NCWIT AWARD FOR ASPIRATIONS IN COMPUTING
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AFFILIATE CEREMONY
Tuesday, May 20, 2014 | Newport Beach, California
ABOUT NCWIT ASPIRATIONS IN COMPUTING

The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing builds a talent pool for the growing technical workforce and helps academic and corporate organizations celebrate diversity in computing by honoring young women at the high-school level for their computing-related achievements and interests. Award recipients are selected based on their aptitude and aspirations in technology and computing; leadership ability; academic history; and plans for post-secondary education.

The Award is a component of Aspirations in Computing — a talent development initiative of NCWIT designed to increase women’s meaningful participation in computing careers by providing encouragement, visibility, community, leadership opportunities, scholarships, and internships to high potential technically inclined young women. Aspirations in Computing is the only national level pipeline program for young women, 5th grade through graduate school, in computing and information technology.

NCWIT Aspirations in Computing is supported nationally by AT&T, Bank of America, Bloomberg, HP, Intel, and Microsoft with additional support from Google, Motorola Solutions Foundation, and Northrop Grumman.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR WOMEN & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (NCWIT)

The National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) is a non-profit community of more than 500 universities, companies, non-profits, and government organizations nationwide working to increase women’s participation in computing and technology. NCWIT convenes change leaders and equips them with resources for taking action in recruiting, retaining, and advancing women from K–12 and higher education through industry and entrepreneurial careers. Find out more at www.ncwit.org.

NCWIT receives significant financial support from Strategic Partners NSF, Microsoft, Bank of America, Google, and Intel, as well as from Investment Partners Avaya, Pfizer, Merck, Turner Broadcasting Systems, Inc., AT&T, Bloomberg, and Hewlett-Packard. View all of NCWIT’s supporters at www.ncwit.org/about/supporters.
ANA HERNANDEZ
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Ana is a Junior at Foshay Learning Center and a proud member of the school’s Technology Academy, FRC Robotic’s team, Film club and Academic Decathlon team. As a public speaker and STEM enthusiast, Ana hopes to spread the word that STEM is the new “cool” and that anyone can be an engineer! Ana’s computing achievements range from successfully writing her first piece of code in Java to hand coding an HTML website through Dreamweaver! She is proud of her experience with Photoshop and Scratch and the knowledge she has gained in LabVIEW and Java. One of Ana’s biggest accomplishments was her participation in an engineering camp with the National Student Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. Ana plans to study civil engineering or interactive media and animation in college and pursue a career in civil engineering or video game designing.

ANNA RESNICK
CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, GRETCHEN WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL

Anna fell in love with computing when she took her first class in movie making and Photoshop, and has mastered Power Director and Flash. She took a college CS course in Visual Basics and a C++ training. She is teaching herself Java and is the head programmer of her VEX Robotics Team. Last summer, Anna was selected for the EDGE engineering workshop at Union College, where she built a robotics learning toy for a child with Down’s syndrome. This was a valuable opportunity to connect technology with a life application. Anna is an artist and avid volunteer. In 2011, she co-founded a non-profit organization, Arts2Cure. The first project — Art for Tornado Relief — earned a ‘Do Something’ Disaster Grant, and allowed the organization to donate money for art classes in Joplin, Missouri. Anna would like to major in computer engineering, hoping to combine that with her love of art and philanthropy.

CALLA CARTER
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, PILGRIM SCHOOL

Calla’s binary baptism occurred in the form of a sluggish netbook, which (she claims) begged her to triple boot its SSD using conflicting boot loaders. Her passion continued to blossom at National Computer Camp. In an era before Codecademy and edX, Calla learned Java and C++. Toying with several languages, including Python, JavaScript, and Objective-C, on operating systems like ArchLinux, Ubuntu, OSX and 7, Calla sought to merge her technological fascination with her love of writing — first on her blog, and then on the Huffington Post. Calla led the creation of an aesthetically functional website for her school’s newspaper. She applied her skills to website bugs and audio problems, translated computer diagnostic questions to human-English, and formulated a technological solution library for HuffPost Live. She introduced the “Hour of Code” to her school, and dabbled in robotics and artificial intelligence. Calla hopes to intertwine technology and creativity in college.
CAMILA KATZ
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
10TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Camila takes AP Computer Science and classes in C, Java, and Python. She attended the LEAD CSI summer program at Caltech where she took college programming classes. Camila is most proud of her work at the UCLA LAPTAG Plasma High School Lab. There she uses computer programming and modeling for data arrays manipulation, analysis and 3D graphing. Camila is doing novel research creating two simultaneous resonance plasma cones. She presented the preliminary research results to the American Association of Physics Teachers and won first place in the high school division of the American Physics Society Division of Plasma Physics. Camila participates in Kumon Math; she plays 1st violin for her school’s orchestra and is a Junior Olympic springboard diver. She volunteers, is bilingual and is learning Chinese. Camila sees a future working for a company where she can use her analytical skills and diverse cultural, language, and leadership abilities.

