



# The Caltech Y NEWS

"Making a World of Difference"

Since  
1916

## Announcements & Reports

### Caltech Y Staff Transitions

by Athena Castro, Y Executive Director

#### Alycen Chan

Alycen Chan Hall has left the Caltech Y for a new position at the USC School of Engineering, where she will be managing a new outreach program.



Alycen was with the Caltech Y for over 5 years, most recently serving as Assistant Director of Programs & Services. During that time, she developed the *RISE Program* from the ground up and laid the foundation for a successful ongoing program. As many of you know, the Caltech Y *RISE Program* is a tutoring program for middle and high school students specifically in areas of math and science.

Alycen is very passionate about working to improve opportunities for students in schools and areas that lack educational resources. She also partnered with Pasadena organizations to make a positive contribution in the

community. In addition, Alycen worked with the Caltech Center for Diversity to coordinate the FSRI and YESS programs.

Her leadership, visionary skills, and strong work ethic will be missed greatly by all. We wish her well in her new position at USC.

#### Liz Jackman



Alycen's duties are now in the capable hands of Liz Jackman, who many of you already know. Liz will continue the work with students and parents in the *RISE Program* as well as the various on-going community service programs. Liz is very well qualified to take on her new role as Assistant Director of Programs & Services, having served four years as a teacher in Japan and provided outstanding support in her previous position of Administrative Assistant on the Y staff.

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#### Heather Bixby

Heather Bixby, who previously served on the Y staff as an intern in 2008-09, rejoined the Y staff in January to assume Liz's previous role as Administrative Assistant.



By a fortunate coincidence, Y Executive Director, Athena Castro, happened to cross paths with Heather while on the recent *Caltech Y India Cultural Trip* in December. Having been in India for several months, Heather accepted Athena's offer to assist the Y office, on a temporary basis, doing the work that Liz had been performing.

## Recent Events (December-January)

### Inspiring Caltech Y Adventure 101 Talk

"Winter Sports in Southern California"

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

Those looking for some fun and local winter activities, who thought that Southern California only offers summer sports, got a whole new perspective at our latest *Adventure 101 Talk*. On December 1, graduate student and

Y-Outdoors member, Jeremy Sandler, shared some of the best local options for getting out in the snow, including snow shoeing, cross country, sledding, and alpine skiing, where there are actually six ski areas within two hours of

Caltech – and one you can even see from campus.

It was an interesting overview and, as always, very informative. Many were inspired to get out there – if only it would snow!

## Recent Events (continued)

### Y Fall Decompression – Another success!

by *Katja Luxem*, '14, student,

The Y Fall Decompression was again a success! The Y hosts Decompression every term at the beginning of finals week. With lots of food and different forms of entertainment, it gives students a chance to take a break during or before taking finals.

This year, on December 3, several hundred students came out to grab some food and relax with their friends.

Several changes were made to Decompression to reduce the time commitment for the student leaders this year, including screening T-shirts earlier, splitting people into more shifts, and more clearly separating specific tasks. Several dozen additional students volunteered to cut fruits and bagels, flip burgers, and help with set up / clean up.

And, now that we've decompressed, it's time to get back to studying!



[photo by Alex Wang '13]

### Caltech Y India Cultural Trip – India-ki-Khoj

In search of society, culture, economy, science, technology and beyond

#### Program Overview

by *Athena Castro*, Y Executive Director

This past December, the Caltech Y had the exciting opportunity to partner with the SURF Program and the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGn) in a wonderful new program called *India-ki-Khoj* or “In Search of India.” The idea came about as a result of conversations between the directors of SURF, IITGn, and the Caltech Y. In fact, this program would not have been possible without Candace Rypisi, the Director of the SURF Program and Sudhir Jain, the Director of IITGn. Thanks to their willingness to think out of the box, Caltech students benefitted from an amazing trip to expand our knowledge of India and, in the process, expand our sense of selves and sense

of community that now includes our friends at IITGn and the many speakers and others we met during the program.

