



Our **Reach** by the Numbers

197,194 patients & families reached

16,429 volunteers

62,943 volunteer hours

486 hospital & nonprofit partners

Our **Mission**

We deliver the healing power of play to children with medical needs through trained and dedicated volunteers.



Dear **Friends,**

2022 was a tremendous year and Project Sunshine is stronger than ever before. We reached a record number of patients and families, re-engaged a dedicated base of volunteers, began our technology build that will support all of our programs, and so much more.

It took a lot of hard work! We spent the year making a concerted, targeted effort to reestablish our services back into medical facilities post-pandemic. This took thousands of calls, emails and meetings. We adjusted our volunteer training and clearance processes to account for the changing policies of hospital partners due to the pandemic. And we went through a rigorous vetting process to find the perfect partner for our technology build.

We also closed the year with a momentous transition. After 25 years of visionary leadership, Joe transitioned as Chair of the Board. Natan Bibliowicz was unanimously voted in by the Board of Directors in March 2023. Natan joined the Board in 2011 and is one of our longest serving Board members. We're thrilled to have such a dedicated and sincere leader take on this role and Joe will continue to serve on the board as Founder and Chair Emeritus.

As we look ahead to 2023, we will build on this momentum to serve even more children and families with enhanced programs, more efficiency, and greater accessibility. But we know that this important work is only possible through vibrant partnerships, a dedicated staff, an engaged board, and timely resources. We are grateful to the growing number of supporters, volunteers, and partners who continue to energize us and propel us forward. And we're especially thankful for the patients and families who play with us every day.

We invite you to join us. Become a volunteer, give financially, invite your networks to get involved, and see just how powerful play can be. We are energized, we are excited, and we are ready to take on another year of delivering the healing power of play to children who need it most – together.

Gratefully,



Joseph Weilgus

Founder and Chair Emeritus



Whitney Namm Pollack

Executive Director

Play is...

brain building

research-backed

experimentation

self-expression

powerful

healing.

Unfortunately, illness and hospitalization are traumatic and lead to emotional changes for both patient and family:

- Children with medical challenges regularly endure disruptions in routines and relationships, and experience pain, loneliness, fear, and loss of autonomy.
- Parents and caregivers are at risk of long-term traumatic stress.
- Siblings are acutely at risk of adverse developmental and psychological outcomes, such as emotional fragility, behavioral issues, academic problems, and family conflicts.

Project Sunshine delivers healing play to children in 48 states in the U.S. and 3 international countries, through 486 hospitals and partners, alongside more than 16,000 volunteers.

Here to **Play**

Play is educational, conducive to healing, and, above all, fun. At medical facilities across the country, our dedicated corps of trained volunteers, dressed in yellow Project Sunshine t-shirts and equipped with creative arts and crafts materials, visit patients at bedsides, waiting rooms, clinics, and playrooms. These activities and connections with volunteers alleviate the stress of hospital stays and medical procedures while promoting key aspects of childhood such as socialization, creative expression, intellectual stimulation, and sensory integration.

2022 Updates

In 2022, Project Sunshine volunteers returned to hospitals after a long hiatus due to the pandemic. We were glad to be back seeing patients face to face. Yet, our team needed to adapt quickly to new hospital rules and policies post-pandemic, adjusting recruitment and onboarding strategies as needed. We're amazed to know that our volunteers are dedicated more than ever to ensuring we serve more children and families than ever before. Today, volunteers are seeing an average of 11 children and family members per visit (compared to six pre-pandemic) and they are volunteering six times more than before. We are grateful to our volunteers and our medical facilities who have welcomed us back in and look forward to even more opportunities to bring Here to Play to patients and families.



