacity by recruiting more tutors and enrolling more students into the program.

Finally, happy holidays and winter break to everyone, and we look forward to a brand new 2008!

### Moore Huffstedler Fund provides new equipment for Y

by Athena Castro, Y Executive Director

Thanks to the Moore Huffstedler Fund (MHF), the Caltech Y has been able to purchase new camping and sound equipment. The MHF Committee generously awarded the Y \$12,000 towards the purchase of new tents, sleeping bags, sleeping bag liners, backpacks, and GPS units. The Caltech Housing Office also supplemented Y equipment by donating several tents and a canopy. The camping gear is used for the Y's Outdoor Adventure

Program, which includes the Y-Hike backpacking trip and National Park Camping trips. In addition, the equipment is available to the campus community. In fact, many geology students, clubs, and house social teams have availed themselves of this service!

The Y and the Graduate Student Council (GSC) also successfully co-submitted a \$7,850 proposal to the MHF that resulted in funding for audio visual equipment. We now have two new sound systems complete with powered

speakers, mixing boards, and new microphones. This equipment is used for Y programs such as noon events, movie nights, and decompression, and is available for student use.

We gratefully acknowledge the Moore Huffstedler Fund for the two above awards. The Y is now able to more effectively serve the campus community. We also thank the Caltech Housing Office for their contribution to the Y Outdoor Adventure Program.

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## Recent Events (October)

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### **PALAC Discussion Series initiated**

*by Norri Sirri, Y Board*

The first meeting of this new discussion group series, in which members of the Pasadena Area Liberal Arts Center (PALAC) participate in discussions led by Caltech students, on scientific topics selected by the student leaders, took place on November 8 in the Caltech Y multipurpose room.

Led by June Wicks and Abdul Ahad, this discussion centered on how the advent of fire and cooking complicated the male-female relationships of early humans. The event was very successful, and participants were excited about the topic tentatively scheduled for the Winter Quarter: "Nanosystems Biology – the coming revolution in predic-

tive and preventative medicine." If Caltech students express sufficient interest in leading these groups, there will be one discussion each quarter, based on a paper selected by the students, and read by participants.

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### **Social Activism Speaker Series holds two events**

**Kevin Sites**

*by Gunilla Hastrup, Y Board*

Kevin Sites, invited by SASS for a second time after visiting last year, made a presentation on November 14 in the Ramo Auditorium. Peter Liu reported to the Ex-Comm that the event was a success with attendance of 120 with more than 25% students.

Kevin Sites is a war correspondent, who discussed and showed a video from his experiences from spending a year in war zones around the world as a freelancer. Sites helped pioneer solo journalism, traveling and reporting without a crew. His assignments have

taken him all over the world, including the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, South America and Eastern Europe.

**Peter Cleary**

*by Peter Liu '09, ExComm*

Our most recent SASS event was a collaboration with Engineers for a Sustainable World (ESW), who had the idea of inviting a representative from the makers of Lifestraws, a portable water purification system being made available for those in need. Lifestraws are at no cost to recipients and are purchased in large quantities by organizations like the UN, UNICEF, the World

Bank, and World Vision, who distribute the Lifestraws to wherever they see the need.

Peter Cleary, communications director of Vestergaard-Frandsen, the company who makes Lifestraws, came to Caltech to speak in one of the undergraduate classes, had lunch with students at the Athenaeum, a round-table dinner with students and community-members, and finally gave the keynote address at Beckman Institute. As it was widely promoted by both SASS and ESW, the talk was well attended with about 70 people.

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### **Life Skills Series considers personal finance issues**

*by Iliia Shadrin '08, ExComm*

On November 28th, 16 students and 4 staff members gathered at the Caltech Y multipurpose room for a lunchtime discussion about personal finance.

Part of the booming *Life Skills Series* program, this informative event allowed students from all backgrounds to voice their questions about credit cards, credit reports, budget plans, identity thefts, and many other finance related issues. Led by guest speakers, Pattyl Aposhian and Jo Ann Mistich,

from CEFUCU (Caltech Credit Union), the presentation quickly developed into an interactive group session where the students were eager to ask many questions.

