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More Than Bootstraps Announces New Leaders and Program Resource Fellows

These outstanding students will lead the MTB College Access and Success Program

WESTFIELD and PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY – August 20, 2024.

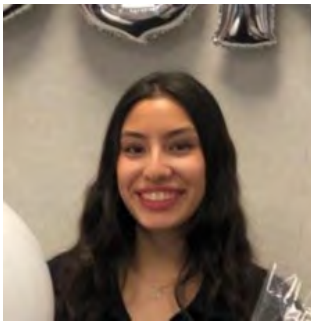
More Than Bootstraps (MTB), a New Jersey non-profit organization, announces that four college students from Passaic, New Jersey, have been selected for and completed leadership training with MTB. These ambitious and talented first-generation college students will serve as College Student Leaders, mentoring their younger peers -- high school juniors in the Passaic Public Schools – over the next two years, as their mentees work to achieve their higher education goals.

The new MTB College Student Leaders for the 2024-2025 academic year are **Jasmin Bravo** (Ramapo College), **Rachel Sainz** (Monmouth University), **Nelsie Abreu** (Rutgers University, Newark), and **Alyssa Tentle** (The College of New Jersey). All of these students previously completed two years as High School Fellows in MTB.

These four new leaders will join 15 returning Leaders in mentoring 33 MTB High School Fellows during the upcoming school year.



Jasmin Bravo



Rachel Sainz



Nelsie Abreu



Alyssa Tentle

Also taking on new leadership positions are **Lisbeth (Kamila) Gell** (Kean University) and **Melissa Reyes** (Dartmouth College). These two outstanding College Student Leaders will take on the role of Program Resource Fellow. Already, they have led the MTB Summer Training Program for College Student Leaders. In addition, they spearheaded the MTB Summer Program for rising senior High School Fellows. Kamila and Melissa have served as College Student Leaders for three years. As rising college seniors, they will continue to take on new responsibilities within MTB over the upcoming academic year.



Kamila Gell



Melissa Reyes

Now beginning its fifth year of programming, MTB employs a near-peer mentoring approach to address the challenges first-generation, low-income students face in accessing and succeeding in higher education. Working with underrepresented students in Passaic, NJ, the organization matches high school students with near-peer mentors – graduates of the Passaic Public Schools currently enrolled in institutions from Wellesley College to William Paterson University. Led by their college student mentors, MTB High School Fellows follow a curriculum that focuses on education about higher education and financial aid, communication with families, holistic student development, and the promotion of student well-being and agency.

Grants and donations to More Than Bootstraps fund the monthly stipends that allow the high school and college students in the program some time and space to devote to their professional development and college-going activities while still meeting their financial responsibilities.

"As our program matures, more of the students are able to take on leadership positions within the organization," said **Audrey Fisch**, president of More Than Bootstraps. "This allows them to continue to develop their skills while contributing to the empowerment of all the students within the program."

Interested donors are invited to 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.

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