

Danny Hope

The motto of Community Bank of Fitzgerald is "community pride in everything we do." I feel that the most important aspect of community banking is having this personal connection with the community and developing relationships with community members. A local bank can be more immediately responsive to the needs of the area. The people served at a community bank are not just customers, but oftentimes, friends as well. In a small, close-knit community, relationships are built when the customer establishes a sense of pride and trust in the local bank. Local banks have an opportunity to make a great impact on their community. The Community Bank of Fitzgerald makes an effort to create a positive influence on the surrounding community and its members. My local bank participates in various forms of outreach. For example, the Community Bank of Fitzgerald donates to local causes, rewards outstanding students in the nearby schools, and sponsors a Junior Board of Directors. In these ways, my local bank is making personal connections and developing relationships in my community.

The Community Bank of Fitzgerald has had a tremendous impact on my life. Last spring, I was chosen to be on the Community Bank Junior Board of Directors. This experience has taught me a lot about the different aspects of the business world, and it has shown me how to benefit my community through service. As a Junior Board member, I learned about marketing from local business owners, and I was introduced to the banking industry. I have also gained an understanding of the economy by competing in a stock market simulation. I have toured businesses in my area, such as my local hospital and the Port of Savannah. The most important aspect of the Junior Board is our involvement in community service projects. We have started a mentoring program to encourage at-risk middle school students; and we have participated in raising donations for our local food bank. In addition, serving on the Junior Board of Directors has opened other doors in my life.

The Community Bank of Fitzgerald gave me an opportunity to gain work experience through the Work-Based Learning Program at my high school. I now have a part-time job as a teller; I am obtaining valuable work experience. I am grateful that Community Bank has given me this chance because my work experience will prepare me for a career in a business field. My involvement through the Junior Board of Directors and the Work-Based Learning Program has led me to find some vision for my future career. The things I have been exposed to on the board and in my job have shown me that I have an interest in business. The additional work experience that I have gained has just been the icing on the cake. The Community Bank of Fitzgerald has impacted me personally by developing my interest in business, by giving me my first real job, and by steering me toward a major and career in finance and business.