

Western Home Communities is a charitable Christian service organization that assertively creates fulfilling lifestyles for those we serve, their families and our employees.

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Impressive results from unique training center at WHC

CNA turnover down 30%? Check. Retention numbers up threefold? Check. New employees feeling competent and confident? Check.

These impressive results can be attributed to the Learn & Earn Training Center. It's a unique offering born from the need to instill a consistent, company-wide culture of quality care for residents and to combat a healthcare worker shortage at the same time.



The training center on Technology Parkway is welcoming, spacious and well-equipped.

"There's nobody to look to for this, that I could find," explains Chief Clinical Officer Wendy Ager, RN, BSN. "So we created it. We put together a team to address recruitment and retention from an employee development perspective, starting with the clinical teams."

Ager asked Krista Dreyer, LPN, BA, who was with atHome with Western Home, to become the Director of Education. Employee development is Krista's passion.

"If they're not happy or invested in their job or understanding it, they'll leave," says Krista Dreyer. "I believe that if you train people well, truly care about their success and support them at every step, they'll stay and thrive."

CNA Zoe Kelgbeh laughs as Krista Dreyer demonstrates proper gait belt technique during a recent CNA onboarding session. Krista likes to keep the sessions engaging and informative.



Continued on page two



The lower turnover and higher retention rates prove her point.

"Building this from scratch is more than an endeavor; it's proof of Western Home Communities' commitment to providing the best possible care to residents," says CEO Kris Hansen. "It's a strategic effort that is paying off. We really believe this investment in our nurses and caregivers is the best way to shape the future of senior living and long-term health care."



Rebecca Mommer uses one of the four life-like manikins to demonstrate proper personal care techniques, before these new CNAs in onboarding get to practice with the manikin.

Dreyer admits the original goal of building

competent, confident caregivers has expanded. Now there's a mindset of how to invest in and professionally develop employees so they're working where they want to be. Ager refers to it as playing the long game.

"Really, it can be four to five years from starting as a caregiver to becoming a CNA, LPN and then an RN, if that's the path someone wants to take," she says. "If they're happy and fulfilled as a CNA or LPN, we're going to help them keep growing in those roles, too, all throughout their careers here."

Grant funds have helped pay for office space and developing an apprenticeship model. Western Home Communities now covers the educational cost for CNAs who want to pursue LPN training - and more than 70 immediately expressed interest.



New CNAs in onboarding get to practice moving a "resident" in and out of bed using an E-Z Lift. From left, Brittney Willett and Ashley Workman.

"When you think about how few full-time employees we have involved, the Learn & Earn cost is pretty low," says Ager. "When you compare it to the high price of employee turnover, it definitely pays off. It's so much better for the residents, too, when they have consistent caregivers and consistent care. That's ultimately what it's all about."

The education team works with nursing supervisors to address any issues in care that may arise. Trainers can visit long-term care areas to re-educate employees, a more positive and productive approach than discipline and write-ups. This year, the team is working on training more trainers in each long-term care community.

"My vision is actually zero turnover," admits Dreyer. "I'd love to never do another onboarding session because no one is leaving, just growing."





UNI president is next program speaker

Friends of Western Home Communities will welcome University of Northern Iowa President Mark Nook at this month's program. All residents are welcome to attend – invite a friend to join you!

Monday, April 15 🔳 11 a.m. 🔳 Windcove dining room

Dr. Nook was born in Estherville, Iowa, and educated at University of Wisconsin, Iowa State, and Southwest Minnesota State. He will give us an update on UNI's programs into the future.



He recently said, "I always believed education needs to be personal, and at UNI it is very clear that students get to know faculty members, and they get to know the staff members. Many of them even get to know the president." Get to know President Nook on April 15.

New Friends of WHC event this spring

Get ready for the first Spring Swing to benefit Friends of Western Home Communities!

