

**The following essay was submitted by Danny Weinstein, 2023 winner of The Stevie Strong Scholarship award. Danny has granted his permission to share this with you and others who would apply for future awards from the Stevie Strong Foundation.**

### **Scholarship Essay**

I come from a family of immigrants. My dad escaped from the Soviet Union as a political refugee in 1989, while my mom arrived in the U.S. from a comfortable life in Russia in 2004; as a result, I am the first American-born member of my extended family.

Eventually, my grandma also moved to the United States with the goal of becoming a citizen. Unfortunately, she failed her first attempt at the naturalization exam, and while we were all heartbroken, that very day, my mom came into my room to speak with me. She wanted *me* to help my grandma prepare for her next attempt at the exam. I agreed, quickly dedicating my time to helping her accomplish her goal. A few months later, when my grandma told me that she had passed the exam because of my help, I knew that I wanted to help other immigrants become citizens of the best country in the world.

Through my help, a dozen Eastern European immigrants have become citizens in the past three years, and with each one's success, I learned important lessons of my own. I learned how to take full advantage of the extra time that COVID provided to start a non-profit business teaching a comprehensive citizenship course, complete with my own lessons on English grammar, the 100 civics questions, and the infamously difficult N-400 application. I created presentation slides, collaborated with an immigration lawyer on the best way to start up my business, and created a social media account to advertise myself.

Teaching these lessons through Skype, I felt so much gratitude for the amazing people I

talked to, who shared their incredible stories and made me marvel at how vast and beautiful the people of this planet are. I have enjoyed every second of this remarkable opportunity, and I wouldn't change it for the world.

Inspired by my own journey as well as the guidance I received from those around me, I was honored to act as a bridge for my students, connecting the values from their previous lives with the freedom and opportunities of America. I'm excited to cross my own bridge now: the bridge that goes from high school to college.

Undoubtedly, nothing I have ever accomplished would have been possible without the support of my parents. My greatest successes and learning moments are thanks to my parents. Without their tireless effort into my upbringing, without their support and dedication to my education, I would not be the person that I am today. From an early age, they have pushed me to be my best self, encouraging me to tackle the hardest problems and to achieve all my goals, pushing past any obstacles in the way. Every day, my parents inspire me to be a better student, a better athlete, a better individual. They have been my heroes my whole life, and they deserve so much credit for my success, both past and future. Now, as I have matured into a young adult, I have learned to appreciate more of the finer moments with my parents.

My life experiences and the constant blessing of my parents have led me to pursue my passions beyond high school, which are international business and the study of economics. In my eyes, there is no discipline more important for the success and well-being of our country, and it is imperative for my generation to be knowledgeable about the factors that impact both a local and a national economy.

Economics has been on my radar ever since I started traveling abroad with my family. The differences in local markets amazed me, from a traditional barter system in Guatemala to a

more “advanced” capitalistic system in Switzerland. How vulnerable some nations are to natural disasters that could wipe out their local economy. How government interventions such as quotas and price controls disrupt the equilibrium supply and demand balance and result in product shortages or surpluses.

These problems and others I’ve observed within some local markets led to many questions, and I became curious about finding solutions, so I enrolled in AP Micro and Macroeconomics. In addition to having already found answers to so many questions, what most excites me about the study of economics is that it deals with not just concepts, but fascinating real-world issues. Throughout my career in economics, more and more questions will be solved, yet at the same time more and more inquiries will arise. This constant stimuli is exactly what I am looking for, and attests to the elegance of this career field.

Adding on, I’ve begun a year-long project in my AP Research course which involves secondary research of 30 carefully chosen American sports stadium development products and subsequent economic growth in their respective cities. Through a one sample t-test on this data, I am determining the potential economic benefits of building a new multi-purpose stadium for the Chicago Bears football team in Arlington Heights. Out of all topics to pursue for my inquiry, I chose to study the economic relationship between professional enterprises and local communities, attesting to my interest in this subject.

Beyond observing local economies first-hand and researching long-term economic effects on local communities, my interest in financial economics has been furthered by my immersion in a club that I helped create at my high school. Finance Club's primary goal is to discuss investment strategies and different financial careers. These conversations, and friendly debates, align with the club’s mission, which is to create a strong group of thinkers and leaders

for the future. I'm proud to say that Finance Club has become the largest student-run organization at my high school after only one year of its introduction.

The world of financial economics has intrigued me to the point that I've begun exploring different trading techniques to get a sense of how the American market functions on a day-to-day basis. The current volatility in the markets has provided new lessons on how they function, which will allow me to make smarter economic decisions in the future.

And while I don't yet fully know my plans beyond this year, I do know that my persistence and dedication to a strong high school education, symbolized by a perfect ACT score of 36, a 5.04 GPA, ten perfect AP test scores, and a National Merit Finalist distinction, will enable me to succeed no matter what school I commit to in the coming months.

From Adam Smith to John Maynard Keynes to Milton Friedman, our world has continuously been defined by famous economists, and I hope to one day create my own legacy in this field. But most importantly, I aspire to be a high-minded individual, someone that people respect and look up to not just in the business world but in my personal life as well.