CAMILLE NIBUNGCO
LA PUENTE, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, BISHOP AMAT MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Camille became very interested in video games and website creation the summer before high school. It was then that she discovered the strange but wonderful thing called ‘coding.’ She decided she wanted to learn how to program and began watching tutorials on YouTube and borrowing books from the library to learn Python. She taught herself HTML and CSS using online resources such as Codecademy, EdX, and Udacity. Camille followed a how-to-guide online and created her own personal website on a Wordpress platform and her father helped her build her own computer last summer. Her high school did not offer AP Computer Science because no teacher knew Java and there were not enough students, so Camille taught herself. She is interested in a variety of sub-fields in Computer Science including Human-Computer Interaction and User Experience and Design. She hopes to get involved in the start-up and space technology industries.

CLAIRE HUANG
DIAMOND BAR, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, DIAMOND BAR HIGH SCHOOL

Claire wears many hats at school: she is the State Treasurer of the Technology Student Association and Vice President of her school chapter; she is Vice President of Brahma Tech, a technology based school program; she is the A&E Editor of her school newspaper; she founded her school’s robotics team, is the FBLA Vice President and a member of the Science Olympiad team! Outside of school, Claire interned at Portera-Cailliau’s lab at UCLA’s Reed Neurological Research Center, where she learned MATLAB and assisted with a study on Fragile X Syndrome mice. Because of this experience, Claire was inspired to conduct her own studies on neurodegenerative diseases. She has participated in Raytheon’s Engineering Competition and won a first place (Animatronics) and second place (Biotechnology Design) honor at the California TSA Competition. She plans to study neuroscience in college because of her interests in the interdisciplinary fields of neurology and computer science.
DANA SIROTA
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, NORTH HOLLYWOOD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Dana is captain of the FIRST Robotics team and a member of a national finalist CyberPatriot team, in addition to being a lead builder for her school’s Science Olympiad team. An active member in her school’s robotics program, Dana heads the building for the FIRST team while helping out with building and finance for the Botball Club. Having learned cyber security, networking, and computer forensics in CyberPatriot, constructing and programming a robot from raw materials using Java and C with FIRST Robotics and Botball and building complex constructions with the help of woodworking technologies in Science Olympiad, Dana’s extensive experience has provided her with a well-rounded glimpse into the world of technology. When not participating in her school’s STEM extracurricular activities, Dana is an active member of the Red Cross Club and plays Ultimate Frisbee. Dana will be attending Colorado School of Mines in the fall.

DIANA SERRANO
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Two years ago, Diana tried being an amateur photographer and learned to edit pictures using Photoshop. Amazed by the technology, she jumped at the chance to join Foshay’s Technology Academy. Diana started with Scratch and followed tutorials to become familiar with the program. Her first project was an English Grammar game for 10th and 11th graders to prepare for the SAT. Although simple, it is still one of her best accomplishments. Diana learned Adobe Flash CS5 and used it to create short movie clips. In her technology class, she designed a Public Service Announcement on World Hunger using Flash. Diana has completed group assignments using Lego Mindstorm and AppInventor. Diana was one of the students selected to design Foshay’s Homecoming. Her favorite project is her digital portfolio and self-created website. Diana plans to study Business Management with an emphasis in Computer Science and pursue a career in business or acting.

DIVYA SIDDARTH
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Divya is fascinated by science and technology and is particularly interested in their application to medicine and public health problems. She has done research on varied public health phenomena, including obesity and aging, and has presented her findings at national conferences. Her work has been published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Journal of Investigative Medicine. Divya was a Roberts Summer Student Academy Fellow at the City of Hope Cancer Research Center where she developed a computational method to pinpoint druggable binding sites in protein-protein complexes, which can be used to design drugs with specificity. At her internship with the USC Department of Computational Biology, she developed an algorithm to organize and classify genomic data and implemented it in Python. Divya participated in COSMOS at UCSD where she learned MATLAB. Divya’s goal is to combine her passions for public health and technology to improve lives around the globe.
GABRIELA LOMELI
PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, PETE KNIGHT HIGH SCHOOL

Gabriela became proficient in computer-aided design with the SolidWorks software in her 9th grade Introduction to Engineering and Design course. Sophomore year she enrolled in Digital Electronics where she learned about the logic of electronics as she designed, tested and constructed circuits and devices. Gabriela participated in the Northrop Grumman Innovation Challenge, where she was honored that her teammates chose her model satellite shade design. When she pressed the button on the RC controller and a beautiful shade extended over the living room floor was one of the proudest moments of her life and was also the moment she knew she wanted to be an engineer. As a junior, Gabriela learned how vital computer programs are in her Principles of Engineering class. This year, she deepened her computing experience with programming lessons through Codecademy and AP Computer Science. Gabriela is going to Stanford and is an engineer in the making!