3,887
patients & families reached

1,094 volunteers

2,149 volunteer hours

“When we were volunteering at The Pediatric Specialty Care Facility, there was an older child living with quadriplegia who was hesitant to come to the playroom. We wanted to meet him where he was comfortable, so we went to his bedside where we discovered that he was a huge Pittsburgh Steelers fan. We are too! He lit up being able to share his personal interests with us and it made our day to share it back with him.”
– Robyn McKnight, Volunteer



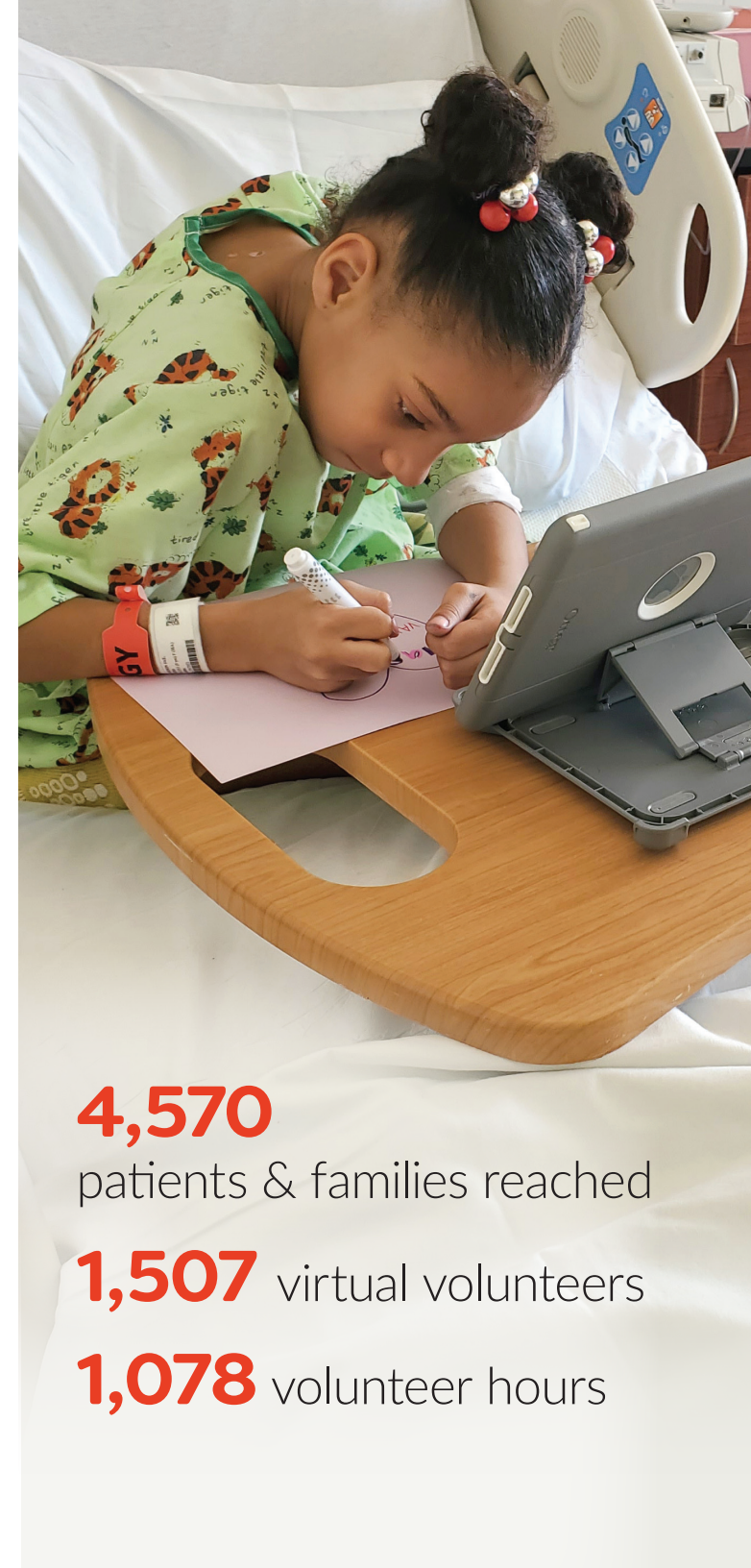
TelePlay

Project Sunshine's virtual program is a live play experience via HIPAA-compliant video conferencing. Our volunteers meet children online for developmentally appropriate games and activity sessions. Since the inception of TelePlay, the program has served over 10,000 children and families. The flexible platform is allowing for expansion within various communities—for example, geographically distant families with children who have rare conditions.

