For Information Contact:
Carmen Gates
African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey
cgates@aaccnj.com
www.aaccnj.com
609-571-1620

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 17, 2026

The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) recently partnered with Trenton Central High School to present its highly successful "**Life After High School**" Program.

(TRENTON, NJ – June 17, 2026) – AACCNJ's "Life After High School" Program Connects Mercer County Students with Career and Workforce Leaders.

Mercer County, NJ – The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) recently partnered with educators Ms. Parimi and Mr. DeSimone to present its highly successful **Life After High School** program, providing students with direct access to employers, workforce professionals, and community leaders dedicated to helping young people prepare for success beyond graduation.

Twenty-four students participated in the interactive 2 session program at TCHS, which focused on career exploration, workforce readiness, educational opportunities, internships, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and paid training programs available right here in Mercer County.

The event featured an impressive lineup of speakers and professionals who shared their personal journeys, career advice, and valuable resources with students:

- Dr. Pamela Pruitt, Capital Health System
- Detective Corey McNair, Trenton Police Department
- Shelly Bryant, SBR Realtors
- Keysha Berry, First Bank

- Richard Hadley, Mercer County One-Stop Career Center, accompanied by interns Janerah and Daniel
- Justin Laureti and Terrance Pyres, Cure Arena
- Raheem Veah, Razor Sharp Global, LLC
- Ronald White, The Cheesecake Factory (Quaker Bridge Mall location)

Throughout the session, students engaged in meaningful conversations about career pathways, workforce expectations, post-secondary education options, internships, apprenticeships, entrepreneurship, and the many training and support programs available to them throughout Mercer County.

The program was coordinated by **Carmen Gates, Vice President of Community Development & External Affairs Officer for AACCNJ**, and **AACCNJ Board Chairman Gary Mann**, who worked closely with Ms. Parimi and Mr. DeSimone to develop a highly engaging, results-driven experience designed to empower students with actionable information, professional connections, and real-world career insights.

As part of the program design, Mr. Mann participated in the first session, where students completed assessments and surveys to identify their strengths, career interests, workplace readiness skills, and areas requiring additional development. The results helped shape the content and delivery of the program to ensure students received relevant guidance and exposure to opportunities aligned with their interests and future goals.

"Our objective was to listen first," said Gary Mann, "By assessing students' strengths, interests, and areas for growth, we were able to design a program that addressed their real needs. The result was an authentic conversation that equipped students with practical information, valuable connections, and a clearer understanding of the opportunities available to them after high school."

"Our goal was to create an honest and impactful conversation about life after high school and connect students directly with professionals who could provide practical guidance, mentorship, and opportunities," said Carmen Gates. "The level of engagement from the students was outstanding, and we are grateful to our presenters for investing their time, expertise, and resources in the next generation."

The success of the program reflects the shared commitment of AACCNJ, school leadership, educators, employers, and community partners to prepare students for meaningful careers and lifelong success.

"The success of this program demonstrates what can happen when educators, employers, workforce professionals, and community leaders come together with a shared commitment to student achievement," said **Dr. John E. Harmon, Sr., Founder, President and CEO of AACCNJ**. "Providing students with access to information, mentorship, and career opportunities is essential to building the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals."

The overwhelmingly positive response from students, educators, and presenters reinforced the importance of providing young people with direct access to employers and career professionals. AACCNJ looks forward to returning next year and expanding the program on a larger scale, potentially reaching additional junior and senior students through an auditorium-based format that will allow even more students to benefit from the experience.

About The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey

The AACCNJ performs an essential role in the economic viability of New Jersey. While providing a platform for New Jersey's African American business leaders to speak with a collective voice, the AACCNJ advocates and promotes economic diversity fostering a climate of business growth through major initiatives centering on education and public policy. The Chamber serves as a proactive advocacy group with a 501(c) 3 tax exemption, which is shared by the National Black Chamber of Commerce.