JASMINE TALAVERA
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Meet Jasmine C. Talavera, commonly known as JT. She enjoys solving puzzles, analyzing riddles, and taking on challenges to make her brain work! Sometime during her freshman and sophomore year she came to love mathematics and physics. This adoration of finding patterns and evaluating equations led her to study computer programming; Java to be exact. The fact that JT was able to comprehend this information allowed her to challenge herself with taking the AP Computer Science Exam without a class. Thanks to late night coding and practice drills she was able to pass the exam with a 4! Jasmine also has a passion for competing in the National Competition: CyberPatriots. She joined this club in 9th grade to expand her knowledge of computers. She absorbed so much knowledge on services and infrastructure made possible by computers; and the team made it to the National Finals two years in a row!

JENNY HUANG
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Jenny avoided math classes her first year in high school and focused primarily on an arts club she helped co-found. It was sheer curiosity (and the foolish thought that working with computers somehow equated to making video games) that made her check out CyberOps, her school’s only computer club. The only interest Jenny had in computers was her love for videogames. Yet she dedicated many hours and advanced to the CyberPatriot National Finals her first year! The following year, she studied for the AP Computer Science Exam and passed. Jenny has studied cybersecurity, cryptography, programming and networking and has learned Python, Windows, Linux, Abash and Base 64. Jenny plans on working with computers for the rest of her life, hopefully creating video games. Her first step is to publish a comic she’s been working on for three years and then to double major in English and Computer Science at UC Berkeley.
KAREN HER  
BREA, CALIFORNIA  
12TH GRADE, BREA OLINDA HIGH SCHOOL

Karen’s interest in technology stemmed from taking a Video Production course in junior high. She further pursued this interest by enrolling in her high school’s Global IT Academy. There, she learned to program in Visual Basic, HTML, JavaScript, Flash, and Java and completed projects like making her own version of Pacman, creating a web page on cyber safety and building web pages for a Taiwanese café. After helping run a program called Creative Computers, whose goal was to encourage students’ interest in technology, she started her own program to teach elementary school students basic web design. She even completed a summer internship at Boeing in Industrial Engineering and 3D printing where she learned to use a program called Computer Aided Three-dimensional Interactive Application (CATIA). Karen is a member of her school’s Academic Decathlon team. In the future, Karen hopes to pursue a career in computer science and business.

KARINA CARVAJAL  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
12TH GRADE, FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Karina’s interest in STEM fields has grown quickly and robustly, kind of like her school’s garden where she volunteers her time. Karina had an epiphany early on – technology can be connected to everything in the world around us. She feels that communicating with people is what opened the world of computer science to her. Through Iridescent’s Technovation Challenge, she worked with other students and created a mobile application for environmental issues relating to the garden. Karina was responsible for programming code blocks to command the actions in the app. She learned HTML and CSS to create a website using Adobe Dreamweaver and was able to delve more into website development during her internship with Edlio. She is involved in Robotics/MESA and has created robots and machines with design programs. Karina has used Google SketchUp and worked through programs like Lego Mindstorms and she tries to learn something new each day.

KATIE GUNDLACH  
LA QUINTA, CALIFORNIA  
12TH GRADE, LA QUINTA HIGH SCHOOL

Katie has loved programming since she was nine when she was introduced to the Botball robotics program. She attends a KISS C programming workshop each year to expand her knowledge and has been the lead programmer of her team for six years. Katie has had the opportunity to be a judge for the onsite presentations and volunteer for regional competitions when she was not a participant. Her greatest accomplishment in Botball was winning first place in the European Conference for Educational Robotics. Katie’s internship at the Interaction Lab at USC offered her an opportunity to build and program a robot to express different emotions. She incorporated the emotions into a story to show students the principles of Disney animation and had to film the finished product. Katie was asked to attend a workshop at the global conference. Besides robotics, Katie also has a passion for singing and tennis.
LARA BAGDASARIAN
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
9TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Lara is the founder and president of her school’s Technology and Entrepreneurship Club and the senior student help desk technician. She is taking AP Computer Science online and taught herself C programming. Lara knows JavaScript and has used Dreamweaver and HTML. Lara is captain and principal programmer of her school’s Technovation Challenge Team. Together, they designed a mobile application for the Android platform called ServeCity, an interactive database for community service coordinators. Lara created an electronic scoreboard for GolfbyKids, a non-profit that raises money for children’s issues. Lara was a Technovation Fellow for Iridescent Learning, where she critiqued the program’s website and launched the Southern California student ambassador program. She interned at the UCLA Smart Grid Energy Research Center and worked on a project to reduce energy costs and increase the stability of local power systems. Lara is interested in the application of computer science to real-world problems.