Ten undergraduate students participated in this 14-day trip and were joined by ~12 IITGn students. Caltech Y student leaders, Margaret Chiu (senior, biology) and Katja Luxem (sophomore, chemical engineering) assisted with the planning, and we began meeting in June to work out details from the Caltech end, such as suggesting a theme, finalizing the dates, advertising and, more importantly, coordinating the selection process. An overwhelming 28 students applied for 10 spots, and Margaret, Katja and I had our work cut out for us in making selections. Many thanks to Margaret and Katja for all of their hard work in helping to make this program a success.

The program content was coordinated by IITGn faculty. Prof. Rita Kothari, Associate Professor in English, and Prof. Jaison Manjaly, Associate Professor in Philosophy and Dean of Students, put together an excellent program which explored the idea of India's emerging identity as a nation in all of its complexities – particularly in the context of its history, traditions, culture, and vision for the future. Through a combination of lectures and field trips, we journeyed through ancient India's traditions of philosophy, science and technology to present day India identifying continuities as well as shifts that India made through the centuries. There were also discussions on India's economic trends, culture and history, poetry and films, castes and community structures. The speakers, all experts in their respective fields, came from all over India to speak to our group. At the end of the program, we all came away with an appreciation for the many layers that form the idea of “identity.”

The students who participated in this program will present on a topic from this trip in the coming month. In addition, we are planning to feature this program at the *Spring Caltech Y Friends Dinner*. More information about the student presentations and the *Spring Friends Dinner* will be available as details get confirmed. Also, sophomore student Stanford Schor talked about his India experience in a blog for the Admissions Office. Here is the link in case you'd like to check it out:

[http://caltech.typepad.com/caltech\\_as\\_it\\_happens/caltech-in-india/](http://caltech.typepad.com/caltech_as_it_happens/caltech-in-india/). More pictures from our trip can be found on the Caltech Y's facebook page.



## India Cultural Trip (continued)

Again, many thanks to the people who made this program a reality. I am especially thankful to Candace Rypisi and Sudhir Jain as well as Rita Kothari and Jaison Manjaly. In addition, I would like to thank the student leaders, Margaret Chiu and Katja Luxem. This program is a wonderful example of collaboration between departments and institutes, and I look forward to continuing this partnership for many more years to come.

### A Student Account

by Dong Woo Shin '13, Undergrad

On December 10, a group of 10 Caltech students headed to the city of Ahmedabad in the state of Gujarat, located in the northwestern part of India, for the new cultural exchange program named *India-ki-Khoj*, which was designed to teach and show to both the IITGn and Caltech students the diversity and the complexity of the society of India. The program was comprised of intriguing and extremely informative talks by experts from respective fields, which were accompanied with field trips to multiple cultural sites in the state of Gujarat and various performances, which gave the students a chance to learn and experience the rich Indian culture and heritage.

On the day we arrived, despite the 16-hour flight, we were extremely excited to drive around the city before the orientation, since most of us had never been to India before. We were astonished at the sight of cows roaming the streets next to auto-rickshaws and motorcyclists, while a very elaborately painted elephant was led by a man, blending into the general liveliness of the city. The next day, a formal commencement of the program was held by a ceremonious lighting of the candle, marking the start of an eventful program that was to follow the next 12 days. We prepared for a heritage walk through the old city of Ahmedabad through a series of lectures, where we learned about the history of the traditionally mercantile city, and how the city served as a melting pot to innumerable cultures and civilizations creating the identity of Ahmedabad that

we see today. We also gathered to enjoy Indian classical music from an accomplished artist specializing in a form of singing called “raga.” The next day, we went on the breathtaking heritage walk and were immersed into the old city of Ahmedabad. Considered a “living museum”, the old city was brimming with life as we walked past the people bargaining for produce, ironing their clothes, and feeding their cattle next to buildings and gates built hundreds of years ago. We also visited Lothal, an Indus Valley civilization site, accompanied by a series of very informative lectures by an archeologist, who provided us with an invaluable outline of India, preparing us for the future lectures and events that would give us a more detailed view of India in the past and present.

