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Fitzgerald completes coding academy, gets 'dream job'

ANDREW HARP The News-Enterprise

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Caleb Fitzgerald
Community and
Technical College
developer.
Submitted photo

Caleb Fitzgerald participated in the Greater Knox Coding Academy earlier this year at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College. Fitzgerald currently works at CoreSys Consulting Services as a Java developer.

Submitted photo

Some students who completed the 17-week Greater Knox Coding Academy at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College already are reaping the rewards of their training.

Caleb Fitzgerald, 20, and graduate of John Hardin High School, attended Hardin County Schools Early College and Career Center working on multiple categories of information technology including networking and cyber security.

After graduating high school, he became a contractor in Louisville doing a few different help desk jobs, but soon realized he wanted to move on from that.

“I really wanted to get on at Fort Knox and work there because that was like my dream job,” Fitzgerald said.

When the coding academy opened, he said he viewed it as an opportunity to get his foot in the door at Fort Knox, but also to learn something new. Programming was an area he hadn’t studied.

Fitzgerald’s participation in the academy was paid for through the North South Consulting Group, a Radcliff-based defense contractor.

NSCG CEO Krista Steven worked with the Knox Regional Development Alliance and ECTC to launch the academy.

Fitzgerald said the academy felt like a full-time job since classes would from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. He said there were times when they had to work on weekends and he also was enrolled locally in classes through Western Kentucky University.

Work at the academy began in February and finished in June.

Fitzgerald said a requirement to work at Fort Knox for application and software developers is to take a test and earn certification in Security Plus. Before the academy, he said he had attempted the test a few times but fell short by a question.

While at the academy, students took part in Security Plus training, which Fitzgerald said was helpful, allowing him to be the first student in the class to earn the certification.

After finishing the academy, he started a job at Fort Knox which used a component of his programming work in July. By September, he was working in a Java developer position, and began work in September at CoreSys Consulting Services.

CoreSys is an IT company that provides professional services, including to government contractors which include Army Human Resources Command at Fort Knox.

Doug Chapman, vice president of operations at CoreSys, said retired Brig. Gen. Jim Iacocca with the Knox Regional Developmental Alliance approached the company about the academy.

Chapman said he provided the current hiring needs and an ideal candidate profile. He said the company competes with the Louisville job market which has created a labor shortcoming.

Since the conclusion of the first group at the academy, Chapman said two graduates, including Fitzgerald, were hired onto CoreSys. He said the company has a rigorous interview and screening process, which both candidates passed. He said this is a good indication of the quality of the individuals and the academy, which will begin its next session in February with an application deadline of Jan. 15.

Fitzgerald said he creates programs using object-oriented language to make programs more simple and easier to function. He said his entire team creates programs for the military and for different components of the Department of Defense.

Currently, Fitzgerald is attending Western Kentucky University and studying IT, political science and organizational leadership, and plans to graduate in about a year.

He said he thanks his family, friends, fiancée, academy instructors and God for the opportunities he has taken up.

“I’m just blessed that all the people that took a chance on me and believed in me and gave me opportunities to achieve the goals that I always wanted to achieve,” Fitzgerald said.

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