LAURA HU
FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, TROY HIGH SCHOOL

Laura’s first experience with technology came in fourth grade when she had to create a website documenting what she had learned. Laura had not realized she would be using Microsoft Publisher and was determined to program her own website. By sixth grade, she knew CSS and HTML and could code her own layouts. She and a friend decided to create their own version of Neopets, so Laura found V-Petsite and learned the basics of programming through VPCode, such as FOR loops and recursion. Laura learned PHP and mySQL because she wanted their website on its own platform. At Troy, Laura has taken AP and IB computer science classes. She knows Java, C++ and Python. She read up on cyber security and networking and placed fifth nationally for cyber security in FBLA. Laura is a member of Troy’s FRC team and she interned at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in computational chemistry.

LILLY KATE DIAZ
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
10TH GRADE, FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Lilly is part of Foshay’s Technology Academy. Her future aspirations include becoming a computer scientist and programmer and using those skills to continue her never-ending love affair with music. Lilly adores playing instruments, singing, and performing lovely pieces by Shakespeare and many great playwrights. Lilly’s curious and open mind has allowed her to discover amazing things. Lilly learned Scratch and HTML at SMASH Academy (Summer Math and Science Honors) a rigorous program where teens learn about computer science and other fields. One of Lilly’s greatest accomplishments is receiving her Technician’s license as an amateur radio operator and finally being able to operate a ham radio. Lilly would love to go to MIT for a degree in computer science and then to Ithaca College for a degree in psychology and music. Lilly wants to study computer science because of all the unanswered questions, and because of her desire to answer them.
MEGHA SRIVASTAVA
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Megha’s experience with computing and technology spans a wide range of fields: Linguistics, Cryptography, Machine Learning, Nanotechnology, Chemistry, Music, and Community Service. She loves the interdisciplinary opportunities computer science entails, such as computational chemistry, artificial intelligence, and image analysis. The world of codes has always piqued Megha’s interest, and after an online cryptography course, she secured an internship at USC/ISI’s Natural Language group working on machine learning and cryptographic algorithms. She also collaborated with Tsinghua University, China on processing a secret code language used by Chinese women called “Nushu.” Megha participated in a nanotechnology course at UPenn, where she won the best speaker award, and interned at UCLA’s California Nano Systems Institute. While at the COSMOS program, Megha learned about psychoacoustics and creative computing. Megha definitely wants to pursue computer science and computer engineering research in her future. In her spare time, Megha loves playing the piano, photography, and swimming.

MELANIE KRASSEL
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

What sparked Melanie’s interest in computer science was a 7th grade class which introduced her to Scratch and SketchPad. In 8th grade she worked with Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, and learned she really liked graphic design. Melanie created an online magazine through Blogspot, which has received over 37,000 views. Melanie was excited about Harvard-Westlake’s computer science curriculum and she took Intro to Programming I and II as a freshman and AP Computer Science A as a sophomore. Currently, Melanie is taking Design and Data Structures Honors and plans to take Advanced Topics in Computer Science Honors and Directed Studies: Web Programming. Melanie volunteers at CoderDojo, a program that teaches children the basics of programming. She is secretary of Harvard-Westlake’s Women in Technology club and is on the Track and Field team. Melanie will attend Stanford’s Artificial Intelligence program this summer. She is planning to pursue Computer Science in college.

MICHELLE TJOA
BREA, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, BREA OLINDA HIGH SCHOOL

Michelle loves the connection between technology and everyday life. In junior high, Michelle took video production and photography and learned how to make videos, pictures, and animated images. She taught herself HTML, and HTML 5 and Flash and created a simple website and Flash program. Michelle entered a local STEM fair and worked with PHP and JavaScript to create a project that helps those with dementia or Alzheimer’s disease. Michelle volunteers her time in her school’s computer library and with a children’s program called Creative Computers, where she teaches computer skills. She has built and coded a robot and learned Visual Basic to create her own version of Fruit Ninja. Michelle received a designing internship at Melrose and used her knowledge of web design to maintain the company’s website. Michelle’s career goal is to work with computers and create new designs, games and programs that can benefit daily life.
MOLLY CINNAMON
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Computer Science is the common denominator between Molly’s extracurricular interests and her formal lab research. Molly completed a Computational Biology internship at the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and has worked at the Laboratory of Neuro Imaging at UCLA. Molly was a High School Scholar at the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing at UCLA. This is where Molly dreamed up the idea for an Android app, “Another Man’s Treasure”, that informs users when items have been left on the side of the road so they can be reclaimed for second-life use. A short film Molly created about dispelling the stereotypes of women in technology has been broadcast as a PSA on television and the internet. Molly is part of the FIRST robotics team and is the founder and webmaster of her school’s blog, H-W Voices. Molly hopes to continue to impact society by bringing people together through technology.