Save the date: Thursday, May 16 ■ 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. ■ Diamond Event Center



Enjoy live music by the Cedar Valley Big Band, a dessert buffet and a short annual report by the Friends executive board. Tickets are \$12, available after April 1 at Jorgensen Plaza and each independent living community.

Funds raised from the event will go to enhance the lives of all residents through equipment and experiences that encourage friends to gather.

Come celebrate the swing into spring and the accomplishments of Friends this year!

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month

We are tickled pink by all the hours donated to Western Home Communities by our faithful volunteers! We'll express our thanks at the annual breakfast. If you volunteer for Western Home Communities in any way, for any amount of time, please join us:

Wednesday, April 17 🗧 9 – 10:30 a.m. 🔳 Diamond Event Center

We will have a small gift of appreciation. No invitations are being sent. All WHC volunteers welcome!



Western Home Foundation and Western Home Communities appreciate being honored through estate gifts, memorials and other donations. We list donor names each month as



April 2024

one way of thanking donors for their generosity. This list reflects gifts received through Mar. 8, 2024. For information on supporting Western Home Foundation, contact Director of Administrative Services Susan Steffy at susan.steffy@westernhome.org or (319) 222-2022.

In memory of: **Richard Berky** Nancy Colvin

Jack Hovelson Joanne Helland

Carl Meusel Marcia Colwell

Richard Monson Lorraine & Larry Tonn

Mary Taylor Health Sciences Scholarship Phyllis Steele Nell Wilson Family Health & Nursing Scholarship Wendy & Jeff Ager

Frances Peterson Scholarship Cindy Fisher

V. Carole Martin Fund for Dementia & Alzheimer's Education

Larry Martin, in memory of: Michael Blevins Bobbye Callahan Ron Jones Judith Metzger Richard Monson

Child Care Scholarship

Richard & Bev Michael Richard & Martha Stanford

Employee Appreciation Fund (Annual Appeal)

Connie & Richard Frankhauser Lucinda Klodt Kathy McCrea Audrey Porter

Other Gifts

Amber Elsberry Karla Foust Connie & Richard Frankhauser Chad & Cindy Wiles

Child care scholarships awarded to employees

These seven employees have been awarded child care scholarships totaling \$14,400 from Western Home Foundation:

Haley Burbridge – business office associate Dakota Chavez – medication aide, Madrid Home Jofelle Corona – employee health nurse Megan Grimm - Fortified Life lifestyle coach Morgan Lehmann - Director of Wellness Maggie Rottinghaus – physical therapy assistant Rose Stone – massage therapist

"Western Home Communities has an excellent record of having well-trained and caring employees, so we thought this scholarship would both recognize their admirable service and aid them in providing for their families," said Kay and Willard Jenkins, who started the fund. "Also, as Western Home Communities looks to a strong future, we hope this will help to recruit and retain outstanding people."

The Jenkins will celebrate with this year's recipients at a luncheon in May.



Plan now for summer and fall travel



Sioux Falls (registration opens May 1)

Reservations are available beginning May 1 for our August trip to Sioux Falls: Our trip in the summer of 2021 was so much fun we decided to do it again! If you haven't been to Sioux Falls lately, you'll want to reserve your seat early to see all the amazing things that are going on just over the lowa border.



New England (registration opens May 1)

Come with us to the colorful mountains of the northeast United States and see the amazing color of fall! Our trip to New England sold out so fast last year that we are offering a very similar trip this fall. Flying from Chicago to Boston, we'll continue with tours of Boston, the Vermont Country Store, The Mount Washington Cog Railway (it's a real trip!) and Kennebunkport, Maine. If you've ever wanted to experience the splendor of fall in the northeast, this is the best way to do it.



Central Wisconsin (registration opens June 17)

All things cranberry are on the itinerary for our trip to central Wisconsin this fall. We will leave September 17 for three days of learning, tasting and observing how the cranberry industry thrives in Wisconsin. We'll stay at the Cranberry Country Lodge all three nights—no changing hotels on this trip.

