

# CALTECH Y ANNUAL REPORT

2024







**Nick von Gersdorff**  
Board Chair

Founded in 1916, the Caltech Y has been a steady beacon of service, resilience, and community engagement, enduring historical challenges which have tested our region's fortitude. From staffing soup kitchens during the Great Depression to helping with the recovery from the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake, we have consistently risen to support one another with compassion and action. During times of great uncertainty, we forged our commitment to our pillars, including leadership, civic engagement, and service.

Once again, the Caltech Y is shining brightly. This past year, our students, staff, and volunteers partnered with many non-profits to support the community. Luke Zhou and fellow student board members on the ExComm led events such as Make-A-Difference Day, which this year supported Habitat for Humanity, Friends InDeed, and the Boys & Girls Club. Another example of the great impact on the community is the Caltech Y's Rise program, which sponsored tutoring for 180 students during the 2023-2024 academic year.

The annual Caltech Y Friends Dinner on May 1 featured an intimate discussion with Professor Jamie Bock on NASA's SPHEREx launch. With over 110 attendees, this was another great opportunity for the Caltech Y, Caltech students, Friends of the Caltech Y, and the Pasadena community to connect and engage with the cutting-edge of science.

We are thankful for your continued support! Your contributions to the Caltech Y are more important than ever.





## Luke Zhou

### Student Executive Committee President

As my time as a Caltech undergraduate draws to a close, I have spent more time reflecting on the experiences acquired and the lessons learned. The Caltech Y has played a pivotal role in shaping me into who I am today. From local volunteering opportunities just a few miles away for Make-a-Difference Day to the distant conferences and soul-searching trips powered through the Hummel-Gray and Hastrup Adventure Awards, the Y has allowed me to broaden my perspective beyond the limits of what I had done before. For that, I will forever be grateful to the Y and its commitment to student growth.

With the goal of providing the same opportunities for exploration to all, the student ExComm has worked tirelessly, expanding the scope of the Y's programming in all areas. We have brought students to a showing of The Nutcracker and educated students on topics such as election analysis and cloud seeding, which are not traditionally taught in the classroom.

Several students have reignited old outreach programs, such as Pasadena LEARNS, while others have forged new connections at other institutions, including Anawakalmekak, an Indigenous Peoples school in the Los Angeles area. This is all in addition to the continuous programs we support year round: the meal preparation at Union Station, the Explore LA Cultural Cuisine Tours, and the tutoring services that remain strong and steadfast.



At the beginning of the new year, the Eaton Fire erupted, disrupting lives and decimating neighborhoods in Altadena. In the wake of this disaster, however, a new sense of community was born – the Y fostered stronger relationships with and joined a student-led collaboration between ASCIT, GSC, and CPA to support fire relief efforts and promote community. The presence of the Caltech Y among these organizations is testament to the Y's multifaceted and critical role in supporting students and the community.

Through its transformative programs that explore policy, the great outdoors, the local and global communities, and more, the Y enables students to transform into role models and to make the Caltech experience more meaningful for everyone. This kind of positive change is only possible with your support – your generosity has been invaluable to our growth as leaders. On behalf of the Caltech Y, thank you for your commitment to the students of Caltech.



# 2023-24 Awards



## Advocating Change Together (ACT)

Tyler Fox

Offers students an opportunity to explore a cause and make a difference. Funded by the Caltech Employees Federal Credit Union (CEFCU).



## Lucy Guernsey Service Award

Sebastian Lamas, Nicholas Friesenhahn,  
Cai Tong Ng

Initiated in 1992 by the Caltech Y ExComm in honor of Lucy Guernsey, the Caltech Y's Executive Director from 1989-1992, in recognition of her leadership, dedication to students, and diligence to furthering the Y's commitment to volunteerism.

## Gunilla Hastrup Adventure Award

Leo Zhang, Emma Sosa, Marilyn Recarte,  
Daniel Echeverri & Tyler Amick,  
George Ore & Sophia Adams,  
Genevieve Gandara & Miguel Liu-Schiaffini,  
and Catherine Ko & Luke Zhou

Established in memory of Gunilla Hastrup, a long-time Caltech Y Board Member, and provides students the opportunity to take a break from the rigors of academic life, delve into their family roots or history, and/or explore a different culture. The award captures her devotion to student welfare, as well as her spirit of adventure, love of travel, and belief in maintaining strong cultural ties.