I was highly pleased with the turnout and the enthusiasm of both the graduate and the undergraduate students; I was even more pleased with the outstanding presentation and handouts prepared by Pattyl and Jo Ann where they provided the "inside scoop" on what creditors consider before giving

out a loan or the factors affecting a person's credit score. They finished off with a few notions on identity theft and the current issues putting customers in danger of it — this helped bring out awareness of the problem as well as provided contact information and "to do" lists to make sure the personal damage is minimized.

Upon leaving, each of the students thanked me for organizing this session, and that was a sign this successful event should be repeated in the future.

(continued)

## [Recent Events \(continued\)](#)

### **Thanksgiving Dinner in the Park**

by Leon Liu '10, ExComm

On Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>, Thanksgiving Day, a group of 25 Caltech undergraduate and graduate students went to Central Park in Pasadena to volunteer at the annual *Thanksgiving Dinner in the Park*, sponsored by the Union Station foundation. Often referred to as the "Biggest Potluck in the Nation,"

*Thanksgiving Dinner in the Park* brings a hearty meal and holiday to all who attend, many of whom are homeless, senior citizens, or families with children on limited incomes. For many years, the Caltech Y has partnered with the Union Station in providing games for the children. This year, the student volunteers engaged in

enjoyable athletic and artistic activities. Some played soccer and volleyball with the older kids, while others decorated the younger ones with face paints and played various parachute games with them. Some others volunteered to serve food. There was a great showing of kids of all ages, and everyone had a great time.

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### **A Full-Moon Hike**

by Rory Perkins, Grad, ExComm

Nine Caltech students took advantage of November's full moon on the 24<sup>th</sup> to hike up Echo Mountain by moonlight.

We started at the end of Lake Avenue and finished at the ruins of 'White City,' an old resort along the Mount Lowe Railway.

With cool but pleasant evening air, a clear sky, and an entire Metropolis shining before us, we had a nice relaxed hike.

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## [Meet the ExComm](#)

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

### **James Huang '08**

by Molly Jones, Y Student  
Activities Coordinator

"Karate Grill Master" is just one alias that James Huang has obtained from his peers on the ExComm. James figures that, over the three years that he has spent with the Y since he joined as a freshman, he has flipped thousands of Decompression burgers for hungry Caltech students. In addition to the countless hours he has spent behind the grill, James has also led a Make-A-Difference Day trip to support the environmental conservation organization, Heal the Bay, by helping to clean local beaches. This month he is also co-leading the next program in the Explore LA Series, which will consist of a trip for graduate and undergraduate students to the Museum of Tolerance.

Prior to coming to the Y, James had had negative volunteering experiences filled with mundane and unfulfilling tasks. He feels that the Y is different



and has changed his perspective about volunteering. "The Y makes volunteering fun. It isn't something that you have to do, so it is important for everyone to enjoy the experience." James has also thoroughly enjoyed the people he has met through the Y and finds the

free lunches a great perk too!

James grew up in the nearby towns of South Pasadena and Arcadia as his father has worked for many years at JPL. He has a younger sister who just started at UCLA and a younger brother who is still in elementary school. Since starting at Caltech, James has taken up a passionate interest in the martial arts, specifically in Shotokan and Tang So Doo. He practices a minimum of 12 hours per week and recently earned his brown belt in Shotokan.

Now in his senior year, James will be graduating with a degree in biology this spring. He is currently applying to medical schools throughout California and to Washington University in St. Louis. While he is still undecided, he thinks he may be handing in his grill spatula for a scalpel as he is considering pursuing a career in surgery.

## Greetings from an Ex ExComm

### Heather Dean '96

I think most people look back fondly on their college years. Like most Techers, I found mine challenging and at times overwhelming, but overall I loved my time at Caltech. I certainly learned a lot in classrooms and labs, but many of my favorite lessons and memories are due to my association with Y.

As a pre-frosh, I learned about the Y and soon signed up to go on the Y Hike my very first week in California. I made friends there and began attending Y meetings. I loved the focus on service and awareness and very much enjoyed being a part of events that celebrated diversity. Undergraduate life at Caltech can be narrowly centered on academics, and college should be an opportunity to broaden horizons and learn about personal strengths and weaknesses. The Y provided opportunities to learn. The skills and knowledge that I gained through working with the Y helped to shape my life after college almost as much as the academic skills I learned at Caltech.

