

Dear Friends of More Than Bootstraps,

It takes
MORE THAN
BOOTSTRAPS
to succeed



As we move into summer and hope for a nearly-normal school year and world in the fall, the challenges remain for first-generation students. Despite their resilience, drive, and academic accomplishments, we know that remote learning and economic disruption have had disproportionate impacts on the health, finances, and educational aspirations of communities of color and low-income families.

First-generation students have the academic skills and the drive to succeed, but it takes More Than Bootstraps to succeed in higher education. Please keep MTB in mind as you emerge from lockdown and decide where you want to spend your volunteer time and your resources this summer.

Don't forget to follow us on social media and please visit our website: www.morethanbootstraps.org. Thank you!

Audrey Fisch, Ph.D., President, More Than Bootstraps
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MTB has grown from 11 to 24 first-generation students!

Our partnership with the Passaic Public Schools is expanding!



We began 2020-2021 with six MTB Fellows, all juniors, **Jennifer Angel, Marisol Coliente, Ashley Delgado, Abigail Huitzil, Catherine Librado, and Juliana Suarez**. Over the course of the year, these students have been mentored by our inaugural cohort of five MTB Leaders, **Rogreka Clayton, Michelle Contreras, Dhruvi Rana, Jocelyn Gonzalez, and Johana Lastor-Montes**.

For the upcoming academic year 2021-2022, MTB will more than double the total number of first-generation students. Three of our Leaders, Rogreka Clayton, Michelle Contreras, Dhruvi Rana, will continue, joined by five new college student Leaders from Passaic.

Our High Schools Fellows, now rising seniors, will be joined a new and larger class of ten rising juniors: **Jacquelin Arteaga, Yessenia Garcia, Giselle Belen Gomez, Jasmin Hernández, Yoselin Hernandez, Joana Molina, Roselyn Munoz, Rachelli Soliz, Alyssa Tentle, and Diana Torres**.

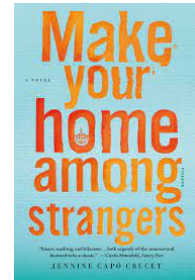


All students in the MTB program receive monthly stipends, laptop computers, and access to emergency resources to help them with the many non-tuition expenses of higher education and to enable them to devote time to come together as a community of success.

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL: *"The Leaders are honest in the aspect of any questions you may have for them [and share] similar experiences that make us feel close because they have been through high school before so they know what we're going through and always support us!"*

MTB Programming for Summer 2021

In addition to summer classes, pre-college classes, work, cooking, cleaning, taking care of siblings, and internships, MTB students are reading and discussing Jennine Capó Crucet's *Make Your Home Among Strangers*, a novel about the experience of Lizet, a first-generation daughter of Cuban immigrants who enters the alien and sometimes unfriendly world of the fictional, elite Rawlings College.



MTB Alumnea

We say good-bye to two of our Leaders. **Johana Lastor-Montes** graduated from Rutgers, Newark, in May and will embark on a Master's in Mental Health Counseling at Hofstra University. **Jocelyn Gonzalez** has been accepted into The College of New Jersey's Global Student Teaching Program, and she will spend much of her time next year student teaching at an international school abroad. We congratulate both of these students on their success and are grateful to their contributions to MTB.

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL: *"College can be a quite frightening idea, especially if you are a first-generation college student. I joined MTB because I felt like I was going to start my college journey blindly and I needed guidance."*

More Than Bootstraps in the News!

We continue to receive critical media attention and call attention to the needs of first-generation students and the ability of the MTB students to empower each other as they navigate the higher education landscape.

We were profiled, including comments by MTB Board Member **Claudia Severino** and MTB High School Fellow **Marisol Coliente**, in [The Boulevard Online](#), the online media site of Passaic Preparatory Academy in Passaic, NJ.

Michael Sowell, MTB Board Member, was featured in a [NJCU in 10 podcast interview](#) about MTB. Listen to Michael speak eloquently about the importance of college access

and college success programs and about the power of near-peer mentoring.

