



For Immediate Release

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Chemical Bank Announces Community Spirit Essay Contest Winners

May 20, 2011 ...As part of their 'Community Spirit. Made in Michigan' campaign earlier this year, Chemical Bank sponsored an essay contest for High School Students titled, "What Community means to me."

"I'm overwhelmed by the response this essay contest generated," said David B. Ramaker, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and President of Chemical Bank. "For over 90 years, Chemical Bank has embraced and acted upon the philosophy that it is our responsibility to support the communities where we live, work and play. The 92 essays we received from students throughout Michigan simply illustrates the sentiment that the spirit of community is just as important today as it was in the past."

The first place winner is Morgan Messing from Bad Axe and she will receive a U.S. Series EE Savings Bond from Chemical Bank and an iPod® touch*. Second place winner, Stacy Lang from Kawkawlin, and third place winner, Justine Sherman from Sebawing, will each receive a U.S. Series EE Savings Bond from Chemical Bank.

My Community

by Morgan Messing, Bad Axe

What is community? The concept is most commonly defined as the place where a group of people live. To me, though, a true community is not strictly made by the place, but more by the people that live there. It is a place full of friends, family, and colleagues who work together and support each other to form friendships and foster attitudes that emphasize serving others. Webs of relationships build upon each other to create a comfortable, collaborative unit that harbors amicable intimacy and supportiveness in an almost familial way.

I am reminded of what a community is every time I see a friendly face during an afternoon jog or every time my neighbor braves the winter cold to plow my family's driveway after it snows. The material of my community is spun from a rich variety of dreams and ideas, weaving together to form a safe and supportive environment in which I have grown and developed over the years. Over time my sense of community grew as I offered my service to others and developed a common identity with the people I live, study and work with. I believe that perhaps the most important feature of a community is the shared sense of identity of its members. Strongly connected communities create a specific brand of people who share a common pride over the place in which they reside. My community is the place where I feel I belong and the place that most feels like home.

Stacy Lang, Kawkawlin

“We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men.” Herman Melville spoke this wise statement with profound insight into the importance of community in human life. What does community really mean to me?

As I pondered this question, a vibrant collection of varying factions flashed within my memory. I witnessed vividly my soccer team, my church congregation, my study group, my Relay for Life squad, my NHS assemblage, my family members, and my best friends. These random gatherings represent but a small sampling of the countless communities that exist in society. Each serves a unique role, yet each is able to enrich and fulfill human life in its own way. Branching out to form relationships enables us to grow and learn with likeminded individuals while allowing us to develop a sense of compassion for others. These connections place us in contact with people who expand our minds, our ideas, our goals and encourage us to accomplish the impossible. A community is a neighborly network that provides emotional support when times become tough. A community is a collection of individuals who learn to love, care, and look out for one another. A community is an extended family united under a common intention. All communities provide a sense of teamwork, support, and camaraderie, while allowing us to link arms with our neighbors in order to achieve a more meaningful sense of purpose than would otherwise be possible on our own.

What Community Means to Me?

By Justine Sherman, Sebewaing

To me, when I hear “community” I think family. My community is especially important to me because they really showed their true colors at the time I needed them the most. Just recently my mom, sister, and I found ourselves in an unbelievable situation; a car accident. My mom was airlifted to Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Michigan where she was in a coma for almost a month. My sister and I were bounced around amongst family members while my dad was in Flint with my mom as much as he could. While being with my Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, people from the community stepped forward to help. Some held auctions, and meetings to raise money, others brought dishes full of food or gifts of money. Living in a small town, everyone knows everyone and to see the love this community has for each other literally brought tears to my eyes. My community helped me through one of the worst times in my life and helped us to bring my mom home sooner than we’d expected. Even after bringing my mom home the help kept coming. The doctors in Flint used to tell my mom that when they looked over our town it was glowing because of all the cards, prayers and flowers sent to her. When you get my community together it’s like one big heart. The caring and love we have is unimaginable. This is why my community is important to me.

*Apple is not a participant in or a sponsor of this promotion.

Chemical Financial Corporation is the second-largest bank holding company headquartered in Michigan. The Company operates through a single subsidiary bank, Chemical Bank, with 142 banking offices spread over 32 counties in the lower peninsula of Michigan. At March 31, 2011, the Company had total assets of \$5.3 billion. Chemical Financial Corporation's common stock trades on The NASDAQ Stock Market under the symbol CHFC and is one of the issues comprising the NASDAQ Global Select Market. Member FDIC.

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