Through the Y, I learned about community service. I started by organizing Friday afternoon Project Angelfood trips. We picked up food from the AIDS Service Center to deliver to homebound HIV patients. This experience was an eye-opening one, as we were often patients' only contact with people during the week. It was not easy getting to know the people we visited and sometimes showing up another week to find family members gathered for a memorial service.



With Athena - Career Fair, 10/07

I began to lead student groups to more community service events that I wanted to attend: Race for the Cure, Christmas in April, Habitat for Humanity, the Pasadena AIDS Walk, and more. I learned about life outside of Caltech, and I also learned that I very much enjoy helping others, organizing events and learning outside the classroom.

Because of my undergraduate leadership experiences with the Y, I looked for similar opportunities in graduate school at Duke. In my first semester there, I applied for a position at the Duke Women's Center organizing discussion events every other week – a position I held for the next five and a half years. The interest in diversity and issues of equality that began at Caltech bloomed at Duke, and the organizational skills that I used in bringing Caltech students together for community service events helped me to build the Graduate and Professional Women's Network at Duke.

Through the Caltech Y, I was also able to organize events that promoted mentoring, such as Tea at the Huntington Gardens. I learned how to raise funds from various offices on campus for such events. (This once led



Caltech women's basketball game, 2/07

to an interesting bet with one Dean for a cup of tea, but that's another story.) Because of such experiences, I was able to organize similar events at Duke, including a mentoring dinner for 300 women from across campus funded by a number of offices and organizations.

Because the Caltech Y funded events across campus, I attended many that I might not have otherwise, including a number of cultural events. These were always interesting and educational, and I made a number of friends at the various dinners, celebrations, and dances. I later traveled to India to attend the wedding of a friend I met at a Y-funded event. These made me more interested in the world around me and led me to work as an International House Orientation Peer for new students at Duke.

The Caltech Y shaped my interests and passions, taught me leadership and organizational skills and gave me the confidence to follow these interests in graduate school. Although I am currently pursuing an academic career and working as a post-doctoral fellow in the Center for Neural Science at New York University, I plan to continue to serve as a leader and also to push for diversity and equality. I want to be an academic administrator, perhaps someday a university president. I will always be grateful for the opportunities and values that the Y gave me, and I hope that others at Caltech appreciate it as much as I do.



Machu Picchu, 6/07

## A New Year's Resolution – More Great Programs!

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities Director

The transition to a new year causes one to pause and reflect on what has been and what will be. The ExComm, Y-Outdoors, Community Service Coordinators, and Social Activism Speaker Series Committee have all put on an impressive array of events. If it is possible, 2008 will take programming to another level. Coming soon:

- Fall **Decompression**, as always, 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 *The Office* (this Fall’s theme) entertain. Several hundred are expected to brave the cooler temps and possibility of rain to decompress.

- As other students pack up and head for home following finals, students on the ExComm will be extending their term a couple of days in order to hold an **ExComm Planning Retreat** for next term. It should be a great chance to explore possible programs, schedule events and designate coordinators, start organizing major events on the horizon (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.

- While many from the Caltech campus are well into 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** from Dec 18-21. 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 way policies are developed and implemented.

- The **Explore LA Series** is concluding 2007 at a performance of *The Nutcracker* at the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium, and is looking to start next year with a repeat performance of *Wicked* at the Pantages.

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.

- Our leaders from the **Y-Outdoors** committee are adding a new series to their lineup of trips and excursions. *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. *Y-Outdoors* programs provide Caltech students, including novices and experienced outdoor enthusiasts, an exciting opportunity to explore with guidance.

- 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.

- The **Social Activism Speaker Series (SASS)** will have a quiet couple of months – at least as far as events are concerned. They will be busy with funding proposals and helping with **Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Week**. As always, SASS will focus attention on current social and political issues giving students the opportunity to explore how they might shape the world.

- 2008 will also mark the inauguration of the Caltech Y **ACT Fellowships** – a new program made possible through the generous support of the George Housner endowment. The **ACT Fellowships** will offer students an opportunity to pursue an interest or passion in the area of community service or advocacy. Within the scope of the fellowship, fellows will determine what issue or cause they would like to address and identify a partner organization with whom to work – over the course of 10 weeks during the summer. Students may tackle hunger, homelessness, HIV / AIDS, capital punishment, poverty, or other worthwhile challenges while partnering with an exciting organization that is changing the state of the world as we know it here in our local area, across the nation, and around the globe.