Audrey Fisch published a [piece in The Hill](#), imploring educational leaders to embrace some of the disruption of COVID-19 and employ our newfound skills and flexibility to respect and accommodate the needs of first-generation students. In a [guest column for The Star-Ledger](#), New Jersey's largest newspaper, Audrey details the experience of one of her first-generation students and argues that policymakers who embrace the free tuition fallacy fail to truly understand the financial burdens faced by first-generation students.

[Boulevard Online article](#)

[Op-Ed in The Hill](#)

[Star-Ledger Op-Ed](#)

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL: *"The most impactful part of the program for me would have to be discussing the idea of college with my parents. College is something unfamiliar to both us, and it is really great that we are learning together."*

New MTB Advisory Board Members



Dawn M. Wilson

Ms. Wilson brings nearly fifteen years of college access and success experience to MTB. Dawn currently serves as the Associate Director of the Princeton University Preparatory Program (PUPP), where she aids in program and scholar development.



Maria J. Zamora

Ms. Zamora, Program Manager for Undocumented Student Services at Rutgers University-Newark, works to empower undocumented students by coordinating community-building programs, facilitating educational trainings and sharing her personal narrative of being a first-generation college student and an immigrant.



Janely Jose

Ms. Jose is the newly appointed Assistant Principal of Etta Gero School No. 9 in her hometown of Passaic, NJ. Born of Dominican parents, she is a first-generation college graduate of The College of New Jersey. She has 15 years of teaching experience, most of which she spent teaching English at Passaic High School, her alma-mater.

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL: *"MTB has taught me how valuable it is to be a first-gen student and how I can help others become successful as well."*

Nomination for Making A Difference Award

More Than Bootstraps' Founder and President, Audrey Fisch, and More Than Bootstraps were nominated for a [Russ Berrie Making a Difference Award](#). For 25 years, the Russ Berrie Making a Difference Award has honored New Jersey residents and organizations who provide outstanding service to others and make a substantial impact on the lives of others.

SUPPORT THE STUDENTS IN MORE THAN BOOTSTRAPS

We are so grateful for support from over 100 friends of MTB. To date, MTB has raised nearly \$90,000, including cash donations and in-kind contributions. Recent foundation support includes a \$750 community grant from the [Westfield Rotary Club Foundation](#) and a \$1,500 from the [Westfield Foundation](#). Board members cover all administrative expenses. All donations go directly to fund student stipends, educational expenses, and emergency funds.

Don't ask first-generation students to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Give them a hand!

\$75 funds the monthly stipend to create time and space to learn from a Leader about how to get from Passaic to college

\$300 a month frees a Leader from some work in the service economy so that she can be part of a community of success, develop her own skills, and mentor her younger peers

\$750 funds a high school Fellow for a full academic year

\$1,000 funds one Leader for the MTB summer training program where our Leaders learn from each other and from experts from across the country about how to enhance the strengths of first-generation students on the journey to and in higher education

DONATE with a credit card

Checks: 421 Highland Avenue, Westfield, NJ 07090

Venmo: @morethanbootstraps

Paypal: paypal.me/MoreThanBootstraps

Volunteer! We welcome donations of time, talent and expertise.

Amazon Smile

It's easy to support MTB through your purchases on AmazonSmile. Just be sure you select More Than Bootstraps so that you see this message in the left hand corner of your screen each time you make your purchase.

New! MTB T-SHIRTS

Want to support MTB and get a nice thank you? [Buy one of our new t-shirts!](#)

Designed by amazing volunteers with input from the MTB student community.

Feeling inspired? A gift of \$475 will allow us to buy t-shirts for all the students in our program for 2021-2022.



black logo (front)



white graffiti (front)



black graffiti (front)



back logo (back)

white graffiti (back)

black graffiti (back)

MTB logo shirt designed by Yuzu Dixon. Graffiti t-shirt design by Frankie Rodriguez

Check out our new infographic!

*Designed by Olivia Wheeler,
Founder & Creative Director,
[Acton Circle](#)*

MISSION

More Than Bootstraps (MTB) is a non-profit organization founded by educators who understand the significant obstacles that first-generation college students face on their journey into and through higher education. To succeed, they need More Than Bootstraps.

STUDENTS SERVED

2020-2021

8 High School Fellows (Seniors) 5 College Student Leaders

2021-2022

10 High School Fellows (Seniors) 5 College Student Leaders

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