

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Than Bootstraps Awarded \$750 Grant from the Westfield Rotary Club Foundation
The grant will support stipends for students in the MTB College Access and Success Program

WESTFIELD and PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY – June 29, 2022. [More Than Bootstraps](#) (MTB), a New Jersey non-profit dedicated to helping low-income, first-generation students access and succeed in higher education, has received a \$750 community service grant award from the [Westfield Rotary Club Foundation](#), an organization of business and professional men and women in Westfield who value service above self in Westfield and throughout the world. This is the second award MTB has received from the Rotary Club.

Founded by **Audrey Fisch**, a long-time Westfield resident and college professor, More Than Bootstraps addresses the challenges first-generation, low-income students face in getting to and succeeding in higher education. MTB builds on these students' strengths to create a sustainable pathway to and through college. The organization provides first-generation high school students with near-peer mentors, current college students from their community. These mentors meet weekly with their high school mentees and follow a curriculum of activities focused on personal and professional development, college and financial aid awareness, and communication with families. Once a month, the full group convenes for workshops and guest presentations.

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. The new grant will provide one year of monthly stipends for one MTB high school Fellow.

MTB launched in Westfield on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 2020. Donations from individuals, including many Westfield residents, and local organizations, such as Temple Emanu-El of Westfield, the Westfield Rotary Club, the Westfield-based Union Innovation NJ Alliance ([UNINJA](#)), and the Westfield Foundation, provided resources to support five college student Leaders and six high school Fellows in the first year of operations in the Passaic community. MTB continues to expand. In 2022-2023, the organization will serve 18 high school Fellows and nine college student Leaders.

In May, MTB celebrated the high school graduation and college matriculation of its first cohort of high school Fellows. All of the initial cohort of MTB college student Leaders have now graduated from college in four years, vastly outpacing the 9% of first-generation, low-income students who earn a BA by age 24.



Pictured from left to right are Marisol, Catherine, our speaker Ingrid Renderos, Rogreka Clayton (our graduating College Student Leader), Ashley, and Audrey Fisch, our President. (One additional Fellow, Jennifer, is not pictured.)

Now entering its third year of operations, the organization is grateful to continued public support from individuals and institutions, including the KearnyBank Foundation, Comodo, Revivn, Investors Bank and the Investors Bank Foundation, PNC Bank.

“We are enormously grateful the recognition of our program’s contribution to the higher-education success of first-generation students,” said **Audrey Fisch**, president of More Than Bootstraps. “Education remains transformational in the United States. We are grateful to the Westfield Rotary Club Foundation for their partnership in our endeavor to make an impact on the lives of these first-generation college students.”

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More Than Bootstraps is a 501(c)3 organization, Tax ID 83-2245008

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