Follow along for the next trip

A Mississippi River cruise planned for Mar. 30 – Apr. 9 had to be cancelled as American Queen Voyages ceased operations in late February, so the next Away from Home with Western Home excursion departs in early June for Mackinac Island in northern Michigan. This trip sold out at last fall's travel show and it will be exciting to take 47 passengers to this historic location. Follow along on Facebook to see the sights.

Step into spring with a May day trip

Plan now for the annual spring outing to Klunder's Kafe in New Hampton and nearby Mennonite greenhouses. Villas will be going on Tuesday, May 7, and independent living communities will make the trip on Thursday, May 9.

RSVP required by May 3.

Independent living residents should RSVP to their resident coordinator. Villa residents should RSVP by email to **villarsvp@westernhome.org**.







CHAPLAIN'S CORNER God's providence and redemption by Chaplain Byron Simar



In the book of Ruth, the character of Boaz represents God's providence for two destitute widows, Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth. In Boaz, the two widows found a "kinsman redeemer," one whose responsibility was to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger or need.

God positioned Boaz to rescue the women from their trouble.

The redemption of Ruth and Naomi through Boaz was God's providence in action and was completely sufficient to their need. But it wasn't immediately obvious that Boaz would be their redeemer. There was someone else who held precedence before Boaz. The time of waiting must have been an agonizing suspense for Ruth. But the other man declined and Boaz acted without delay. He became perhaps the best biblical example of a redeemer short of Jesus Christ himself. Ruth and Boaz would have a son named Obed, who would be the grandfather of King David, the forefather of Jesus.

What can we take away from the story of Boaz when customs are so different? Like Naomi and

Ruth, we are all in need of redemption. "There is no one righteous, not even one." Romans 3:10.

We need a kinsman redeemer to purchase us out of our slavery to sin. Just as Ruth trusted God's providence in Boaz, we need only trust that Christ's death and resurrection cleanses of sin and gives eternal life.

Simply put, providence is God's provision in all the circumstances of our lives. The founders of Western Home Communities experienced this personally. The search to find a suitable property was long and laborious with many disappointments. The very first superintendent called the Western Old People's Home "a child of providence." God's providential leading was evident and undeniable then and it continues to be true today.

Jesus taught that our heavenly Father who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the flowers knows our needs. Matthew 6:25-34. We can have full confidence in his faithfulness and trust his good providence every day of our lives.

"Praise be to the Lord!" Ruth 4:14.

A memorial service of remembrance honoring those who have died in our care from July 1–Dec. 31, 2023, will be held **Sunday, April 21**, during Fresh Wind Worship service.

Join us for weekly worship at Diamond Event Center

All are welcome at Fresh Wind Worship services on **Sundays at 10:30 a.m.** We invite you to participate in a time of music, fellowship and exhortation.

Recordings of the services continue to be broadcast on CFU Cable channel 18 or 95.5 at 11 a.m. on Sundays and 3 p.m. on Wednesdays, and they are posted on the Fresh Wind YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Villa resident nominated for volunteer award

Western Home Communities has nominated Greg Hankins for the Lifetime Achievement Mayor's Volunteer Award. Some of Greg's many contributions include:

- Driving the campus shuttle, being part of the resident ambassador team, and meeting weekly with a nursing home resident as part of Reading with Jean – all at Western Home Communities
- Watering plants downtown for Community Main Street
- Serving on the board of World's Window
- Serving on the board of Lutheran Student Center and taking on many volunteer roles
- Preparing home-cooked meals for UNI students at ThreeHouse Ministry
- Establishing the food pantry and serving as president of the council at St. Luke's Episcopal Church





From left, Jerry Harris, Greg and Jan Hankins, and Carolyn Ayers.

"Greg has made a positive impact on our community that will be felt far into the future," said Carolyn Ayers, Director of Lifestyle Enrichment.

"As a former educator, Greg has helped us all to be continuous learners and how to be accepting of the learning process throughout life," said Jerry Harris, president of Cedar Falls operations. "Residents and employees trust him and are grateful for all his volunteer participation."

