Southern California Affiliate Aspirations in Computing Award Celebration

Saturday, April 14, 2012
Santa Ana, California

National Center for Women & Information Technology
www.ncwit.org | 303.735.6671 | info@ncwit.org

The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing is sponsored by Bank of America, an NCWIT Investment Partner.
# Event Agenda

**April 14, 2012: 4:00 PM**  
**Santa Ana, California**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Debra Richardson, Professor of Informatics, Founding Dean Bren School of ICS, UCIrvine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Introduction</td>
<td>Ruthe Farmer, Director of Strategic Initiatives National Center for Women &amp; IT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Presentations</td>
<td>Ruthe Farmer, NCWIT Debra Richardson, UCIrvine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing Remarks</td>
<td>Ruthe Farmer, NCWIT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## 2012 SoCal Affiliate Event Participants

**Lead Coordinator:** Debra Richardson, UCIrvine  

**Co-coordinator:** Lee Wills, Qualcomm  
Cynthia Williams, Girls Inc. Orange County  
Nancy Taylor, San Diego County Office of Education

**Volunteers:**  
Rebecca Maessen, UCIrvine  
Amelia Regan, UCIrvine  
Sholeh Forouzan, UCIrvine  
Ankita Raturi, UCIrvine  
Nicole Sylvester, UCIrvine

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NCWIT is the National Center for Women & Information Technology, a coalition of over 300 prominent corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and non-profits working to increase women's participation in information technology (IT). We believe that inspiring more women to choose careers in IT isn't about parity; it's a compelling issue of innovation, competitiveness, and workforce sustainability. In a global economy, gender diversity in IT means a larger and more competitive workforce; in a world dependent on innovation, it means the ability to design technology that is as broad and creative as the people it serves.

The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing honors young women at the high-school level for their computing-related achievements and interests. Awardees are selected for their computing and IT aptitude, leadership ability, academic history, and plans for post-secondary education. The NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing offers both a national and local affiliate competitions to generate support and visibility for women's participation in communities nationwide. Complete information is available at [www.ncwit.org/award](http://www.ncwit.org/award).

This first Southern California Affiliate Aspirations in Computing Award Ceremony is being held in conjunction with the 2012 Celebration of Women in Computing – SoCal, also the first such event in southern California (April 14-15, 2012). CWIC-SoCal is bringing together women (and a few men) interested in computer science and information technology to network, share their experiences, learn from each other and of course to have fun. The attendees consist of students, faculty and professionals from early career to CEO, primarily from southern California. More information about the program is available at [www.cs.hmc.edu/cwic-socal](http://www.cs.hmc.edu/cwic-socal).
Jessica Allen
Troy High School
Fullerton

Jessica’s father inspired her to begin computer programming, but she truly became interested in it after completing a computer science course at her high school. At her high school, she has had the opportunity to learn about electrical engineering and working with circuit boards to create simple electronics including counters, calculators, and vending machines. Jessica has completed two major programming projects, she coded an original side scrolling computer game, and a dossier that is a computer program that functions as flashcards, quizzes, and tests and records grades. She has also written a translator for Morse code using both Maps and Binary tests. She has participated in Harvey Mudd’s Fall FAST (Future Achievers in Science and Technology), WEST (Women Engineers and Scientists of Tomorrow), and the Dave Wittry Programming Competition. Jessica would like to double major in math and computer science.

Bianca Bequer
Pete Knight High School
Palmdale

Bianca uses computing and technology everyday, and she especially enjoys working with Photoshop and Illustrator. In Photoshop she has created her own bio-image, which describes everything about her without using any words. She has also created her own clothing line with Illustrator, created the football program using InDesign, and works with her best friends to edit photos in Photoshop. Bianca is the leader of the Digital and Engineering Academy group project, and ensures everyone is on task to complete the project. Bianca would like to pursue a career that fuses technology and her artistic creativity, and would love to be working on projects that create some kind of new technology or program.
After joining a robotics team, Leia discovered she had a passion for computer science. She learned to program the robots they built, bringing their work to life. She grew extremely interested in learning other forms of programming as well, and took the newly created computer science class offered at her school. Leia’s greatest technological accomplishment has been designing, creating, and programming and award-winning robot, and leading her VEX robotics team to gain both the Captain’s Winning Alliance Award (the highest award for robot performance, and the Excellence Award (the highest award for team performance). In the future, Leia hopes to be attending college, working on projects such as the self-driving car by Google and working on such innovative user-interfaces as Siri.

