

# Avishai Don

*SAR High School, The Bronx  
Winner, Physiology/Medicine*

*Essay title: Karl Landsteiner: Three Simple Letters that Save Millions*

Avishai Don, a seventeen-year-old junior from SAR High School, is the son of a dermatologist and an attorney. Born in Manhattan and raised in Riverdale, Avishai expresses a deep commitment to learning as well as a desire to use his talents and abilities to help others. "I admire my parents for their devotion to their occupations as well as the extra acts of kindness that they perform in the community," he says, citing his father's house calls to the elderly and home-bound, and his mother's pro bono work.

His choice of an essay topic for *The Laureates of Tomorrow - Nobel Essay Contest* literally came by accident. As he waited in the hospital for surgery to fix a broken leg, a nurse told him his blood type was A+. "With time on my hands, I looked up blood types in my biology textbook, where I first found Karl Landsteiner," he recalled. Fascinated by the Laureate's work, he started writing an essay that he hoped would do the great scientist justice. "I found him to be a truly dedicated, brilliant, and humble scientist and I really wanted my essay to reflect these qualities," he says. Despite a grueling workload that included an Advanced Placement (AP) History midterm exam held the day before the contest deadline, Avishai found time to work on his essay, spending hours at the library and using the Internet for research. It was a task made easier "because I was thoroughly captivated by his work," he says.

Avishai can't wait to attend college and graduate school. Inspired by his father's stories about doing research (he has a Ph.D. in Molecular biology), Avishai sees himself "definitely working as a scientist someday, perhaps pursuing DNA research and technology." Not only would a life devoted to research be intellectually rewarding, but he acknowledges it

would also fulfill his personal goal of "helping humanity." In addition, he has found that he "works well with children, so I might enjoy a career in pediatrics."

In addition to sharing his parents' love for law and medicine, he is also a movie buff, enjoys reading classic American literature and is a fantasy writer. "I hope to publish a collection of suspense stories told in the style of the old Twilight Zone TV show someday," he says. Another passion is digital photography, which he calls "an excellent way to unwind and express my view of the world." He also enjoys volunteering at his local synagogue and co-leads a toddler Sabbath group. "I help with many youth events, including carnivals and community-service projects," he says.

Outside of Israel, where he plans to spend a year before entering college, Avishai has not traveled much and is thrilled that he will be visiting Sweden soon. "I can't wait to visit Sweden and learn all about that country's history and its fascinating culture," he says. If anyone asks him about his paper, Avishai says he and his family are eager to talk about Landsteiner. "My parents, including my sister Ronit, have now become experts in Landsteiner trivia," he jokes. However, he admits the video game on the Nobelprize.org site based on Landsteiner's work was harder to master than he thought. "In the game, the player has to transfuse the correct blood type into a patient's body by first deducing their type. I must say that even after writing a paper on the subject, I found the video game to be quite challenging," he added with a smile.

*The Laureates of Tomorrow*  
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