This pandemic adaptation of Project Sunshine's signature programming remains a force for play-powered healing, reaching children facing medical challenges at home or in the hospital. Caregivers, medical staff, volunteers, and patients alike value TelePlay—the only program of its kind in the country—for its versatility and accessibility.

2022 Updates

In 2022, we launched the Sunshine Network, with events featuring special guests from the entertainment world, for our community of children and families. This initiative has helped us to build stronger relationships directly with the constituents we serve. We're also excited to launch a new technology platform and app to enhance the TelePlay experience for all later in 2023. We look forward to sharing that experience with our community!



4,570
patients & families reached

1,507 virtual volunteers

1,078 volunteer hours

“My child just told me she loves TelePlay more than anything. She doesn't get to play with a sibling, so this is very fun for her.”

– Caregiver

“We are so excited to expand our partnership with TelePlay to ultimately benefit the patients by providing quality programing, creating smiling faces at even the darkest of times.”

- Heather Bailey M.S.,
CCLS, Child Life
Program Manager



Kits for Play

Project Sunshine activity kits deliver safe, creative play directly to children. The materials spark joy and provide therapeutic value to the physical and emotional healing process. Project Sunshine volunteers prepare individualized kits, complete with developmentally specific activities for pediatric patients in the hospital. Designed by child life specialists, Kits for Play not only alleviate boredom; they spark the imagination and create a sense of connectedness.

2022 Updates

Nearly 400 hospital partners received kits in 2022. We updated parts of the kit to incorporate the new brand and to better engage our volunteers and patients. In addition, we were able to include our first musical instrument, a xylophone, into our latest co-branded kit, thanks to our partner PepsiCo!

131,397 kits packed & delivered to patients
10,840 volunteers
45,447 volunteer hours



“The kits have been wonderful. Parents and children love them. They give the kids something to do while they wait for providers to see them. I enjoy being the person giving them out to our patients. Seeing them smile and decreasing their anxiety by keeping them entertained may seem so minimal, but it truly makes a huge difference for these kids.”

— *Elise Garcia,*
Family Advocate





“Rays of **sunshine**”



ast year, Lauren Pierce, a Certified Child Life Specialist at Bernard & Millie Duke Children's Hospital at Albany Medical Center, brought Project Sunshine's Here to Play program back after a hiatus during COVID due to visitor restrictions. "It was a pretty easy sell," she says. "For one thing, it's free for the hospital." More importantly, the volunteers are thoroughly trained, which allows staff to have more clinical capacity. She describes the volunteers from the Albany Medical College Chapter, who visit all three pediatric units at the hospital, as "rays of sunshine in their bright yellow t-shirts who light up everyone's day." Pierce says, "Project Sunshine helps bored, antsy kids overcome difficult situations and it provides a valuable outlet for the parents and caregivers." As a mother of three, she never forgets that the pediatric patients are children. "That could just as easily be my child," she reflects.

A young child with dark hair is sitting at a table, focused on drawing. The table is covered with various art supplies, including a green folder, a pink polka-dot folder, several colored pencils, a watercolor palette with red, blue, green, and purple paints, and a white sheet of paper. The child is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The background is slightly blurred, showing more art supplies and a white wall.

“It’s been a **salvation**”

Johanna lives in Harlem with her three children, including Isaiah, the youngest, who has cerebral palsy. During the most isolating part of the pandemic, staff at The Mount Sinai Hospital referred her to Project Sunshine’s TelePlay program. “It’s been a salvation,” she says (through an interpreter). “We weren’t seeing anyone or going out of the house. It really helped us.” They continue to join TelePlay programs even today. The whole family gets involved drawing together, answering Disney trivia and playing other fun games with the volunteers. One of the key benefits of TelePlay for Isaiah has been getting to meet other kids with similar conditions. “He likes knowing he’s not the only one on a ventilator,” Johanna says.

Play **Abroad**

Project Sunshine is rooted in a universal value—kids need to play. Our international programs mobilize volunteers who provide customized programs and resources that meet the needs of pediatric patients in their local communities. Currently, we operate in Canada, Israel, and Kenya.

Our operations in Beijing, China were put on pause in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2022 we decided to keep this program dormant for the foreseeable future. We are grateful to have had over a decade of wonderful and fruitful programming in the country after serving more than 30,000 patients and families, and thank those who have supported and watched the development and growth of Project Sunshine China over the years.