Leia Chang
Whitney High School
Cerritos

Molly is a student with interdisciplinary interests, between theater and computer science. Molly has written and directed two nationally award-winning films and has been the main editor for both as well. She is also the founder and designer of her school’s blog, H-W Voices where students and teachers alike can share daily experiences. Molly has also interned at the Information Sciences Institute at the University of Southern California and has been a part of the High School Scholars Program the University of California-Los Angeles. This is where Molly came up with the idea for an Android app, “Another Man’s Treasure”, that tells people when things have been left on the side of the road for other people to claim for second use. Molly has also volunteered her time at Koreh LA, where she helps elementary children learn to read through fun activities. Molly hopes to continue to bring people together through technology.

Molly Cinnamon
Harvard-Westlake School
Studio City (LA)
2012 National Runner-Up

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Since fourth grade, Namrata has been using digital art applications such as Photoshop and Illustrator to design magazines. Once in high school, Namrata began taking programming and her interest in computer science soared. She and friends joined NASA: No Boundaries and placed in their first competition, choosing a project on robotics engineering. Soon after, Namrata enrolled in COSMOS at UCSD and learned how to program Android apps as well as programming robots. Her work in COSMOS and her passion for graphic design led Namrata to start building a search and rescue robot. She was able to create a robot that could navigate a maze and search for certain shapes. She then included a pseudo-thermal imaging camera and her team won the Gordon Fellow Award. Now, Namrata continues to program and work with digital art applications for her roles as Chief Staff Artist and Layout Designer for her school’s literary magazine. Namrata has also helped organize a Bollywood dance team. She holds the office of Vice President of the Indian Student Association, and is founding member and treasurer for the Touch Club and the American Heart Association on her campus. Namrata hopes to pursue a career in animation and programming and expand the field of graphic search.

Throughout high school, Nicole has changed her interest from graphic design to networking and computer system administration but she has taken a wide variety of courses including Multimedia 1, Multimedia Design 2, Web Managers 1, Video Game Design 1, and AP Computer Science. As a part of the Digital Design and Engineering Academy, Nicole has been the secretary for two years. This past year Nicole also volunteered at the Super Science Saturday where she helped kids launch the rockets they have made. Nicole now looks forward to college and her future career in Networking and Computer System Administration. One of her biggest accomplishments will be being able to succeed in this male dominated career path and show that women can handle this career.
Southern California Affiliate
2012 Award Winners

Jahayra Garcia
Washington Prep High School
Los Angeles

Jahayra was first encouraged to take computer science by her math teacher. She found that she really enjoyed the class and decided to intern at UCLA to learn more about computer science. During her internship she was able to create an application for Android phones called “What’s Hazardous.” Users can report hazards by taking a quick survey that consists of a picture, rating, and description. She learned a lot about coding in Java, html, and other programming languages. Jahayra is also the co-captain of her school’s tennis team, and has started a new club at her school. Because of her great experience at UCLA, she plans to attend there in the fall and would like to major in a science.

Noa Glaser
Torrey Pines High School
Encinitas

Noa has been interested in Computer science since she was 9 years old. While her friends were playing video games she became intrigued by how they work and how to create one and delved into computer science. Noa developed a biologically inspired novel method of communication between robots - Inter Robot Kinetic Communication. She has won several awards including the San Diego Supercomputer Center Computational Science Award, Armed Forces Communication and Electronics Association Award, Accenture Award for her work. She has also founded and is coaching a FIRST Robotics team, and it is the only robotics team founded and led by a high school student with no adult involvement. Noa plans to attend college and study computer science and engineering, and has a long term goal of leading a group of scientists and engineers in developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms.
Myra Haqqi
Canyon Crest Academy
San Diego

Myra’s parents are both software engineers and introduced her to computer science at a young age. After job shadowing them for years, she developed a passion for computer science and technology because it is based on logic, imagination and creativity. Myra has worked on many different programming projects, including Java, HTML, Flash, Python, RobotC, Scratch, and Alice. She has designed web pages in HTML, created interactive games in Flash, made drawings in Python, animated movies in Alice and Scratch, and programmed robots to navigate through an obstacle course using RobotC. One of her favorite projects was to write a program that finds solutions of complex quadratic equations in Java. She will attend college this fall, majoring in either computer engineering, electrical engineering, or computer science.