## Patrick Hummel & Harry Gray Travel Fund

Elliott Mueller, Rebecca Wipfler, Jessie Gan,  
Michael Sowell, Shrishti Pankaj Kulkarni,  
Henry Peterson, Jaeden Bardati, Riley Tam

Initiated by Carla and Paul Hummel, with Patrick Hummel (Caltech, BS, MS 2006), to honor Harry B. Gray on his 80th birthday. In response, Prof. Gray, Arnold O. Beckman Professor of Chemistry and Founding Director of the Beckman Institute, and his wife Shirley generously doubled the fund. This award supports travel that fosters professional and leadership development while broadening students' perspectives as responsible global citizens. It also celebrates the special relationship between the Gray and Hummel families.

## Paul Studenski Memorial Fund

Athena Kolli, Ellen Min

Created in memory of Paul Studenski, a Caltech student who was killed in an automobile accident while traveling across the United States in 1974. It is awarded to a Caltech undergraduate who has reached a crossroads in life and would benefit from a period away from the academic community to gain self-awareness and explore possible directions for the future.





# 2023-24 Programs

## Social Programs

- 📍 Explore LA:
  - Cultural Cuisine Tours:
    - Dim Sum and Cantonese, Hong Kong, India, Korea, Malaysia, Portugal, Thailand, Uyghur, Vietnam
  - Disney's *Wish* at the El Capitan Theater
  - Knott's Berry Farm Boysenberry Festival
  - Night at the Opera: Madama Butterfly

- 📍 Fall Decompression

- 📍 Fresh Fruit Friday (Spring)

## Outreach

- 📍 Orientation Y Open House
- 📍 Alumni Weekend Eaton Canyon Hike
- 📍 Caltech Dining Services Board Dinner

## Outdoor Adventures

- 📍 Day Trips:
  - Kayaking
  - Brown Mountain / El Prieto Day Hike
- 📍 Camping Trips:
  - Blair Valley Stargazing Trip, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
  - Joshua Tree Camping, Hiking, & Bouldering Trip
- 📍 Adventure 101 Talks:
  - Camping and Backpacking Basics
  - Great Hikes in the Greater LA Area
  - Long-Distance Backpacking Abroad with Jeremy Brouillet

- 📍 Y-Hike: Yosemite

## Community Service

- 📍 Cloverly Elementary School STEAM Night
- 📍 CSA Fair 2023-24
- 📍 Suva Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Campus Tour & Demos
- 📍 Young Legends
- 📍 Union Station Birthday Club
- 📍 Rise Tutoring Program:
  - Rise In-Person, Monday-Thursday
  - Steam Summer Experience (SSE)
  - Y-Tutor (online)
  - Muir Rise
- 📍 Union Station Homeless Services:
  - Adopt-a-Meal (monthly)
  - Birthday Club
  - MLK week service in partnership with CCID
- 📍 MLK Week: Habitat for Humanity ReStore in partnership with CCID

- 📍 Make-A-Difference-Day:

- Eaton Canyon
- Alhambra Convalescent Hospital
- Ronald McDonald House
- Eco Urban Gardens
- Pasadena Humane Society
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore

- LA Arboretum
- STEAM: Coders
- North East Trees
- Boys & Girls Club
- LA Makerspace
- Project Linus
- Science Olympiad

## Cultural & Educational Programs

- 📍 Life Skills:

- Finance Friday with Denny Delgadillo from TIAA
- Finance Friday with Erica White from JP Morgan
- Finance Friday with Pattyl Aposhian from CEFCU
- Google Sheets & Excel with Chase Blanchette & Randy Ngo
- Mending with Maddy Christensen

- 📍 Professional Attire & Headshots with CALE

- 📍 STEM Adjacent Career Exploration Industry Day

- 📍 Friends Dinner- AI Dialogue: Bridging Minds & Machines with Karina Montilla Edmonds & Mario Munich

- 📍 Costa Rica Environmental Sustainability and Service Trip

- 📍 Hawai'i Environmental Sustainability Trip

- 📍 Washington DC Science Policy Trip

- 📍 Student Activism Speaker Series (SASS):

