

The Herald-Sun

Chapel Hill senior wins \$20K scholarship

CHAPEL HILL — Representatives from Foot Locker visited Chapel Hill High School recently to surprise senior Ariel Kantor with a \$20,000 scholarship, moving him to tears.

But winning one of 20 scholarships geared toward student athletes nationwide was just one high point in a long list of the 18-year-old's achievements.

Kantor is one of his class' valedictorians; he has a 4.0 GPA and scored a 32 on his ACT.

Kantor, who has lived in Chapel Hill since immigrating to the U.S. from Israel when he was 12, said that when he was applying to colleges, he looked at the net price calculator and thought, "There's no way my family can afford this."

So he applied to hundreds of scholarships, along with maintaining his normal school and extracurricular schedule.

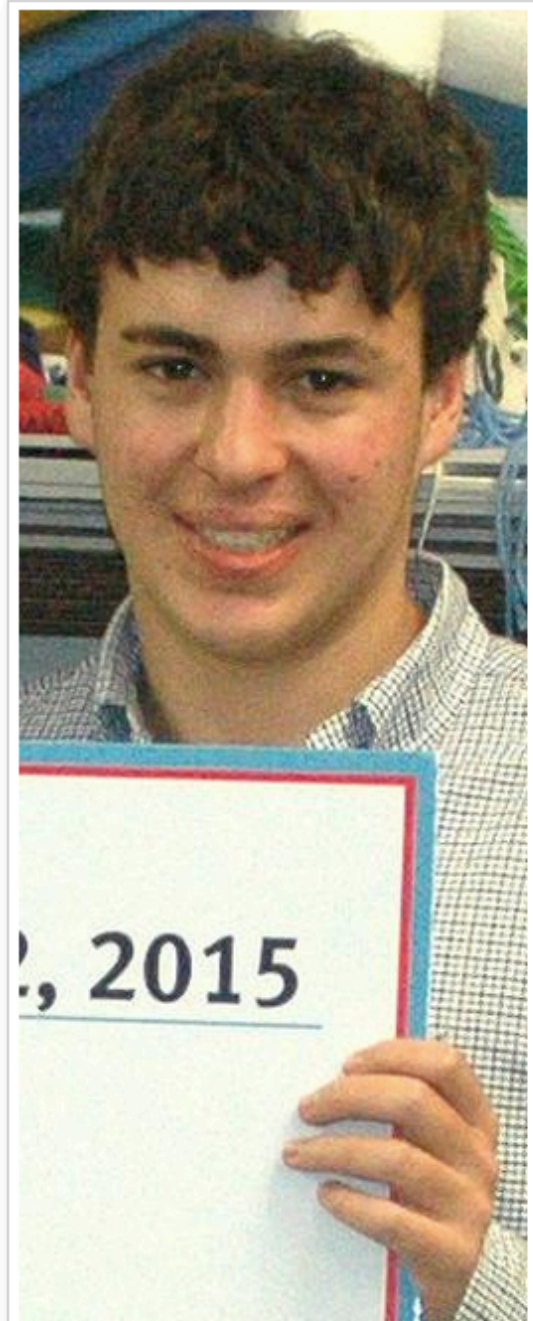
"This year was basically no sleep," he said, laughing.

Kantor swims for the school team and often practices twice a day, doing homework on the bus on the way to meets.

He is also deeply involved in a school club called Students Against Violence Everywhere, or SAVE.

Kantor said he is passionate about spreading nonviolent approaches to solving problems. For example, he started a program called "Wreckless-not-Reckless" that was aimed to educate his fellow students about teen driving safety.

But Kantor's contributions don't only extend to his school and his classmates, said Jim Wise, adviser of SAVE. Kantor is also one of seven members of a SAVE national youth advisory board that meets in Raleigh.



Ariel Kantor

Wise said Kantor was instrumental in organizing a national summit of SAVE that took place in March.

Kantor brings creativity, an ability to work with all kinds of people and leadership to the club, Wise said.

"You can count on him," Wise said. "If he's committed to something, he's not going to halfway commit. He's going to come through."

Kantor also plays basketball for fun. He said he is a huge Tar Heels fan, and he applied to UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke and Davidson.

He has a full ride to UNC via the Colonel Robinson Scholarship, but he says he's leaning toward Duke or Davidson so he can move a little farther from home, "meet new people and grow as a person." He's still in the running for a full ride to Davidson.

Armed with \$20,000 from Foot Locker and another \$20,000 from The Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, the former Jerusalem resident now has help to pay for an education wherever he chooses.

His favorite classes right now are biology and biomedical sciences. Once he gets to college, he wants to study biology on a pre-med track.

"I've always been really fascinated by science and the way things work," he said.

But his real goal, he said, is to combine his passion for science with his love of helping others by establishing a nonprofit that brings healthcare opportunities to less fortunate areas.

"I'm really thankful and grateful for this opportunity," Kantor said of his most recent scholarship win. "It's been a dream to be in the U.S. and continue my education and give back to the community that's been so supportive of me."