Crystal Hsieh
Northwood High School
Irvine

Crystal was first encouraged to get involved with technology by her fourth grade teacher, Mr. Manchester. She was recruited to his small A/V team where she filmed and edited videos of school events. Crystal’s greatest technical accomplishment to date is surviving two computer science college courses at Harvard during the summer. She entered the classes with one year of Java experience and throughout the course challenged herself with projects she never thought she could accomplish. They made dynamic websites including their own fully functional pizza ordering website and their own Google maps of the BART subway system. After high school, Crystal plans on attending college to major in computer science with a minor in business.
Lavanya Jawaharlal  
Diamond Bar High School  
Diamond Bar  
2012 National Runner-Up

Lavanya was introduced to computing, specifically robotics, at a very young age by her father who is a mechanical engineering professor. Ever since she had her first set of LEGO Mindstorms she has been enthralled with technology and robotics. Lavanya feels most accomplished and proud when she is able to design and program her own robot. This year, Lavanya started her own business called STEM Center USA. This business is dedicated to introduce children and teenagers to robotics, programming, and math at a young age. She is very passionate about this business and about increasing awareness and interest in the field of technology and robotics. Lavanya is confident that her future will involve designing, building, and programming robots, and she is excited to see where her passion will lead her.

Sierra Katow  
La Cañada High School  
La Cañada  
2012 National Runner-Up

Beginning in fifth grade, Sierra knew she wanted to be a programmer while on the school playground. Neopets is what had caught her eye and after teaching herself how to code and the basics of web programming Sierra sent in a resume to Neopets. When she was not hired she decided to make her own virtual game called Ecotopians. All of her hard work paid off when Agoge, Inc. gave her a job offer as PHP Programmer. Other websites Sierra has created include Thropile.com and Scollab.com. Sierra is currently focused on a new web application. Not only is Sierra holding a job as a paid programmer, is her high school’s Student Body President, but she is also president of her Academic Decathlon team and school’s Science and Red Cross clubs. With plans to study computer science and receiver her master’s degree Sierra hopes to work for a top-notch company that equates the prominence of Google or Facebook.
For as long as she can remember, **Divya** has had a need to disassemble and reassemble everything just so she could get a peek inside to see how everything worked. Not only did she feel the need to do this, but she actually came to find that she was good at it. After enrolling in an AP computer science course, Divya realized that she specifically enjoyed disassembling and reassembling computers. Divya is the founder and president of her schools Cyber Security Club/Team, as well as an active member of her schools robotics team. Divya hopes to one day be able to use her talents to better society and achieve great advancements in the technological realm.

**Divya Kothandapani**  
Westview High School  
San Diego  
**2012 National Runner-Up**

**Galina Meyer**  
Viewpoint School  
Calabasas

**Galina** started programming on a whim, but what hooked her were the parallels she started to see not only in math, but in the humanities as well. Because of her passion for computer science and because CS courses offered in high school have been cut, she has decided to make a website that makes learning programming much more accessible for all students, with a goal of including online compilers, video, and text tutorials to help students learn about computer science. Galina is quadlingual (she knows English, Russian, French, and Mandarin) and is also a dual citizen of both the USA and France. Galina is most proud of a program she created that determines how liberal or conservative a political speech is, using a Bayesian Network. She will be attending Stanford next year, hoping to major in either Symbolic Systems or Computer Science.
Hailan Pang
University City High School
San Diego

Hailan’s father has always been her greatest inspiration; because he is an engineer, computer science became her interest. He encouraged Hailan to learn programming. Hailan is very proud of her work at the San Diego Supercomputer Center. She surprised herself by figuring out different scripts for data and text mining projects. Besides computer science, Hailan loves classic literature. She fell in love with Jane Austen in middle school and enjoys finding new classics to take in literature. If she needs a break from schoolwork or studying, she goes to Gaskell, Forster, or Bronte. Hailan plans to study electrical or mechanical engineering and computer science. She has already been accepted into a number of top universities, and she would love to attend a school where she can finally have the resources to understand the applications and possibilities of computer science and engineering.