In the next few days, we learned about modern India and the issues surrounding it, including the efforts and challenges that people are facing when trying to incorporate their ancient culture and traditions into the modern world. Issues such as democracy, caste, religion, class, and technology were extensively discussed, as we learned more about what India meant as a nation and as people. We visited a village in the state of Gujarat, where we were able to see and learn about the issues surrounding the farmers and the general public as they were trying to adjust their lives to the radical changes in modernizing India. We also learned about the complex co-existence of religions in India as we visited Jainist and Hindu temples, and mosques, all in close proximities of each other. As we had the chance to interact with social activists, artists, writers, and professors, the program gave us a very well-rounded view of the problems facing India. Outside of the scheduled program, we went to the modern city of Ahmedabad on auto-rickshaws with

fellow IITGn students, and visited street shops where the IITGn students taught us to bargain, tried local “street” cuisine, played cricket, and enjoyed other various activities.

The cultural exchange trip to India was an invaluable opportunity for all of us, as we learned to further appreciate and respect the complexity and the diversity of different cultures. As future scientists and engineers, we were given a chance to further enrich and widen our views, engraving into our minds that the things that we would be doing in the future will be affecting neither numbers nor percentages of a population, but individuals with dreams, aspirations, and problems similar to those of our own.

For me, this trip turned out to be more than just learning about a culture on the other side of the world. I was extremely impressed by the multitudes of people willing to sacrifice opportunities for self-accomplishments to help others live a better life. I really did enjoy India – in fact, I loved it beyond my imagination. But, with all the great adventures put aside, I was shocked to see the poverty and the glaring differences of the livelihoods people led in India compared to the majority of the people in the US. I saw families living in the streets, drying their clothes they had washed in the river next to the busy city roads; I saw nomadic construction workers laboring barefooted, while their children looked after each other as their parents lifted stones in woven baskets balanced on top of their heads. On this trip, I realized that, given so many opportunities and resources in my life, it was my responsibility to give back to others, and that those accomplishments that only benefit the individual cannot really be considered achievements. Visiting the village and talking to and hearing about social activities that are really trying to help out the poor helped me to start re-evaluating my values and goals. I do not know where this self-reflection will eventually lead, but this trip was definitely an invaluable eye-opening experience, helping me to start thinking a bit differently.



## Recent Events (continued)

### Caltech Y DC Science Policy Trip – eventful and educational!

by Chenxi Qui '13, Student

During the week of December 12, a group of 20 students participated in the Washington DC Science and Policy Trip, sponsored by the Caltech Y, with generous support from the Alumni Association and the Housner fund. The purpose of this trip was to expose students to the world of science policy, by meeting with the policy makers, leading administrators, science advisors, and lobbyists. The wide variety of perspectives on the creation and implementation of science policy provided students with an idea of the options available to them outside academia after graduation. In addition to the discussion sessions, there were also opportunities for cultural exploration. A number of students had never been to DC and were delighted to see the famous national landmarks.

Upon our arrival in DC, we met with Caltech alumni over dinner at our lodgings, the William Penn House. There were recent and old graduates, who told us what their life was like in DC, which gave us the chance to compare our life with theirs.

On the morning of Tuesday, December 13, we were able to meet with Dr. William Colglazier, the Science and Technology Advisor to the Secretary of State. He gave us some insights to the advisor side of policy making. It was shocking to find out that sometimes policy makers ignore sound scientific advice in order to satisfy the demands of their constituents. After the session, there was a block of time for people to explore DC. Small groups were formed and we dispersed. A number of us walked over to see the Lincoln Memorial and the newly built Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. We proceeded to walk down "The Mall" to see the Smithsonian Museums, before heading back to the William Penn House for a dinner dialogue with Dr. David Doll, recent Caltech graduate who now works at the Center for Naval Analysis, and two fellows from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

After a night's rest, we met with Michael Ledford, the principle lobbyist for Caltech, to hear from an insider what lobbying is actually like. Then

we took the metro to the Department of Energy to hear Dr. Peter Lyons talk about the current policy for Nuclear Energy. In the afternoon, we talked to Dr. Steve Koonin from the Science and Technology Institute, and a former Caltech physics professor. We were all tired by dinner time, but then we chatted with Dr. Mike Nelson, former Science Policy Advisor to Al Gore, and Dr. John Andelin, former Congressional Advisor. They recounted amazing stories that invigorated us and enlightened us on the secrets of policy making.

On our final day in DC, we were warmly welcomed by AAAS, who provided us with breakfast as we listened to their presentations.