NICOLE CHEN
DIAMOND BAR, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, DIAMOND BAR HIGH SCHOOL

It all started with the Nintendo Gameboy. When Nicole received hers, she could not contain her excitement and was fascinated by how the game console worked. Nicole is involved with many different technology oriented organizations on campus, and juggles those with academics and orchestra. As a member and an officer of Brahma Tech Academy, Nicole has had the opportunity to further explore computing and technology as well as foster the growth of STEM education in her school community. Coding is a big part of Nicole’s life, and she is currently taking AP Computer Science to learn Java. Nicole is the captain of her CyberPatriot team and has not only learned how to code, but how to lead. Nicole knew her career goal when she completed Computer Systems class freshman year: she wants to code and be a software engineer. Actually, her dream is to be a software engineer for Google!

OCTAVIA SMITH
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, USC CINEMATIC ARTS AND ENGINEERING MAGNET SCHOOL

Octavia’s experience with physics and calculus has offered her a different perspective on Computer Science. She can visualize the logic problem and then is actually able to map it out so she can perform a code that can run and solve it! She considers herself a fledgling in the world of Computer Science, but does not let that prevent her from trying to understand codes and how each functions and plays a specific role. Octavia’s involvement in MESA has allowed her to physically apply codes that make objects perform certain movements and taking AP Computer Science gives her the chance to construct these intricate codes. Octavia will be attending Kalamazoo College as a Posse Scholar for the Posse Foundation this fall. She is considering majoring in computer science, but if she doesn’t, she wants to find a way to incorporate the thought processes and problem solving skills she has learned.
PROUD HENG
CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, GRETCHEN WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL

In second grade, tired of playing with the same toys, Proud thumbed through her father's old programming books. Although the “programming” she did was just copying the books and customizing its code, Proud was captivated by the idea of creating her own “toys” from strange English and her imagination. Since then, Proud has dabbled in everything software-related she could find — creating Microsoft Agents, making GIF’s and Flash games, tackling Dreamweaver website design; she spent months photo-editing in Photoshop. She enrolled in AP Computer Science. Discovering CAD opened up another world for Proud; programming wasn’t just for making little games anymore, but for producing hearts for Tin Men. Proud has been involved with robotics as competition team member, mentor, captain, instructor, and president. She loves teaching how to program with ROBOTC and figuring out how to CAD with PTC Creo Parametric. Proud hopes to work in the field of artificial intelligence.

SUHYEON ELLEN LEE
FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, TROY HIGH SCHOOL

As a part of Troy’s Tech program, Ellen has taken Computer Logic Algorithms, Fundamentals of Programming, AP Computer Science A and Standard Level IB Computer Science. She has learned basic programming with Alice, Karel the Robot and Java. Ellen built a program that aided a medical intern in keeping track of patient records and information. In a group assignment, Ellen developed an Android application using AppInventor. She is currently involved in her school’s Computer Science and Peer Tutoring Clubs. She has practiced her coding skills using CodingBat and has participated in numerous programming contests. Ellen has a high interest in mathematics and computer science and has been pursuing these fields through classes offered at her school and through independent studies. She plans to further study theoretical math. Ellen hopes to contribute to the advancement of minority groups in STEM fields, especially at the doctorate level, by mentoring underrepresented young students.

VICTORIA CHU
EL SEGUNDO, CALIFORNIA
10TH GRADE, EL SEGUNDO HIGH SCHOOL

Victoria loves math and science. She has been an active participant in robotics, cyber security competitions and other technology related activities since middle school. Victoria knows how to program using Mindstorms, Alice, Popfly, Firebug, Scratch, LabVIEW, C, HTML5, and Python. She taught herself Java by reading a book, she is learning JavaScript on Codecademy and knows a little Node.js! Victoria is also an enthusiastic member of numerous robotics competition teams including First Robotics, First Lego League, the LA Robotics/Arduino club, and VEX Robotics and Zero Robotics. She is often the only female programmer and has acted as lead programmer on many of her teams. Victoria has taken on leadership roles in other ways, as well: she is the team captain of her national finalist CyberPatriot team and she enjoys teaching new members. Victoria hopes to recruit members for a new CyberPatriot team at the local middle school.
VICTORIA HERNANDEZ
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Victoria feels her best decision so far has been joining CyberOps. When she first joined, she did not know anything about computers, and now she is able to help others with their computer problems. She understands most of the processes for every Windows operating system! Victoria has learned many things by participating in CyberOps: she knows HTML and CSS and is teaching herself JavaScript. She creates random websites for fun and as she learns new programming languages, she adds new functions. Victoria knows how to install a web server and how to secure a computer. Because of CyberOps, Victoria knows she wants to spend the rest of her life pursuing a career in the technology arena. She does not yet know where she wants to attend college, but she does know that wherever she goes, the college has to have great opportunities for engineering, computing and technology.