Canada

Based in Toronto and operating in 8 provinces, Project Sunshine Canada mobilizes trained volunteers to provide companionship and deliver enrichment programs to patients and families at 40 partner hospitals across the country. In 2022, we supported 6,675 pediatric patients and families through our programs. Our 19 chapters with 180 volunteers visit patients in hospitals, assemble activity kits, sew Surgi Buddies, and host TelePlay sessions for hospitalized patients all year long.

In April 2022, we began Here to Play programming after a two-year break and ended the year with more partnerships with medical facilities for all three programs. In particular, we were thrilled to relaunch our Caregiver Wellness program at Mount Sinai Hospital of Toronto. “It feels great to be here and taking time for myself,” said one parent.

We are also excited to launch a TelePlay en français volunteer chapter in 2023. We spent dedicated time to translate 30 TelePlay games into French and look forward to playing with French-speaking patients and families very soon!



Israel

In Israel, volunteers bring activities to children through bedside services to every child in the hospital ward regardless of age, illness or background. Volunteers also serve children through kindergartens for students with special needs.

Project Sunshine Israel served 7,454 children and families in 2022, a 23% increase over 2021 numbers. We have been focused on getting the volunteers back into the facilities after taking a hiatus during the pandemic. A new team member joined to focus on volunteer onboarding, making it the first time that we have had more than one person working at Project Sunshine Israel!

In September, we held an opening ceremony for Miri's Room at Spivak Kindergarten, a bunker that was converted into an art-making space for children. The room is named for artist Miri Passov, the late mother of Project Sunshine Israel's founder Yuval Passov. We hope to continue the legacy of Miri Passov and serve even more children and families through this room and all of our programs at Project Sunshine Israel.



Kenya

In Kenya, we host clinic-based programming in partnership with Bomu Hospital and its three satellite sites which include special events like World Tuberculosis Day, Global Handwashing Day, orphanage visits, monthly birthday parties, and our signature event, Youth Fun Days. We also run the Healthy Living Initiative where Community Health Volunteers, along with Project Sunshine volunteers, make home visits to teach about water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) including homes in last mile areas where families live more than 200 km away from the nearest clinic.

We're incredibly excited to report that we have reached more than double the number of children and families from last year due to the Gilead Science's Zeroing In grant initiative. We increased the number of our chapter leaders from two to four leaders to accommodate. In addition to clinic-based programming where we served 13,261 children, volunteers also made 1,900 home visits through the Healthy Living Initiative. One of the special events from 2022 included World AIDS Day where we attended a five-kilometer procession with more than 1,500 children and families. According to Unicef, more than 100,000 Kenyan children are living with H.I.V. Altogether, Project Sunshine Kenya served 49,341 children and families.



“Why we do what we do”



At the Bristol Myers Squibb summer outing, associates and executives alike took time away from the food trucks and the dunk tank to assemble activity kits for pediatric patients. Philip Lam, Associate Director, Scientific Liaison and External Outreach at Bristol Myers Squibb, describes it as “having a good time for a good cause.” He and his colleagues were thrilled that the kits were destined for hospitals throughout the greater Boston area. “The reality is that the impact of the work our scientists do today will be seen in the future as opposed to immediately.” He continues, “One of the many benefits to these kits is that they have an impact on our community tomorrow. It reaffirms our values as a company and serves as a great reminder of why we do what we do.”





“The **kids** have control”

When a child is hospitalized, it affects the entire family,” says Ola Guzy, leader of Project Sunshine’s national TelePlay chapter. An aspiring child life specialist, Guzy joins other volunteers in meeting young patients and their siblings online to play specially designed games (a favorite involves guessing movie characters based on emoji), or do crafts together, or just talk. The patients decide. “The kids have control,” she says, “which is something they don’t always have in other aspects of their lives.” A recent TelePlay session brought a group of children together who were all in the same hospital but, for medical reasons, weren’t allowed to be in one room. “Everyone was so comfortable with each other,” she recalls. “They were playing together and laughing. It was like they forgot they were in the hospital.” On top of the benefit to the kids, Guzy says volunteering always leaves a smile on her face for the rest of the day.

