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### More Than Bootstraps Graduation and College Signing Day Celebration

WESTFIELD and PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY – May 23, 2023. The New Jersey non-profit organization, [More Than Bootstraps](https://www.morethanbootstraps.org) (MTB), celebrated the graduation of our second cohort of High School Fellows with a **Graduation Event** and **College Signing Day** on Saturday, May 20, hosted by **Passaic County Community College** and **Dean Ashley Castiglia**.

The event celebrated the college signing of **Jacqueline Arteaga**, **Yessenia Garcia**, **Joana Molina**, **Roselyn Muñoz**, and **Alyssa Tentle**. Each young woman joined More Than Bootstraps as a high school junior in 2021 and worked with an MTB “near-peer” mentor from Passaic.



*Dr. Enmanuel Mercedes, Alyssa Tentle, Roselyn Muñoz, Jacqueline Arteaga, Yessenia Garcia, Dean Ashley Castiglia.*

**Jacqueline** has committed to **Wellesley College**, where she will pursue her interest in dentistry. **Yessenia** will begin her higher education career at **Montclair State University**, pursuing her ambition to become a speech pathologist. **Joana** has matriculated at **Seton Hall University**, where she will study nursing. **Roselyn** will attend **Fairleigh Dickinson University** to study criminal justice. **Alyssa** has committed to **The College of New Jersey**, studying to become a psychologist.

The May 20 celebration featured words of welcome from Ashley Castiglia, Dean of Admissions at PCCC, words of congratulations to our High School Fellow Graduates from their mentors - College Student Leaders **Kamila Gell** (Kean '25), **Lizbeth Coliente** (Ramapo '24), and **Melissa Reyes** (Dartmouth '25), words of thanks delivered by **Ashley Delgado** (William Paterson, '26) to **Ayana Goodwin**, MTB's 2022-2023 Social Work Intern, and words of wisdom delivered by **Enmanuel Mercedes**, Ph.D., President of the Latino Mental Health Association of New Jersey. Translation for the event was provided by **Nereida Delgado Garcia** (Montclair State University, '25).

**PNC Bank** and **Citizens Bank** served as corporate sponsors for the event. “Corporate funding allowed MTB to celebrate the momentous occasion of MTB's College Signing Day and ensured that all our students and their families could travel to PCCC to celebrate,” said **Audrey Fisch**, president of More Than Bootstraps.

More Than Bootstraps is also thankful to **Amanda Racanati** and **Mint Sprig Décor** for generously supplying decorations to help the students mark College Signing Day.

“We are grateful to the MTB Board, our many individual and corporate donors, and the Center for Hispanic Policy, Research, and Development for funding the student stipends that allow our students time and space to come together and empower each other on the road to and through higher education,” commented Fisch. “Our high school and college graduates demonstrate the power of More Than Bootstraps, and we wish Jackie, Yessenia, Joana, Roselyn, and Alyssa much luck and success as they close out high school and transition into unstoppable first-generation college students.”

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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](http://www.morethanbootstraps.org/donate).

MTB DIGITAL PRESS KIT: [www.morethanbootstraps.org/mtb-digital-press-kit](http://www.morethanbootstraps.org/mtb-digital-press-kit)

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Interested donors are invited to visit the MTB website: [www.morethanbootstraps.org/donate](http://www.morethanbootstraps.org/donate).

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](http://www.morethanbootstraps.org) or call (908) 397-0893.



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