(continued)

[Coming Events \(continued\)](#)

## **Y Friends Field Trip: Cachuma Lake Cruise and Wine Tasting**

*by Peter Mason, Y Board*

Saturday, Jan 26, Caltech Y Friends will enjoy a full day's bus trip to the beautiful backcountry of Santa Barbara County. The trip begins at Cachuma Lake, a seven-mile-long lake nestled among oak woodlands in the Santa Ynez Valley north of Santa Barbara. The lake was created as a water supply



for Santa Barbara, but its diverse habitats have become home to a large array of birds, animals, and fish. Cachuma is a favorite spot for wintering bald eagles, and there is a good chance we will see some. We may also see white pelicans, loons, ospreys, red-tailed hawks, and many other species. Other wildlife often seen in the area includes mule deer, foxes, and even an occasional bobcat.

We take a two-hour cruise on the lake with county park naturalist Liz Mason as our guide. The tour vessel has padded swivel seats, half of which are under canopy, and there is also wheel chair access. After the cruise, we go to the Roblar Winery, also in Santa Ynez Valley, for wine tasting and lunch. Then, we go to the East Valley Vineyard and Winery for another round of wine tasting. Both feature premium

wines. (The movie "Sideways" featured the vineyards of this area.)

A mailing for the trip will be made shortly. For more information, see:

<http://www.sbparks.org/DOCS/lakecruise.html>

<http://www.roblarwinery.com/>

<http://www.eastvalleywines.com/>



# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Note: See [Caltech Y website](#) for additional information and schedule updates

## December

| S  | M                    | T                        | W                           | T                    | F                    | S   |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|
|  |                      |                          |                             |                      |                      | 1<br>World AIDS Day:<br>Posada  |
| 2<br>Explore LA:<br>Museum of<br>Tolerance | 3<br>Y Board Mtg     | 4<br>ExComm Mtg          | 5<br>DC Trip<br>Orientation | 6                    | 7                    | 8<br>Reading to Kids<br><br>Decompression                                 |
| 9  | 10                   | 11<br>ExComm Mtg         | 12                          | 13                   | 14                   | 15<br>Union Station<br>Explore LA:<br>Nutcracker Ballet<br>ExComm Retreat |
| 16<br>ExComm Retreat                       | 17<br>ExComm Retreat | 18<br>DC Policy Trip     | 19<br>DC Policy Trip        | 20<br>DC Policy Trip | 21<br>DC Policy Trip | 22  |
| 23   | 24                   | 25<br>Dinner in the Park | 26                          | 27                   | 28                   | 29  |
| 30   | 31                   |                          |                             |                      |                      |   |

## January

| • S | • M   | • T   | • W  | • T  | • F            | • S   |
|-----|---|---|--|--|----------------|---|
|     |   | 1   | 2  | 3  | 4              | 5   |
| 6   | 7   | 8<br>ExComm<br>Mtg  | 9<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y              | 10<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett             | 11             | 12<br>Reading to<br>Kids                                    |
| 13  | 14<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y            | 15<br>ExComm<br>Mtg<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett             | 16<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y             | 17<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett             | 18             | 19<br>Union<br>Station                                      |
| 20  | 21<br>MLK Day<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y | 22<br>MLK Week<br>ExComm<br>Mtg<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett | 23<br>MLK Week<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y | 24<br>MLK Week<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett | 25<br>MLK Week | 26<br>MLK<br>Service Day<br>Friends<br>Cachuma Lake<br>Trip |
| 27  | 28<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y            | 29<br>ExComm<br>Mtg<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett             | 30<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Caltech Y             | 31<br>RISE<br>Tutoring-Winnett             |                |   |

## 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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Molly Jones - Student Activities Coordinator  
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### Board of Directors

#### Executive Committee

Carolyn Ash - Chair  
Lee Fisher - Vice Chair

Peter Mason - Treasurer  
Barbara Heublein - Secretary

Peter Liu - Student ExComm President

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

|                  |                  |                  |                 |                 |                   |
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### The Caltech Y News

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