All in all, not only did we learn a lot about the policy world from the discussion sessions with prominent personnel, but we also learned much about the culture of Washington DC. We were able to explore the museums, the Memorials, the White House, and downtown DC. It was an eventful trip.



At the Department of Energy



At the Einstein Memorial

### Union Station – an ongoing effort to give back to the community

by Susan Liao '14, Student

For over 15 years, the Caltech Y has partnered with Union Station Homeless Services, a local non-profit which helps Pasadena-area men, women, and families, currently living without a regular home, rebuild their lives by providing temporary shelter and social services tailored towards establishing stable living. In 2010 and 2011, Union Station Homeless Services was recognized as "Pasadena's Best Charity" by the Pasadena Weekly newspaper for over thirty-five years of dedicated

work.

Every month, the Caltech Y organizes a group of students to prepare a meal at the Union Station Adult Center, which provides housing for fifty-six residents and provides meals to many others. These meals are part of the *Union Station Community Meals* program, where local non-profits and religious groups prepare a meal in Union Station's own industrial kitchen. In November, a mixed Caltech group – undergraduate students, graduate students and post-docs – visited the Adult Center to

prepare a generous meal for the monthly program.

After toiling for a few hours in the kitchen, we produced a breaded chicken entree with sides of croissant rolls, mashed potatoes, creamed corn, stuffing, and sautéed mushrooms. Watermelon, ice cream, and cheese-cake were served for dessert. We prepared over sixty meals in total.

After we finished preparing and serving the meal, the most enjoyable part of the evening began when we sat down to dine with the residents. It's a

## Union Station (continued)

very eye-opening experience, which dispels many of the myths and stereotypes, which surround the homeless in Pasadena. Especially with the recent economic downturn, many of the temporary residents are ordinary people who are still struggling to find their way back.

Additionally, the Caltech Y also supports *Dinner in the Park* meals with Union Station. These are community meals, prepared and served during the holiday season to the homeless and elderly, and open to the entire Pasadena community. On Christmas Day, a small group of Caltech undergraduates

and graduate students chose to spend time at Central Park to give back during the holiday. We were a part of a larger group of over eight hundred volunteers, who helped serve over fifty holiday hams and hundreds of side dishes. Additionally, students also helped distributed more than a thousand gifts to local children through the US Marine's Toys for Tots.

Through my experience of volunteering in the *Community Meals* program through the Caltech Y, I believe Union Station's philosophy and approach to tackling homeless is especially useful because they focus on helping each in-

dividual overcome unique challenges. After talking with many of the residents, it is clear that there is no profile which fits all the residents, and that Union Station treats individuals on a case-by-case situation rather than as a total population. Not simply providing shelter and food, Union Station also provides career counseling, assistance on overcoming substance abuse, and medical and mental health services.

I'm glad that the Caltech Y can contribute to Union Station's ongoing effort to end homelessness through the *Community Meals* and *Dinner in the Park* programs.

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## Bird-Watching Trip to the Devils' Gate Dam

by Limei Zhang, Postdoc

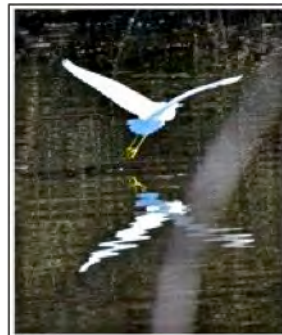
On December 11, seventeen Caltech Y members, guided by local bird-watching enthusiast Ms. Vivica Sapin, went on a bird-watching trip to the Devil's Gate Dam in the JPL area. The Devil's Gate Dam area has several different habitats, which makes it a perfect place to find many different

kinds of bird species.

Under the instructions of Vivica, we recognized over 26 species in this trip, including California quails, white-throated swifts, acorn woodpeckers, the spotted towhee and many others. This journey was concluded with a climax – six red-tail hawks were circling around in the sky when we

returned to the parking lot.

Here we'd like to thank Vivica for kindly sharing her bird-watching experience with us and for giving her patient, detailed descriptions about how to distinguish birds to our bird-watching amateurs.