Daniela Perry
Poway High School
Poway
2012 National Runner-Up

When Daniela got that acceptance email from the California State Summer School for Mathematics and Science, she knew that she had found her passion for technology. Out of 160 students in the program, Daniela was the only freshman. During the program, she studied Mathematical Biology: Modeling of Tissue and Tumor Growth and then she presented her findings at the end of the program with her team. Since then Daniela has conducted her own research on “The Mathematical Analysis of the Effect of Anti-androgenic Drugs on Prostate Size in Mice”. Daniela is the Team Captain of the engineering team of her Robotics Club. She is also volunteering as a food server at a local homeless shelter and this experience has given her great compassion for the down trodden and has inspired her to inspire others. Daniela is also a member of the Society for Science and the Public as well as the NASA INSPIRE program and the Better Education for Women in Science and Engineering. Daniela considered herself a scientific designer and she has a passion for being a part of the global aspect of technology. Daniela hopes to earn her PhD in Computational Biology.
From a young age, Megan has been exposed to computers and technology. Megan works for a non-profit in her area by creating PowerPoint presentations and advertising flyers. As a freshman, Megan was selected for the prestigious Engineering Scholars Program at Michigan Tech University, where she built a prosthetic leg. She also volunteers to teach senior citizens basic computer skills so they can stay connected with family. Megan is also captain of her Junior Varsity Basketball team and plays the violin. She helps teach orphan children in India English and math via Skype. Megan plans to major in Biomedical Engineering and Computer Science with the aspiration of becoming an IT Engineer.

Megan Reddy
Fairmont Prep Academy
Anaheim
2012 National Runner-Up

Mia Sheperd
High Tech High
San Diego

Mia’s brother RJ, who taught himself HTML, PHP and other computer programming languages inspired her to challenge herself to learn about today’s technology. Mia is most proud of winning the World Inspire Award in FIRST Robotics with her all-girls robotics team, Einstein’s Daughters. Mia has participated in robotics for 8 years, and this year she was one of the main programmers, creating over 10 different autonomous mode routes for the 30 seconds autonomous part of the games. Not only did they create multiple autonomous mode, but each one was 100% accurate. Mia would like to become a sustainable architect. Her goal is to design netzero building across the globe, and plans to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, majoring in Architectural Engineering.
Megha’s parents and her teachers first piqued her interest in the use of computers to solve problems. Since math has always been one of her strongest and favorite subjects, when she was young she started to use computer programs to solve interesting math problems such as listing Fibonacci numbers and working with fractals. Megha participated in an internship where her team analyzed twitter data from the time of the Haiti earthquake. After writing programs which removed any special characters and irrelevant words such as “a” and “is” they were able to develop a system that analyzes the topics that tweeters sent out about the Haiti earthquake. Analyzing the twitter data not only introduced her to a new aspect of computing, but showed that through computing we can devise a way to connect information sent out by the general public to a concrete analytical system that determines what topics were important to people at a certain time. Megha would like to major in a STEM field when she attends college. She would especially like to learn about developing technologies that can help challenges in the world, such as cures for various diseases and new sources of renewable energy.