Our partners

Corporate Partnerships

Our Corporate Volunteers are professionals committed to fulfilling the Project Sunshine mission alongside their colleagues. We partner with companies of all sizes and industries nationwide. Through customizable opportunities for community service and teambuilding, our corporate volunteers take a break from their day-to-day responsibilities to make a difference in a child's life.

In addition to strong engagement with our kit packing program which hosted over 450 events last year, we were thrilled to bring back volunteers into hospitals and medical facilities for special events. Arch Insurance hosted a summer graduation and back-to-school event at the East Harlem Asthma Center of Excellence (EHACE). Both events welcomed 150 kids and their families for games, crafts, and face painting. Brooklyn Michaels stores hosted an outdoor summer party at the Brookdale Clinic for nearly 100 kids and families. During the holiday season, we engaged employees from Avance, Away Travel, Blackstone and Canvas to volunteer with four of our hospital partners. "I had the best day volunteering with Project Sunshine," said one Away Travel volunteer. "The activities were organized and appropriate for all. I left with a smile on my face, knowing that I made children smile."

Sunshine Partners:

We want to give a special thanks to our top corporate partners – our Sunshine Partners – who support us through generous donations and thousands of employee volunteer hours:

Arch Insurance
Blackstone
Centene
Genentech
Michaels
Morgan Stanley
Pepsi
RBC
Salesforce
Stack

87 companies engaged

9 hospital events

73,934 children and families served

Our partners

Technology Committee

Project Sunshine's Technology Committee is comprised of board members and industry experts and professionals in the technology industry. This year, the Technology Committee assumed an important role to build a new state-of-the-art platform called the Sunshine Platform to increase operational efficiencies in program development, volunteer management, and reporting and analytics.

The Committee was involved in a rigorous Request for Proposal process to identify our partner for platform development. We are happy to report that we have begun the platform build with a Salesforce third party implementation firm, Silverline, and we're looking ahead to launching the first version, or a Minimal Viable Product (MVP), in Summer 2023. We are grateful to these expert volunteers who are driving our mission forward with strategic and invaluable guidance.



“It’s **light years** ahead”



pediatrician Tom James served on Project Sunshine’s Medical Advisory Board in 2011-12 but wasn’t further involved until he attended the 2022 Annual Gala and heard about TelePlay for the first time. “As an adjunct to telehealth, it’s light years ahead of anything else out there,” said Dr. James. As Chief Medical Officer for Passport Health Plan, a Medicaid plan operated by Molina Healthcare in Kentucky, Dr. James focuses on improving care delivery for Medicaid enrollees in and out of the hospital. Bone marrow recipients and other pediatric patients, he says, “often have nobody to talk to, who is not going to inflict pain.” Soon after the gala, Dr. James joined the Project Sunshine Program Committee to provide informed insight into our programs. We’re grateful for friends like Dr. Tom James who support the children and families of Project Sunshine in such multi-faceted ways.

Project Sunshine awarded grant by The Kentucky Association of Health Plans

Through an introduction made by Dr. Tom James, Project Sunshine is gearing up for its first ever university-backed research study. The Kentucky Association of Health Plans, a conglomerate of 7 health plans, has committed \$100,000 for a one-year “proof of concept” study that will bring TelePlay to three Kentucky-based partners and evaluate behavioral health outcomes. Dr. James says he hopes to see TelePlay proliferate across the state. We want to thank Dr. Tom James, Dr. Taylor Sewell, Dr. Bernie Rosof, and Dr. Gerald Loughlin, for guiding our team through this process. We’re thrilled for the opportunity and look forward to capturing the impact of TelePlay through this opportunity!

Our events

2022 Annual Gala

After a two-year hiatus, we came together on May 12 to celebrate the mission of Project Sunshine, to appreciate our volunteers, to reveal our new brand, and to honor PepsiCo Foodservice for their partnership by donating their expertise, talent, and resources to our work. The event was made possible through the sponsorship of PepsiCo and the Tylis Family Foundation. Together, we were able to raise \$1.1 million to support the children and families of Project Sunshine.