- Building a Women's Voting Bloc and A Future Where All Are Equal with Zach Mooney
- Can Los Angeles Lead the World on Climate? With Estelle Reyes and Williams Lopez from the LA Cleantech Incubator (LACI)
- Local Government Symposiums with Terry Tornek
- Kate Zernike, Pulitzer Prize Winning Author of "The Exceptions"
- Science to Policy: How Scientists Can Engage or Work for Congress - Conversation with AAAS Congressional Fellow Alexandra Phillips
- The Bamboo Ceiling - Lunch with Linda Akutagawa with AACT

- 📍 World Fest (in partnership with ISP and ASCIT):

- African Paradise in Zimbabwe with Tinashe Handina, Nyasha Makaya, & Kim Muchenje
- Clans and Castles: Exploring Heritage with Gabi Twombly & Hope Arnett
- International Food Fair and Multicultural Fashion and Talent Show
- Roots Rediscovered: Stories From India's Diaspora with Rajashik Tarafder
- The Nuances and Traditions of Great Britain with Peter Boorman

- 📍 Movies that Matter:

- LA Real: A Theatrical Reel
- The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks

- 📍 MLK Week (in partnership with CCID):

- "Rustin" Movie Screening
- Keynote Lunch with Gerald Garth





# Bringing Hope for the Planet

Arabella Camuñez



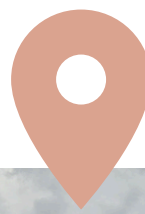
Growing up in Las Cruces, New Mexico, Arabella Camuñez saw how climate change affected her hometown. As a young girl, the Rio Grande was flush and flowing three months of the year. By the time she was 16 years old, the river was full only one month of the year. Wildfires also grew in frequency and intensity in the Southwest. Camuñez grew accustomed to seeing the bright red sunsets, a sign that fire season was underway.

Those experiences shaped Camuñez. In her application to Caltech, she expressed interest in combining sustainability science and public policy in her studies and career. When the chemical engineering student received her acceptance letter, Ashley Pallie, director of admissions, continued a long-standing tradition of adding a handwritten message. She encouraged Camuñez to consider joining the Caltech Y and its annual Washington D.C. Science Policy Trip, one of the Y's Alternative Break trips.

Thanks to the Y, Camuñez, now a rising Junior, has met with several scientists and policymakers. In April, she led the Geneva Global Policy Trip, another Caltech Y Alternative Break program. In Geneva, she met U.S. diplomats and workers from the United Nations and the International Federation of Red Cross who discussed international initiatives to eradicate polio and help African farmers optimize crop yields as climate events become more extreme.

Camuñez also followed Pallie's suggestion and participated in the Washington D.C. trip and spent one summer researching how to efficiently recycle minerals that power nuclear energy. She is inspired by Caltech alumni and their dedication to integrating evidence-based science into legislation and public policy.





“Having the chance to talk to someone from the Department of Defense and then going to NASA and learning how NASA is involved in policy is very motivating to me,” Camuñez says. “Maybe this random career idea I have is actually a meaningful career.”

Through the Caltech Y, Camuñez has also explored California state and national parks and participated in Alternative Break trips to India and Costa Rica. On the latter trip, the opportunity to experience the Central American country’s biodiversity, lush rainforests, and fragile ecosystems reinforced Camuñez’s passion for sustainability.

“These environments are so important for things like providing oxygen on Earth, but they are also so vulnerable to what humans are doing to them,” Camuñez says. “Actually visiting this beautiful country gave me a greater appreciation for how important climate conservation work is.”

Building on the belief that traveling can broaden students’ perspectives and foster responsible citizenship, the Alternative Break programs put her and her classmates first. Thanks to support from alumni and community members, the Caltech Y underwrites a significant portion of each trip so it is within financial reach for Caltech graduate students and undergraduates. Students also play an active role in creating the trip itinerary around their interests. In Geneva, Camuñez and her fellow classmates visited CERN, home of the Large Hadron Collider, and the World Meteorological Organization.