## Recent Events (continued)

# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 2012 Commemoration events

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

Once again, the Caltech Y played a role in the planning of activities commemorating the life and service of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Along with the Caltech Center for Diversity, Dean's Offices, and International Student Programs, the Y coordinated the following events:

### Photographic Presentation and Dessert Reception: Oscar Michel

On Tuesday, January 17, Caltech kicked off its MLK Commemoration calendar with a thought provoking presentation and reception with photographer Oscar Michel. Students and staff joined us for dessert at our reception with photographer Oscar Michel, who showed photos of Occupy LA and discussed the group and protest in the Center for Student Services. Michel addressed several small groups during his time there.

### The Words of Dr. King: "I Have A Dream"

On Wednesday, January 18, 15 joined us to watch a video of King's most famous speech, which was played several times over the lunch hour. From the 1963 March on Washington, the "I Have a Dream" speech is still significant today as those there can attest. A

display, and handouts, provided the text for those who wanted to follow along.

### Movie: "The Help" (2011)

Set in 1960s Mississippi, a southern society girl, who returns from college determined to be a writer, turns her small town upside down when she decides to interview the black women who have spent their lives caring for prominent southern families. The movie, based on the award-winning book and starring Emma Stone, Viola Davis, and Bryce Dallas Howard, was shown and discussed Wednesday January 18 with a small group of students.

### Video Lunch: "Eyes On The Prize: The Promised Land" (1967-68)

The "Eyes On The Prize" series is called the most comprehensive televi-

sion documentary on the American Civil Rights Movement. The Caltech Y hosted a lunch for a group of students and staff. Episode 10 shows that King and many in the movement linked poverty and the war. Activists sought to expand the struggle for civil rights to include economic equality and organized a multiracial Poor Peoples Campaign. In Memphis, violence shattered King's plans for a peaceful protest and, later, he delivered the speech that would become his epitaph the day before an assassin took his life.

### MLK Service Projects

Coordinated by the Caltech Y, on January 21, a number of students joined the nation-wide effort turning Dr. King's teachings into action and making a tangible difference in our community. Guided volunteer projects, transportation, meals, and t-shirts were provided for all.

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## Outstanding SASS Event featured Tavis Smiley

by Anna Salazar, Postdoc

On January 24, the Caltech Y Social Activism Speaker Series (SASS) hosted a fantastic lecture from Tavis Smiley, a broadcaster, author, publisher, advocate, and philanthropist. Tavis Smiley is currently the host of the late-night television talk show Tavis Smiley on PBS, and two Public Radio International shows: "The Tavis Smiley Show" and "Smiley and West." The latter is co-hosted with his abiding friend, Dr. Cornel West.

Tavis Smiley is an engaging speaker who focused much of his lecture upon poverty in America. Mr. Smiley left his studio chair in Los Angeles to go on the road with "Tavis Smiley Reports," his primetime specials on PBS, which examine some of the country's most defining moments. The reports included going behind the scenes examining one of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s greatest speeches, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence," examining an undeclared crisis in America – the staggering dropout rate among young black males; and highlighting the plight of the poor of all backgrounds in Smiley's 18-city "Pov-

erty Tour" in August 2011.

In his Beckman Auditorium lecture, Tavis Smiley discussed the findings of the White Paper written by Indiana University Professors, "At Risk:

America's Poor During and After the Great Recession," which discusses the high number of people in poverty in America, the high number of people who are "near" poverty, and the



Katja Luxem '14 and Malvika Verma '14 (SASS), Aric Fitzcoy '12 (BSCIT), Tavis Smiley, and Anna Salazar (SASS)

## ***Tavis Smiley (continued)***

"newly" poor, with numbers approaching 50% of the population. Mr. Smiley believes that, instead of demonizing or blaming the poor, we need to show compassion. He says that the top 400 Americans have more wealth than the bottom 150 million people, a wealth gap that is creating a national security risk. Furthermore, 24% of the nation's children are currently living in poverty, which is a state of emergency and is morally obscene.

Mr. Smiley emphasized the fact that our current presidential candidates do not spend time discussing the poor in the US, and that this is a very important issue that should not be so readily ignored by current leaders. He believes that we should be a society that cares about our fellow man and that there should not be so many millions of people in this country just struggling to survive.

Tavis Smiley also discussed what it

takes to be a true leader, saying true leaders care about their fellow human beings and are also willing to serve others. Using this definition of leader, the number of true leaders in Washington and other places in society seem fairly scarce. Mr. Smiley also discussed that we should strive for greatness, instead of fame and monetary successes. According to Mr. Smiley, individual greatness can be attained by understanding one's individual gifts and by understanding how to use these talents to fulfill needs that exist in society.

