

M&T Announces Winners of the Prince George's County Small Business Accelerator Program

Sadija A. Smiley Awarded \$5,000 grand prize to support Stillborn and Infant Loss Support Inc.

Largo, MD, November 12, 2024— Sadija A. Smiley and *Stillborn And Infant Loss Support Inc.* (SAILS) have won the \$5,000 grand prize in the small business accelerator pitch competition hosted by M&T Bank (NYSE: MTB) and FSC First. This program aims to equip entrepreneurs with essential skills and guidance to build resilient businesses, drive economic growth in Prince George's County, and create generational wealth for their families.

SAILS provides compassionate support to families experiencing miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant loss. Through community building, education, and support groups, the organization helps families navigate grief with dignity and strength.

"We are incredibly grateful to receive the \$5,000 grand prize, which will allow us to provide more resources, foster community, and support families who have faced unimaginable loss," said Sadija A. Smiley, winner of the pitch competition. "This funding will enable us to expand our support groups, develop additional educational resources, and continue creating a safe space for healing. Together, we are ensuring that no one must face this journey alone."

The competition was the culmination of an eight-week program launched on September 24. This hybrid program, featuring virtual and in-person courses at various county locations, covered topics such as business planning, capital sourcing, financial management, marketing, and branding. The program concluded on November 12 with a pitch competition, followed by the announcement of awards, funded by M&T Bank.

Nicole Angela Sergeant, owner of *Freckled LLC*, secured the second-place prize of \$3,000, while Tiffany Kelly, owner of *House of Ketubah Bridal (HOK Bridal)*, earned the third-place prize of \$2,000. All participants were recognized for their hard work and progress with certificates celebrating their commitment to the program.

To qualify, businesses had to be based in Prince George's County, in operation for at least two years, and in good standing. M&T Bank also offers similar accelerator programs in Montgomery, Howard, and Frederick counties, as well as Baltimore City.

"In partnership with Prince George's County, M&T Bank is proud to have hosted the Business Accelerator Program, which equips local entrepreneurs with the resources to help their businesses thrive," said Jim Peterson, M&T Bank's Vice President and Small Business Ambassador. "This program provides mentorship opportunities, and the tools small business owners need to succeed in a competitive landscape. We're thrilled with this year's turnout and celebrate everyone who participated."

This event marked the second business accelerator program M&T Bank has sponsored in Prince George's County this year, following a Spanish-language program hosted in partnership with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation in June.

About M&T Bank

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services with a branch and ATM network spanning the eastern U.S. from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank. For more information about M&T Bank, visit www.mtb.com.

About FSC First

Founded in 1978, FSC First provides flexible business financing solutions and technical assistance programs to established and emerging businesses in Prince George's County and the state of Maryland. FSC First stands apart as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) designated by the U.S. Treasury Department with a mission to stimulate the growth and development of the local economy. For more information about FSC First, visit www.fscfirst.com.

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