**“It’s so easy to get stuck in an academic bubble,” Camuñez says. “Hiking the local mountains, traveling to other countries, and meeting alumni who are making a difference in the world are all a reminder of the bigger world out there, and the future we want to create.”**







Perspective

Athena Kolli, Studenski Award - Como, Italy

"I took a two-week course entitled 'Textile Design: Fashion and Interior' at the Academia di Belle Arti Aldo Galli in Como, Italy. The intersection of fields is extremely interesting to me because I plan to pursue a PhD in Materials Science and Engineering and have also recently become passionate about sustainability alongside fashion."



Adventure

Dan Echeverri & Tyler Amick, Hastrup Adventure Award - Japan

"The trip was an unforgettable experience filled with wonder and enrichment. We learned so much about Japanese culture and heritage, beyond what we could have ever hoped for. Specifically, we are grateful for all that we learned that we didn't know we were unaware of."



Civic Engagement

Trip Participant, Costa Rica Environmental Sustainability Alternative Break Trip

"The trip was not only an adventure filled with hikes and farm-to-table meals but also an enlightening experience in rainforest restoration. This approach highlighted how technology can contribute to sustainable practices, expanding my view of its potential impact, making me realize how I can leverage my skills for environmental care."



Leadership

Student Executive Committee, Outdoors Committee, Student Activism Speaker Series Committee - Pasadena, CA

Student leaders across three committees lead projects all around the greater Los Angeles area. Coordinating the Annual Make-a-Difference Day, cooking meals at the Union Station Homeless Center, and hosting leaders in science, policy, and humanitarianism are just a few of the ways students gain leadership experience.



Service

Tyler Fox, ACT Award, Best Friends Sanctuary - Kanab, UT

"Understanding and experiencing all of the aspects that allow Best Friends to operate so effectively at such a large scale has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Being a part of such an amazing community for two weeks has been inspiring and has touched my heart deeply as I plan to continue to stay involved with animal rescue and welfare in the future."



PLACES

The Caltech Y is more than a building or a collection of programs — it's a community where people from every background come together around shared passions and interests. At the heart of the Y are five pillars — **Perspective, Leadership, Adventure, Civic Engagement, and Service**, which Catherine Ko (BS '24) so fittingly captured as **PLACES** — the Y fosters spaces around the world where divisions fade. Whether on campus, in Pasadena, or across the globe, the Caltech Y offers opportunities that broaden horizons and opens doors to new possibilities.





# 2023-24 Individual Donors

We are grateful to the hundreds of people who support our mission through the annual campaign and additional contributions. Here, we recognize those who have donated so generously this past year. Thank you!

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Caltech Y Individual Donors live in over  
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The Caltech Y would like to express our gratitude to the following campus groups, foundations, companies and community groups for their contributions to, and sponsorships of, Y programs and events. Your support makes a world of difference!

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California Institute of Technology  
Class of 2024

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Photos by Bob Paz, students, and staff

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### OFFICE LOCATION

505 S. Wilson Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91106

### CONTACT US

caltechy@caltech.edu  
(626) 395-6163  
[www.caltechY.org](http://www.caltechY.org)





# Science Inspired by Nature

## Eitan Rapaport

Inspiration does not always strike inside a Caltech laboratory for Eitan Rapaport (BS '23). **Sometimes, the best research ideas for understanding the physical processes that form and shape Earth and other planets come to him while hiking and camping with the Caltech Y.**

"We're blessed to be in California that has just so many things to see and so many protected lands," says Rapaport, who grew up in Santiago, Chile, and Miami. "When you have a good space to think, good ideas happen."

Rapaport first learned of the Caltech Y as an incoming first-year student. The annual Y-Hike Pre-orientation Trip invites new undergraduate and graduate students to explore Yosemite National Park's trails, waterfalls, and iconic geology. The physics, history, and philosophy student registered for the trip and was grateful for the opportunity to forge new friendships before he stepped on campus. To this day, the people who joined the Yosemite trip are some of his closest friends.

The experience was so enjoyable that Rapaport volunteered to serve on the Y-Outdoors Committee. For the past six years, Rapaport, along with seven other committee members, has led efforts to host two day hikes and one camping trip a quarter. In keeping with the Caltech Y's commitment to fostering responsible citizenship, members also volunteer at trail restoration and cleanup events.

