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Staten Island Advance (NY)

Tech student takes top prize

DIANE LORE ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

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CHALK TALK

Timothy D'Auria wins a full scholarship to NYU as a result of winning the annual city Science Math and Technology Expo

When Timothy D'Auria returns to school for his senior year at Staten Island Technical High School in the fall, he won't have the usual senior jitters about where he'll go to college, or how he'll pay for it.

D'Auria, 16, a junior at Tech, just netted himself a full, four-year tuition scholarship to New York University -- valued at \$88,000 -- as the city's top winner in this year's New York City Science, Math and Technology Expo.

The event, the largest of three citywide science competitions for the best and brightest high school students, was sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences.

Nearly 500 students competed for prizes valued at more than \$120,000. In addition to Tech, students from New Dorp, Susan Wagner and Tottenville high schools, and the Francis School participated.

Island students racked up the lion's share of the prizes, totaling nearly \$100,000 in scholarships, cash awards and U.S. Savings bonds.

D'Auria, a New Dorp resident, jumped for joy upon hearing he'd won. He was cited for his project on "Escherichia coli Bioelectromagnetics," a study of how electromagnetic waves affect E-coli bacteria. He said he chose the topic because of the debate in scientific circles over whether electromagnetic radiation given off by high voltage power lines is linked to human cancers.

He has been working on the project since his freshman year at Tech, and each year he has improved and modified his research and methods in some way. Last year he received a \$500 award at the competition for his research on the same topic. D'Auria did much of his research at the Discovery Center at the College of Staten Island.

"Actually, I've been thinking of the idea since sixth grade, when I first heard a news report about breast cancer in neighborhoods where there were high voltage wires. It was something that was in the back of my head for a while," he said.



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D'Auria started out by taking plants from his garden and exposing them to electromagnetic force generated from 9-volt batteries. He started to gradually build larger electromagnetic forces using wires and other gadgets. He was guided by CSI professors through the Discovery Center.

The young man said he hopes to study medicine and specialize in oncology.

Several of D'Auria's classmates at Tech also walked away with awards.

Junior Jennifer Vourios received \$500 for her project on "Does Taking Care of a Pet Decrease an Elderly Person's Depression?" Freshman Elizabeth Arrabito won a \$100 savings bond from the Society of Women Engineers for her project on "Styrofoam in Concrete." And **Joshua Blackman**, a sophomore, received \$200 for his project called "To Freeze or Not to Freeze? That is the Question."

Additionally, Sana Khan won a \$50 award, and Regina Peters and Deepak Das received cash awards of \$20. Tessey Jose, Desiree Ripo, Michael Ritzkalla and Matthew Robson won honorable mention.

Mariel Fisher, a senior at Tottenville High School, received \$100 for her project on "Brush-like Covering of Chromosomes: A New Observation." Her classmate, Blake Wallach, received a \$100 savings bond and a subscription to "Scientific American" magazine, for his project, "Blocking the Potassium Efflux Channels in Escherichia Coli as a Means of Controlling the Acid Tolerant Response to Prevent Infection."

Tottenville student Mariel Fisher won a \$100 bond from the Richmond County Medical Society, while students George Hanna and Daniel Lepek won \$20 awards; Jared Gerber won honorable mention.

Eugene Dalid, a junior at Susan Wagner High School, won \$300 for his project, "Line Breeding in Purebred Dogs." Senior Hema Nallamshetty received a \$100 savings bond from the Richmond County Medical Society for the project "Correlation Between Anosognosia of Hemiplegia and Personal Neglect," and senior Sulagna Misra won \$25 for the project "Correlation between Atmospheric Parameters and the Number of Wet and Ray Mold Spores Prevalent in New York City."

Susan Wagner student Shendl Lu received a \$20 award, while students Myong Sun Han, Angela Kwok and Cheryl Vinograd won honorable mention.

New Dorp High School student Tina Basu also won honorable mention.

Francis School senior Adam Buchwalter won \$75 for his project titled "Toward Safety and the Use of Knives as Weapons." Classmate See Won (Flora) Yau received a \$20 award.

Diane Lore's Chalk Talk column appears Tuesday on the Education page in the Advance Lifestyle section. If you have a story idea, you can write her in care of the Advance, 950 Fingerboard Rd., Staten Island, 10305, fax her at 981-5679, call her at 981-1234, or e-mail her at lore@siadvance.com.

HEADING FOR NYU: Timothy D'Auria of New Dorp demonstrates his project, which explored how electromagnetic waves affect E-coli bacteria.

Advance Photo by Joshua Carp

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