In addition to his radio and television work, Tavis Smiley has authored 15 books. His memoir, "What I Know for Sure: My Story of Growing Up in America," became a New York Times best seller. In his latest book, "FAIL UP: 20 Lessons on Building Success from Failure," Mr. Smiley steps from behind the curtain of success to recount

20 instances of perceived "failures" that were actually pivotal "life lessons." Mr. Smiley also mentioned an upcoming book that he has co-written with Princeton Professor, Dr. Cornel West, called, "The Rich and The Rest of Us," which will be about poverty.

Mr. Smiley's most gratifying accomplishments are rooted in his passion to inspire the next generation of leaders. The nonprofit Tavis Smiley Foundation was established to provide leadership training and development for youth. His communications company, The Smiley Group, Inc., is dedicated to supporting human rights and related empowerment issues.

The Question and Answer period was especially interesting, with Mr. Smiley explaining personal anecdotes about his own financial struggles and how we must keep moving forward, in spite of hardships. We were fortunate to have such a powerful speaker at Caltech.

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## ***Meet the ExComm***

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

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### **Mario Zubia '13**

*by Liz Jackman, Y Assistant Director of Programs & Services*

Mario Zubia describes himself as amiable and this is the perfect word choice. He is always happy, well-liked, and exudes cheerfulness with his great smile. As a junior biology major, Mario is probably the only bio major at Caltech who is not premed. Instead he'd like to pursue a career in research and he's already off to a great start. He's done a SURF in the Bruce Hay Lab working to stop the transmission of malaria using genetic elements. The plan is to replace wild type mosquitoes with genetically engineered ones. He spent almost the entire summer dissecting ovaries of mosquitoes and still enjoys research, which is a good sign that he's cut out for a career in research. He's now in the Patterson lab working with Huntington disease.

Mario enjoys helping people and that's how he got involved with the Caltech Y. He loved doing community service as a high school student and wanted to continue at Caltech. He's gone to Yosemite for *Alternative Spring Break* and helped lead the *DC Science Policy Trip*. Although the *DC Trip* wasn't



community service per say, he liked hearing a different side to science that "we normally don't hear at Caltech." Caltech is very focused on academia, but going to DC showed Mario some of the mitigation that happens between politicians and scientists. He hopes to

continue his community service by leading an *Alternative Spring Break* trip this year or next.

Along with helping people, Mario strives to voice student opinions on campus. He does this through his position on ExComm at the Caltech Y, as treasurer of the ASCIT board, serving on the Conduct Review Committee, and planning events with CLASES ([Caltech Latino Association of Students of Engineering and Sciences](#)). He's also on the Lloyd house social team and works as a *RISE* tutor with the Caltech Y. In what little free time he has left over, he likes to discover bands before they get big and is always looking up new artists.

Mario's passion for research and helping others is evident in all that he chooses to participate in. Judging from his research and community involvement we will continue to see Mario making a difference in the world throughout his lifetime.

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## Coming Events (December-January)

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### Y Winter Friends Dinner – “Preventing Transmission of HIV”

with Dr. David Baltimore – at the Athenaeum, February 9

When HIV was discovered to be the cause of AIDS, we hoped a vaccine could soon be developed, but today there is no anti-HIV vaccine and it is not clear we will ever have one. However, very effective antibodies against HIV transmission have been recovered from some HIV-infected patients and are available as monoclonal antibodies. We have taken on the challenge of inducing the body to make such antibodies. In a paper just published in *Nature*, we show that we can protect mice carrying a human immune system against HIV infection by causing them to produce these powerful antibodies. We are gearing up for a trial of this methodology in humans.

David Baltimore, former president of



the California Institute of Technology (1997-2006) is President Emeritus and the Robert Andrews Millikan Professor of Biology, and is one of the world's most influential biologists. In 1975, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his work in virology. He has contributed widely to the understanding of cancer, AIDS and the molecular basis of the human body's immune response, and has profoundly influenced national science policy on such issues as the AIDS epidemic and research in genetic engineering.