After graduation, Rapaport joined Caltech's Seismological Laboratory to work as a research technician and remained involved with the Caltech Y. Heading to UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography this fall to begin his graduate studies, Rapaport says his favorite memories of the Caltech Y are the people and the locales. He has gazed at stars above Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, snapped photos of friends and walked along the cliffs at Channel Islands National Park, and shared stories over a campfire at Joshua Tree National Park.

These adventures do not focus on reaching a rugged mountain summit or testing the body's physical limits. Instead, the Y-Outdoors Committee intentionally designs its outings to be accessible to newcomers. The value of exploring sights away from campus and the stress-relieving benefits of being in nature are too important to be enjoyed by just a few people, Rapaport says. That is why the Caltech Y provides complimentary tents and sleeping bags for participants and also underwrites a large portion of transportation, reservation, and admission fees.

"You're in an academic environment where you're always working really hard on your classes, your homework, and your research," Rapaport says. "It's easy to never leave campus. Just simply going out for a hike or a camping trip for a weekend helps you realize 'Wow, I am a human being that isn't just designed to be an academic machine.'"







# Expanding Palates and Perspectives

Rachel Tham

The savory aromas and tantalizing flavors of Cantonese cuisine connect Rachel Tham to her culture. Tham, who is a graduate student studying materials science, had taken countless trips to restaurants in Alhambra and Monterey Park during her first few years at Caltech when she heard of a new Caltech Y program. It provided her with an opportunity to combine her love of food and community.

Launched by Student Executive Committee (ExComm) members in late 2023, the Caltech Y Explore LA Cultural Cuisine Tours tap into the Los Angeles area's rich diversity and take students on global food adventures. A premium is placed on chefs who stay true to the seasoning and flavorings of their home country. At these establishments, nothing is watered down for American palates.

Student volunteers with an intimate knowledge of the cuisine and country help guide the lunches and dinners. They answer questions about the menu, offer suggestions for uninitiated eaters, and share their heritage through the lens of food. When the Bay Area native learned the first tour stop was a Cantonese café in San Gabriel, Tham registered for the event and offered to be a student leader. Now, she is actively involved in planning the entire series of outings. Tham has served as a student leader three times and attended five meals out of 10 total.

"I wouldn't call myself a foodie, but I really enjoy food," says Tham who also serves on the Caltech Y's ExComm. "The Cultural Cuisine Tours allow me to share my culture and also visit restaurants I normally would not have gone to on my own."

Thanks to these culinary excursions, Tham has tasted Portuguese pasteis de nata (egg tarts), Indian dosas (savory crepes), and Vietnamese pho (noodle soup). The Caltech Y subsidizes the Cultural Cuisine Tours, allowing postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, and undergraduates on any budget to attend.

With more of the world to explore, Tham and her fellow Caltech Y leaders are making plans to enjoy Argentinian and Greek meals next school year.

"My Caltech community is bigger now because of these dinners," Tham says. "I've met undergraduates and I've also met a lot of graduate students from different departments. These experiences have been a meaningful part of my social life here."

These trips have also been a welcome exploration of identity and culture, Tham says. **Some of her best memories of the Cultural Cuisine Tours are seeing how one bite can take people back to their childhoods and hearing stories about students' many different life experiences.**

"I didn't realize how many different cultures are represented in the Caltech student body," Tham says. "By sharing their heritage through meals, I've really gotten to know people in various contexts. ExComm and I hope that through the Cultural Cuisine Tours we can help build even more community on campus."







# Giving

## to the Caltech Y

When you make a gift to the Caltech Y, you may choose how the funds will be used as you consider the options for making your donation. Unrestricted gifts allow the Caltech Y to allocate funds wherever the need is greatest, which means that your gift may be used across the entire spectrum of Caltech Y programs. Directed gifts allow you to choose the Caltech Y area of interest that most suits your intention. All donations are tax deductible. Here are options to consider when making your Unrestricted or Directed gift:

### The Caltech Y Centennial Endowment

A strong financial base guarantees that future generations of students will benefit from the Caltech Y's programs. Consider adding to an existing fund or establish a new named fund. Whatever method you choose, giving to the endowment fund creates a permanent legacy of support for the Caltech Y for the next 100 years.