WOOJIN CHEON
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, NORTH HOLLYWOOD SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Advanced in her mathematics studies, Woojin finished Calculus BC sophomore year and earned a 5 on the AP test. In middle school, she attended the CTY Summer Program and enrolled in the computer class which taught students how to program in Python. That was Woojin’s very first encounter with computer programming. In those three memorable weeks, she soaked up buckets full of information about binary mathematics, theory of computation and programming language. Learning Java in AP Computer Science sparked her interest in multimedia design and web application development. Woojin actively participates on her school’s CyberPatriot team. They made it to the national finals last year, placing sixth in the nation. Woojin’s interest in computing was heightened after she joined CyberPatriots where she acquired so much knowledge about servers, UNIX systems and networking that she became an expert in securing computers. Woojin enjoys coaching a Science Olympiad team at Colfax Elementary.

ZHAOZHEN Alice Jin
DIAMOND BAR, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, DIAMOND BAR HIGH SCHOOL

Alice has been fascinated by technology for as long as she can remember, and her passion grew stronger after interning at The Boeing Company. Under the guidance of a computer engineer, Alice wrote navigation software in Java that utilized artificial intelligence. Taking AP Computer Science class and participating in the FIRST Robotics Competition gave her technical skills and opened her eyes to the innovations made possible by engineering. Powered by her hope to introduce the wonders of STEM to more students and her vision to unite these enthusiasts, Alice started the first chapter of the Technology Student Association in California and is currently leading the California delegation as the first State President. She cannot wait to expand her knowledge in college and hopes to improve the world through the power of technology. Alice will be studying electrical engineering and computer science with a focus on artificial intelligence next year.
ANNA LEE  
CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA  
11TH GRADE, GRETCHEH WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL

Anna’s fascination with computers began in elementary school when she learned to play Minesweeper. As she got older, she spent a lot of time in online gaming and as she downloaded more programs, she happened across written code. This new language of symbols and dizzying script was so fascinating! When Anna entered high school, she played around with JavaScript through free online courses, and downloaded visual C++. She enrolled in an iD Tech summer program where she learned how to properly code in C++. During this program at UC Irvine, Anna created games such as rock-paper-scissors and a simple RPG; a calculator for surface areas and volumes of 2-D and 3-D figures; and a spell-check by storing a database inside her program. Anna is currently taking an online edX course in computer programming and is studying AP Computer Science on her own in order to take the AP exam.

ASHWARYA SRINIVAS  
OAK PARK, CALIFORNIA  
10TH GRADE, OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Ashwarya has been interested in computers from a young age, having taken a web design course in middle school. Currently, she is taking AP Computer Science, learning to program in JAVA. She has learned how to use Alice and GameMaker and is part of her school’s robotics team. Using the Robot C programming language, the team qualified for the Vex Robotics Competition finals! She is a member of Future Business Leaders of America and placed in the competition topics of Cyber Security and Introduction to Information Technology, and participated in the state level competition for Information Technology. Ashwarya is the youngest girl in California — and the third youngest girl in the world — to have achieved a Microsoft Office Master certification. She used these skills while volunteering in an AIDS Care Center in India to streamline their database system. She would like to pursue a career in Biotechnology or Bio Informatics.

BETSEABE (BETSY) OROZCO  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
12TH GRADE, UCLA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Betsy decided the best way to learn technology was to enroll in challenging courses. She engineered her own microchip in Nanotechnology; she had fun in Aeronautics while engineering her own plane using Styrofoam! Betsy gained the most experience in Exploring Computer Science by designing a web page, programming a game and learning how data is analyzed. Her work with the Mobilize project taught her how to collect data using mobile apps. Betsy designed a study about the snacking habits of Los Angeles teens and her research garnered so much attention, she was featured on the Today Show! Betsy is one of the few girls in her school who wants to pursue a career in computer science. She hopes to be the first person in her family to earn a degree in science and design technology never before seen. She wants a future where she is creating with computers, not consuming.
CAROLINA MENJIVAR
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Growing up with fantasies of singing or acting, working with computers had never crossed Carolina’s mind. Yet a sixth grade robotics class changed all that. Carolina was terrified of technology and programming and tried to transfer to band class! Fortunately she stayed and was introduced to a whole world where programming and building Lego robots for FIRST Lego League competitions became a fun experience. Since that introduction, Carolina has been interested in learning all the dimensions of technology. She is a proud member of the Foshay Technology Academy and has learned HTML, Photoshop, Scratch, Dreamweaver, and Illustrator. Carolina is part of the FIRST Robotics team, is a FLL mentor and a member of MESA. She joined Iridescent’s Technovation Challenge where she was introduced to AppInventor and learned to program a phone application. Carolina plans to study Communication and Journalism or Graphic Design and pursue a career in the entertainment business.