When Elana was young she was intrigued with the way things worked and took apart everyday appliances to see how they functioned. This young interest has now blossomed into a passion for computer science. She has not only built her own computer but also helped with research on Master-Slave Control of an Anthropomorphic Robotic Arm using the Xbox Kinect. Through her in time at the UCLA High School Summer Engineering Program she was able to work on the control of a robotic arm for its possible uses in the medical world or even in situations of disarming a bomb. Elana is also a Technical Sergeant in the Civil Air Patrol, an auxiliary organization of the United States Air Force. This past year she was selected as the Cadet of the Year and has also participated in the Digital Forensics Challenge created by the US Air Force and Department of Defense Cyber Crime Center. Elana hopes to unite her two passions of computer science and military by working in government service and homeland security.
Ever since Eden was little she has always enjoyed the world of computing. At age 6 her curiosity drove her to get 'behind the scenes' and with the guidance of her father she learned how to write her first Java program. Eden’s greatest technical accomplishment was achieved through her internship at the Center for Embedded Network Sensing (CENS) in UCLA. They designed an Android application for 8 weeks called “Another Man's Treasure”, complete with website. The application allows users to upload yard sales and items abandoned on streets to their database via survey and their GPS location for others to find. She was recognized for her hard work and contributions to the project with the highest award offered by CENS. Eden is the vice president of her school’s computer science club, and is also involved in the robotics club. She plans to double major studying computer science or artificial intelligence and biology.

Rahia entered into the Global IT Academy as a freshmen and has been deeply involved with computer science ever since. A few of her projects have included recreating Pacman and starting a program called Creative Computers. Creative Computers is a five-week course where high school students help teach children basic computer applications. Rahia volunteers with the Creative Computer organization and has also won the Project Tomorrow Student Innovator award because of her work with Creative Computers. Rahia is now the president of her school’s Global IT Academy Club, a member of the National Honor Society, and is on the cross country team. In college she plans to major in Biotechnology or Biomedical Engineering because of all the possibilities and chances to truly impact lives.
2012 SoCal Affiliate Runners Up

Inna Bianca Ardevela, Centennial High School, Corona

Carly Burkhart, Grossmont High School, La Mesa

Cheryl Chang, Northwood High School, Irvine

Gigi Chow, Pacific Ridge School, Carlsbad

Natalie Damrau, San Diego Senior High School, San Diego

Theodora Davis, Harvard-Westlake School, Studio City (LA)

Taylor England, Tesoro High School, Rancho Santa Margarita

Victoria Hall, Hemet Senior High School, Hemet

Anastassia Hill, Pete Knight High School, Palmdale

Zhao Zheng Jin, Diamond Bar High School, Diamond Bar

Angela Knight, Harvard-Westlake School, Studio City (LA)

Yanely Lopez, Crenshaw Senior High School, Los Angeles

Sara Pak, Diamond Bar High School, Diamond Bar

Divya Siddarth, Harvard-Westlake School, Studio City (LA)
2012 SoCal Educator Award Winners

Jacob Hazard
Harvard-Westlake School
Studio City (LA)

Jacob Hazard is in his eighth year of teaching Mathematics and Computer Science at Harvard-Westlake’s upper school in Studio City, California. He is also the Dean of Faculty, the Secretary for the Cum Laude Society, and is active in developing the use of technology in the school. He is the faculty advisor for the Computer Science club, has assisted with the Robotics and Rocketry clubs, and he helped manage the development of Harvard-Westlake’s online Alumni Job Board.

Jacob graduated from Northwestern University with a B.A. in Mathematics and earned his M.A. in Independent School Leadership through the Klingenstein Leadership Academy at Teachers College, Columbia University. He has also taught at The Harker School in San Jose, California, the Westminster School in Simsbury, Connecticut, and in Japan through the Japan Exchange in Teaching (JET) program. Jacob is a huge baseball fan and follows every move the Detroit Tigers make. Go Tigers!

Todd Salesky
Brea-Olinda High School
Brea

Todd Salesky is in his 21st year of teaching full time in public schools. Originally, he taught mathematics for many years. With the emergence of object oriented/ event driven programming, he found the profound relevance of Computer Science and brought it to Brea Olinda High School. In 2005, he created the Global IT Academy. GITA is a four elective, small learning community/career pathway within the high school. As an academic program, it serves as a means for students to distinguish themselves through the skills that they have learned in the classroom. His learning philosophy is for students to apply their knowledge and skills through community service leadership.

Todd is proud that GITA is approximately 30% female, which is over twice the national average for women in IT. He learned at the beginning of his Computer Science career that female students have an incredible eye for detail and creativity. Increasing the number of female students in his computer science classes has made his program very well rounded.