### Charitable Gifts from IRAs

You may roll over your IRA to the Caltech Y and exclude the entire amount of that gift from your taxable income (certain limits apply). You can also create a charitable remainder trust as the beneficiary of your IRA, so that your heirs receive income from the trust and the Caltech Y receives any remaining principal.

### Cash Gifts

A minimum gift of \$200 per person or \$400 per couple qualifies you as a Friend of the Caltech Y for that year. The Friends of the Caltech Y is the primary support group of the Caltech Y. Friends are invited to two to three other private, special events throughout the year, and receive the Y's quarterly newsletters and annual report.

### United Way Pledges

Caltech staff and faculty may contribute through the United Way Campaign, which usually runs in the fall. If you are a Caltech employee, you can designate the Caltech Y to receive your pledge and the Institute match. Other companies also offer United Way matching. Please inquire at your workplace.

### Securities, Stocks, and Bond

These can provide a considerable tax advantage if transferred to the Caltech Y before they are sold. We have made this process even easier by using Every.org for all securities, stocks, and bond donations.

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### Planned Gifts

Bequest, life-income plans, and estate gifts are effective and tax efficient ways to make a legacy gift to the Caltech Y.

### Matching Gifts

Many companies offer matching gift benefits to their employees, doubling the value of their charitable contributions. Check with your company's human resources or benefits office to see if your employer has a corporate matching gift program. Your support will go twice as far. All gifts made to the Global Perspectives Fund (up to \$7,500) will be matched thanks to a friend of the Caltech Y, meaning you could quadruple your impact!

### Venmo, Zelle, & Paypal (NEW!)

Donations of all size make a difference. To allow for the easiest avenues possible to give, we are excited to announce we can now accept gifts using Venmo, Zelle, and Paypal through Every.org.

Check out  
our giving  
website



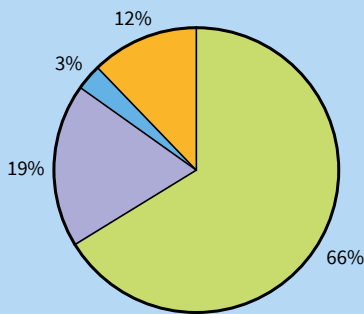


CALTECH Y BALANCE SHEET as of 9/30/24

Assets		Liabilities and Fund Balances	
		Liabilities	
Cash (\$5,937 restricted for endowment)	\$446,086	Accounts Payable	\$15,168
Prepaid Expenses	\$18,801	CIT Account Payable	\$26,678
Unconditional Promises to Give	\$9,190	Accrued Liabilities	\$68,356
Endowment Fund Investments	\$8,984,089	Deferred Revenue	\$8,275
Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts	\$1,757,718	Total Liabilities	\$118,477
Total Assets	\$11,215,884		
		Fund Balances	
		Operating Fund with and without Donor Restrictions	\$355,600
		Endowment Funds	\$8,984,089
		Beneficial Interest in Perpetual Trusts	\$1,757,718
		Total Fund Balance	\$11,097,407
		Total Liabilities & Fund Balances	\$11,215,884

During the year ended September 30, 2024, distributions received from certain other perpetual trust endowment funds, the income distributions from which are revocable, was \$5,742. The value of such funds, which are not included in the statement of financial position, was \$112,528 as of September 30, 2024.

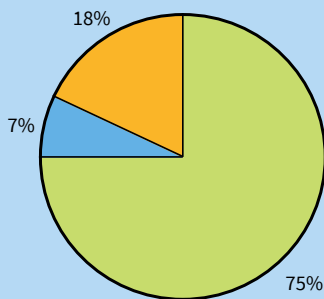
REVENUE & EXPENSES year ending 2024



Revenue and Support

Revenue and Support	
Contributions and Grants*	\$626,347
Endowment Income	\$118,150
Interest Income	\$28,754
Program Service Revenue	\$180,682
Total Revenue and Support	\$953,933

\*includes donations restricted for endowment of \$2,650



Expenses

Expenses	
Program Activities	\$883,716
Management and General	\$207,773
Development	\$87,773
Total Expenses	\$1,179,262
Net Income (Deficit) from Operations	(\$225,329)
Net Realized & Unrealized Gain on Endowment	\$1,435,664
Deficit of Revenue over Expenses	\$1,210,335





