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Media Contact: [Audrey Fisch, Ph.D.](mailto:Audrey.Fisch@morethanbootstraps.org)
President, More Than Bootstraps
908-397-0893
audrey@morethanbootstraps.org



More Than Bootstraps Celebrates Graduation and College Signing Day

WESTFIELD, PLAINFIELD and PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY – May 18, 2026.

The New Jersey non-profit organization, More Than Bootstraps (MTB), celebrated the graduation of our fifth cohort of High Schools Fellows with a Graduation and College Signing Day event hosted by **Passaic County Community College (PCCC)** and Patricia, Medeiros, Associate Vice President at PCCC. MTB received financial support for the event from the [TD Bank Community Sponsorship Program](#).

Students and families in MTB gathered to celebrate the 13 graduating high school seniors in the Passaic Public Schools who will soon be embarking on the next stage of their journey as first-generation college students and the two college students who have completed their bachelor's degrees.

Over the last two years, the high school students have been mentored by their older peers, College Student Leaders from Passaic, who are currently enrolled in college. With the help of their Passaic “near-peer” mentors, these thirteen graduating Fellows gained confidence, communication, and leadership skills; navigated the world of college applications, financial aid, and scholarships; and communicated their goals to their families.

Xzavier Aguilar	Ramapo College
Jonathan Guevara Bautista	Penn State
Savanna Sapphire Diaz	Caldwell University
Andrea Herrera	Stevens Institute of Technology
Gabriel M. Hurtado	Passaic County Community College
Guadalupe Mariano Jimenez	NJIT
Ariakna Robynn Miranda	Caldwell University
Kaylee Nicole Pina	Ramapo College
Dhruvi Matishkumar Rana	Rutgers, New Brunswick
Pearl Rana	Seton Hall University
Pablo Tiro	Passaic County Community College
Xavier Vargas	TBD
Juan Vega	NJIT

MTB also celebrated the college graduations of two College Student Leaders:

Ashley Delgado Criminology and Latin American Studies with a minor in Psychology,
William Paterson University

Mana Raval Data Science, NJIT

MTB congratulates everyone on the hard work that has culminated in these impressive college commitments.

This year’s celebration featured words of wisdom delivered by keynote speaker **Joleen Rivera**, Senior Manager on Amazon Web Services’ Americas Public Policy Team.



More Than Bootstraps also congratulates the families of our graduates, who stand behind the success of these ambitious, talented young people.



MTB 2026 Graduates (not pictured xxxxxxxx)

“National statistics from [The Pell Institute](#) indicate that that only 11% of first-generation, low-income students who enroll in college earn a degree after six years,” noted **Audrey Fisch**, president of More Than Bootstraps. This year’s MTB college graduates both completed bachelor’s degrees in three and a half years. Ashley joined MTB in the first cohort of High School Fellows. She and Manan led MTB this year as Program Resource Fellows, and both are

already working full-time. “Their success,” remarked Fisch, “demonstrates the power of near-peer mentoring for both our mentors and mentees.”

“We are grateful to PCCC for their extraordinary hospitality,” said Fisch, “and thankful to Amanda Racanati and [Mint Sprig Décor](#) for the wonderful decorations that made our College Signing Day special.”



Donations to More Than Bootstraps fund student stipends, educational expenses, and emergency funds for students. Interested donors should visit the MTB website: www.morethanbootstraps.org/donate.

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About **MORE THAN BOOTSTRAPS**

More Than Bootstraps builds a community of first-generation, underrepresented students who empower each other to access and succeed in higher education. *More Than Bootstraps* is a 501(c)3 organization, Tax ID 83-2245008. For more information, visit www.morethanbootstraps.org or call (908) 397-0893.

MTB DIGITAL PRESS KIT: www.morethanbootstraps.org/mtb-digital-press-kit

About the TD Bank Community Sponsorship Program

TD Bank provides sponsorship support for events and activities from both for-profit and non-profit organizations that positively impact the communities they serve. As a sponsor, TD Bank aims to achieve several goals, including creating a positive impression, providing opportunities for colleagues, enhancing relationships with community organizations, and supporting the community.



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