12th Annual Golf Classic

Project Sunshine's 12th Annual Golf Classic brought longtime supporters and many new friends together in September, raising nearly \$550,000 to further Project Sunshine's mission in bringing play to pediatric patients. Event guests got to hear firsthand from Bonnie Eisner and Robyn McKnight, volunteers of the Philadelphia Chapter, who shared about their experience working with children through the pandemic with TelePlay. Thank you to our Sunshine Sponsors, Caryn & Howard Unger, HPS Investment Partners, Jessica & Natan Bibliowicz, NFP, RT Specialty, and Weill Cornell Imaging; and all our supporters and attendees.



Donors 2022

The work we do at Project Sunshine is only possible through the generous support of our dedicated donors who give to our annual fund. We're grateful to partner with so many individuals and organizations to bring healing joy to pediatric patients all around the nation and our international sites.

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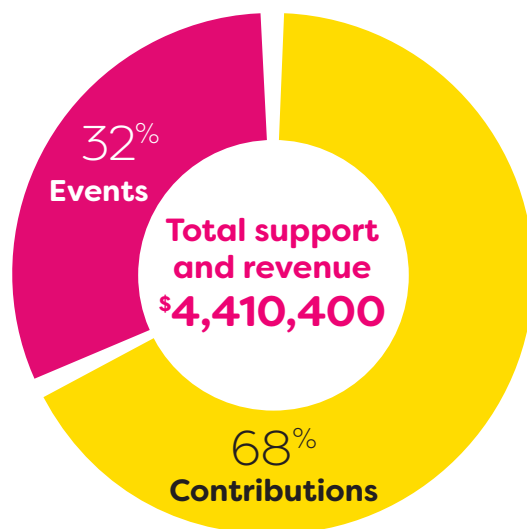
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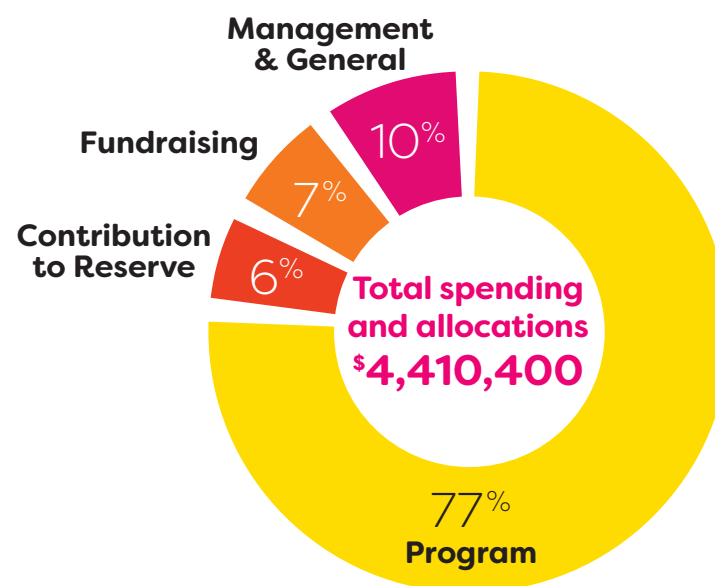
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25 Years of Service and Many More Ahead

In 1998, Joe Weilgus visited a friend in the hospital. Walking by the pediatric wing, he noticed young patients sitting alone in their rooms with nothing to do. Unable to forget what he saw, Joe returned to the hospital the following week dressed up as a clown determined to spread cheer. The rest is history.

Today, Project Sunshine serves nearly 200,000 children and families annually in the United States and abroad in Canada, Israel, and Kenya. Joe's passion and vision has launched Project Sunshine into existence and continues to energize us to reach more children through the healing power of play. Not only has he brought play to millions of children over the past 25 years, but he has also brought purposeful service opportunities for thousands of volunteers.

Joe will transition from his role of Chair of Project Sunshine's Board of Directors into Founder and Chair Emeritus to invite new experience and perspective into the leadership role. Joe will continue to be an integral member of the Board of Directors, providing insight and guidance on major decisions for the organization.

Joe, from all of us at Project Sunshine, thank you for your leadership, your heart, and your dedication to the children we serve each and every day. We wouldn't be here without you.



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