The evening begins at 6:00 with a no-host bar, dinner at 7:00 and the talk at 8:00. For reservations, please contact the Y by phone or the web. (See p. 9)

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## Student Programs Preview

by Greg Fletcher, Y Student Activities & Community Services Director

### Coming Soon! February

**Explore LA Series** – *Explore LA Series* scores with a trip to see a professional hockey game as the Columbus Blue Jackets come to town to face off against our Los Angeles Kings. 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.

**Life Skills Series** – Following up on last year's successful lunch talk on filing taxes, the ExComm is again coordinating a lunch talk on the subject to help prepare students. The *Life Skills Series* continues to bring experience to

the table around a variety of skills that may not be covered in the classroom but that are essential to living life.

**Y-Outdoors Program** – Our leaders from the Y-Outdoors committee are looking into some winter adventures in the area – hoping the weather cooperates. A trip to the Coronado Butterfly Preserve in Santa Barbara County is on the calendar for February 4. *Y-Outdoors Programs* provide Caltech students, including novices and experienced outdoor enthusiasts, an exciting opportunity to explore with guidance.

**Studenski Memorial Award** – The *Studenski Award* application materials are available this month with proposals due February 29. The *Studenski* is a grant of up to \$4,000, established in the memory of Paul Studenski, who in

1974 was killed in an automobile accident while on a trip across the US. It is awarded to a Caltech undergrad who has reached a crossroad in life and would benefit from a period away from the academic community in order to obtain a better understanding of self and to explore possible directions for his / her future.

### Coming Later!

Of course, the major planning is now under way for some of our most extensive programs of the year:

#### *Alternative Spring Break and Make-A-Difference Day*

There is plenty to do through the Y, even during the winter season. Stay tuned for all the program news coming your way.

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## PALAC-Caltech Connection

### “Sex on Six Legs: Lessons on Life, Love, and Language from the Insect World”

On February 15, Susan Liao '14 will lead a discussion of the first chapter of a new book with the above title, by Prof. Marlene Zuk of U.C. Riverside. Insects have inspired fear, fascination, and enlightenment for centuries. They are capable of incredibly complex behavior, even with brains often the size of a poppy seed. How do they accomplish feats that look like human activity – personality, language, childcare –

with completely different pathways from our own? What is going on inside the mind of those ants that march like boot-camp graduates across our kitchen floor? How does the lead ant know exactly where to take her colony to that one breadcrumb that your nightly sweep missed? Can insects be taught new skills as easily as your new puppy? A *New York Times* review of this book, stated: “Insects provide ex-

cellent fodder for studying the relative value of inheritance versus environment, the evolution of personality, the definition of language, and the downside of growing bigger brains.” Join us, as we explore new frontiers in insect ethology. We will also hear a little about Susan's undergraduate research work on the evolution of the sperm/egg reproduction mechanism.

# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

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

## February 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 <i>RISE Tutoring Explore LA LA Kings Hockey</i>	2 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	3 <i>Hathaway-Sycamores</i>	4 <i>Coronado Butterfly Trip</i>
5	6 <i>RISE Tutoring Y Board Mtg</i>	7 <i>Y ExComm Mtg RISE Tutoring</i>	8 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	9 <i>RISE Tutoring Y Friends Dinner</i>	10 <i>Hathaway-Sycamores</i>	11 <i>Zombie 5k</i>
12		14 <i>Y ExComm Mtg</i>	15 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	16 <i>RISE Tutoring PALAC</i>	17 <i>Hathaway-Sycamores</i>	18 <i>Union Station</i>
19		21 <i>Y ExComm Mtg</i>	22 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	23 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	24 <i>Hathaway-Sycamores</i>	25
26	27 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>	28 <i>Y ExComm Mtg RISE Tutoring</i>	29 <i>RISE Tutoring</i>			

## 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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Note: Also visit the Caltech Y Facebook page by clicking the link, "Follow us on Facebook" available at the Y Website

### Y Staff

Athena Castro – Executive Director  
 Greg Fletcher – Student Activities & Community Service Director  
 Christopher Kealey – Marketing & Development Director  
 Liz Jackman – Assistant Director of Programs & Services  
 Heather Bixby – Program Coordinator (temporary status)

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### The Caltech Y News

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