HELEN KIM
BREA, CALIFORNIA
10TH GRADE, BREA OLINDA HIGH SCHOOL

Helen’s first year of high school, she planned a summer computer workshop and took the curriculum to Girls, Inc. and Project Access, a daycare for children from low-income families. This workshop taught the children basic computer applications, including Microsoft Office, graphic and game design with Scratch, and typing skills. Helen runs an after-school, computer-based homework program for elementary-high school students. She has a strong interest in getting more children, especially girls, into computing and technology careers. Helen loves to see the girls suddenly “get it” and see their eyes light up at a “cool” feature on the computer. She relates to the girls because she experienced the same delight when she was in an elementary computer class, the same class where she discovered her passion for technology. Helen hopes to develop more ways to introduce younger students to computers. She hopes to attend a four-year university and study computer science.

JANICE LEE
CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, GRETCHE WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL

As a member of her school’s VEX robotics team, Janice has learned how fun and interesting programming is and the amazing things it can accomplish. She’s learned about robot parts and coding with the RobotC language. Janice will be contributing to the competition robot’s program this upcoming year. Janice is also a member of the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Club and has been since its inception. This past summer, she began learning java through YouTube tutorials. Janice volunteers at a local nonprofit called “Komputers 4 R Kids.” This organization helps the environment through recycling computers and helps families without a computer more easily obtain one. Janice helps refurbish computers by taking them apart and running tests. She knows how to test monitors and hard drives, and now has a better idea of how computers work. Janice would like to significantly change the world for the better through engineering!
JASMINE ZHANG
DIAMOND BAR, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, DIAMOND BAR HIGH SCHOOL

Jasmine’s biggest contribution to computing and technology has been participating in FIRST Robotics as her team’s electrical engineering lead. To collaborate and talk to students with similar interests from all over the world really opened Jasmine’s eyes to the possibilities in engineering. With the skills she learned in robotics, and armed with basic knowledge of electrical components and a soldering station, Jasmine started playing around with circuitry. Her grandfather developing cancer influenced her to base engineering in biology. In her Advanced Architecture and Engineering class, she is doing research on the design of a prosthetic hand and drawing it with Autodesk Inventor, a 3D CAD program. These robotic designs can be used to develop surgical tools, nano-robots to aid in surgery, or even create mechanical organ transplants. Jasmine hopes to mentor her high school’s robotics team. She will be attending Drexel University, majoring in biomedical engineering focusing on electrical engineering.

JINA YOON
CERRITOS, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, GRETCHEN WHITNEY HIGH SCHOOL

Jina’s love for computers was ignited many years ago when her brother introduced her to video games. She studies computer science and programming on her own time and loves anything that combines science and the arts. Jina is involved with and a leader in many organizations: STEM Club President, ASB Secretary, Korean Club Secretary, and National Honor Society and French Honor Society cabinet. She placed nationally in Le Grand Concours, volunteers at the Discovery Science Center, and tutors younger students. Jina is interning at a non-profit called Komputers 4 R Kids spending time disassembling computers and teaching staff how to use new software. Jina believes that thinking like a programmer doesn’t only mean coding well — it’s thinking creatively and logically in every aspect of our lives. Jina hopes to major in computer science and research artificial intelligence/human-computer interaction as well as pursue her passion for the arts.

JUSTICE BUFFORD
MENIFEE, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, JULIAN CHARTER SCHOOL

Justice likes video games and thinks it would be really cool to go into the gaming industry and either code video games or develop the next generation of virtual gaming consoles. She is also interested in the medical aspect of technology and would love to create more non-invasive surgical methods. Justice has been a programmer on a Botball team for four years and has become proficient in basic C++ programming. During her years in Botball, Justice has developed a taste for learning how to code more advanced programs and would like to learn other coding languages such as Java and Python. Justice would really like to create a website from scratch using HTML5. She will be attending Susquehanna University as an honors student and a BIOS-STEM grant recipient. At Susquehanna, Justice will double major in Creative Writing and Biology with an emphasis in Neuroscience.
KARENINA JUAREZ
STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA
10TH GRADE, HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

Nina is a sophomore currently enrolled in AP Computer Science. She has fed her interest in technology with a variety of activities and classes: Nina attended the Stanford She ++ Conference; she enrolled in an introduction to Computer Science course and took a Programming Kickstart class where she was introduced to programming languages and framework; she developed simple applications using an Android based SDK in her “There’s an App for That” class and has taken part in CoderDojo courses; she is in Udacity’s MOOC “Introduction to Programming.” Nina is a member of the Varsity Women’s Water Polo Team and participates in JV Swimming and the Bel Canto Singing Chorus. She is also a member of the UCLA/Rand Community Adolescent Youth Advisory Board. Nina plans to attend college to pursue a degree in computer science. She wants to combine her passion for music and technology and create apps for music lovers.

