

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Than Bootstraps Awarded \$1,500 Grant from Westfield Foundation
The grant will support stipends for students in the MTB College Access and Success Program

WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY – February 15, 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 \$1,500 grant from the [Westfield Foundation](#), a community foundation that provides funding support in the arts, health, aging, historic preservation, social services, and civic projects.

Audrey Fisch, a long-time Westfield resident and college professor, founded More Than Bootstraps with colleagues in K-12 and higher education to address the challenges first-generation 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.

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-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 operation.

In 2021-2022, MTB expanded to serve 12 high school Fellows and six college student Leaders. The current grant from the Westfield Foundation will fund the monthly stipend for two MTB high school Fellows for one year and allow MTB to continue to expand the number of first-generation, underrepresented students in the program. As noted by **Gerard P. Boyle**, the Executive Director, the Westfield Foundation board recognizes the value of More Than Bootstraps and hopes that the students "continue to participate in this program and gain experience as well as a sense of pride in giving back to the community."

“We are grateful to the Westfield Foundation for this second grant and for their recognition of our program’s contribution to the higher-education success of first-generation students,” said Audrey Fisch, president of More Than Bootstraps.

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All 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. Interested donors are invited to visit the MTB website:

www.morethanbootstraps.org/donate.

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

www.morethanbootstraps.org



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About More Than Bootstraps

MTB is a non-profit created by educators seeking to level the playing field and remove some of the substantial barriers that first-generation college students encounter in accessing and succeeding in higher education. More Than Bootstraps employs a near-peer mentoring model to create a community of success. College students from the community return to guide their younger peers in the community through the college search, application, and assimilation process. These leaders, working as a mentoring cohort, in turn strengthen their own college-going identities and improve their own chances of success in higher education.

Students are selected based on their desire to attend college and their commitment to the program rather than grade point average or test scores. All students in the MTB program receive stipends, laptop computers, and access to emergency resources to help them with the many non-tuition expenses of higher education.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<https://www.morethanbootstraps.org/mtb-digital-press-kit>