LAUREN SCHWEITZER
EL SEGUNDO, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, VISTAMAR SCHOOL - ONLINE SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Lauren is a junior at Vistamar School and also takes AP Computer Science through the Online School for Girls. She started her journey in programming when she took an online introductory course in Java through the Center for Talented Youth. At Vistamar, Lauren is an active participant in the robotics team and is a member of the Tech Crew for theatre productions and assemblies. She is also a member of the Physics and Math Clubs. Lauren started a Computer Science Club which provides student-to-student instruction in programming and computing. Lauren isn’t all left-brained; she enjoys being an editor of her school’s newspaper and literary magazine, and writes science fiction for fun. She is researching her college options and is keen on schools with an emphasis on liberal arts; her plan is to pursue engineering at the Master’s level. Lauren hopes to help send the first man or woman to Mars.

MARINA HOVHANNISYAN
BURBANK, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, BURBANK HIGH SCHOOL

The difficulties Marina overcame upon her immigration from Armenia at the age of eleven prompted her interest in academics, music and arts; things she left unexplored due to uncertainty and fear. Marina has maintained academic excellence and as a junior received the Harvard Prize Book, awarded to a student who displays “excellence in scholarship and character.” Marina has used her technology skills, including mastering Java and Python to build and program websites, in her volunteering and work outside of school. She acts as writer, programmer and translator at an international jewelry company. Marina volunteered at the Isis Home Health Care Center where she used her computing skills to aid patients and organize schedules for the workers of the company. She translated a Russian movie script into English and succeeded in publishing an article on-line. Marina will attend UC Berkeley and will double major in Computer Science and Engineering and Neurobiology.
POOREUM SEO
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
11TH GRADE, LOS ANGELES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Pooreum has participated in MESA and the Mini-Urban Challenge Competition. Her experience with computing and technology has enabled her to help her mom “modernize” her knowledge of computers, because her mom was a computer science major when computers were still only black-and-white! Pooreum participated in a leadership program sponsored by K. W. Lee, for which her team decided to help families that had been separated by the Korean War — Yoog-Eeh-Oh in Korean — to reunite, and gather information about their missing family members’ statuses. They created websites and interviewed the survivors of the war. They contacted government officials in pursuit of information and methods to help the divided family members contact each other at least one more time. Pooreum would like to major in computer science like her mother. She wants a career in the medical technology field and hopes to invent more efficient technology to help correct health related issues.

YOOJIN JUNG
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
12TH GRADE, LOS ANGELES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Yoojin has definitely exceeded her school’s technology requirement. In her Exploring Computer Science course, she learned how to use Scratch, program and build a robot using Lego Mindstorms, and use HTML. Yoojin is currently taking AP Computer Science and learning Java. She is also participating in First Robotics and it’s the first time her school has competed in the competition, so she is excited to be a part of the team. Yoojin believes that a good leader should have good ideas, a plan to execute these ideas, but still be able to compromise when new options are put forth. She worked on the National MESA project Prosthetic Arm and as the group leader, she successfully led the team to two ribbons at the city competition. Yoojin is actively involved in the NASA sponsored JPL Invention Challenge. On this project she helped design and modify her group’s plans.
LESLIE AARONSON  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
FOSHAY LEARNING CENTER

Leslie became a teacher in 2003 when she left her job as Production Manager for Blue’s Clues International in New York to move to her hometown of Los Angeles. In 2012, she was awarded Teacher of the Year from LAUSD for her work as the Lead Teacher and Coordinator of Foshay Learning Center’s Technology Academy. Leslie teaches a group of 150-180 students from 10th through 12th grade. Foshay’s inner-city and Title 1 status does not slow Leslie down; the aggressive curriculum includes courses like Exploring Computer Science, Game Production and Programming. The students learn programming through Scratch, App Inventor, and Python, and learn effective communication and problem solving with a four month advertising campaign that includes graphic design, video production, and web design. Leslie’s talents include networking to bring opportunities into the classroom and teaching her students how to interact and prepare for jobs of the future. Her computer lab is a place for innovation and exploration. Leslie lives with her husband and two daughters. She earned a BA in Anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis; a Master’s in Educational Communication and Technology from New York University; and an English Single Subject and Administration Credential from California State University Northridge.

We’d like to thank our Southern California Affiliate team for their outstanding work on behalf of the Aspirations in Computing Program, especially:

DEBRA RICHARDSON, PROFESSOR OF INFORMATICS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - IRVINE

DAVID BERNIER, COMPUTER SCIENCE PROJECT DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - LOS ANGELES
SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

Aspirations in Computing Sponsors:

Bank of America  Bloomberg  Google  HP

Intel  Microsoft  Motorola Solutions Foundation  Northrop Grumman Foundation

NCWIT Strategic Partners:

Microsoft  Bank of America  Google  Intel

NCWIT Investment Partners:

AVAYA  Pfizer  Merck  Gartner  Bloomberg  HP