Congratulations, Greg, and thank you!

Invite friends to an open house at WHC

The model apartment at Windridge, 5311 Hyacinth, will be open for tours. Invite a friend or former neighbor to stop by and see what independent living has to offer!

Tuesday, April 9 ■ 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Reminder: Reserve your seat for Teepa Snow

One of the country's leading dementia trainers comes to Diamond Event Center on June 11 and 12. You don't want to miss Teepa Snow's interactive, engaging and informative session.

Find all the details and reserve your seat at westernhome.org/teepa today.









Evelyn Wohlwend (left), Carolyn Christenson, Cindy Fisher, Shirley McGinnis and Rowena Hardinger tasting Irish treats at Prairie Wind.



Irish stout or St. Patty's day punch? Director of Resident Engagement Rachel Phillips serves Prairie Wind resident Carol Neumann.

Residents of Windridge enjoyed a delicious Irish lunch. From left are Marlene Deery, Marlys Simpson, Bob and Doris Hewlitt and Jane and Norman Doty.





Kurt and Shelby Wiethorn, Kenny Hansen, Wendy Schmitt and Al Schmelzer at Windhaven's St. Patrick's Day social. Green cookies, anyone?







Waterloo bagpiper Christopher Schmitz serenaded villa residents at their social.



There wasn't a "pinch" in sight for LaVerne Puetz of Windcove. She donned the green!

Wellness Coordinator Katie Burkhardt and Jake Bates of Fortified Life showed off their green at the villa social.



Quilting Day comes to campus

Many residents and employees shared the stories of their family quilts during the Show & Tell portion of Quilting Day in March, held at Windridge and hosted by Keepsake Quilters Guild.



Glenn Groothuis stopped over from Windcove to share his family's heirloom quilt and received a few pointers about labeling and storage.



Pat Middleswart, a villa resident, shares the story about her brightly colored quilt.



Villa resident Connie Sullivan briefly explains how her patterned quilt named Grandmother's Flower Garden was made using small hexagons of fabric.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A monthly series by villa resident and volunteer Jim Volgarino

In 1911, there were a limited number of elder care organizations in the United States. Most older adults were cared for by their families or, as noted in previous articles, by county-operated poor farms or almshouses.

Medicare and Medicaid didn't exist, and average life expectancy then was only 47.3 years.

lowa was just barely 65 years old (1846) when The Western Old People's Home was established and there were no formal regulations in place to protect "the worthy poor," as they were described, when other options didn't exist.

It was one of the first private care homes created, joining organizations like the International Organization of Odd Fellows that built an elderly care facility in Mason City, right around the same time The Western Old People's Home became a reality, opening in 1912.



These plaques still hang in the original building downtown, honoring the Pfeiffer parents - whose sons donated their property - and the Merners, early citizens of Cedar Falls and the parents of Henry Pfeiffer Jr.'s wife, Annie.





WELLNESS HAPPENINGS

by Director of Wellness Morgan Lehmann



Monthly rotating class: Brain Fitness

Wednesdays in April 🗧 2 - 2:30 p.m. 🔳 Windridge West Lounge

Join us for brain games and teasers to give your brain a workout.

Thursday, April 11: Pump it for Parkinson's

Pump it for Parkinson's is a one-day event, held on World Parkinson's Day, to raise awareness about the benefits of exercise for those living with Parkinson's disease. More information to come.

Play ball! Third annual World Series is another hit

The bean bag baseball season ended with the championship Mar. 22 at Diamond Event Center. It's easy to see why this has become one of the most popular events at WHC!



Marvyl Oakland of Windhaven makes her shot...and it was a good one! Employee Susan Steffy gives her a cheer.



Congratulations to the Red Team, our 2024 World Series champions!





Villa resident Linda Buchanan takes in the cheers after an excellent shot!

CEO Kris Hansen gets in on the action as employee teams took their turn before the final game of competition.



Bob Miehe makes his shot during one of the first rounds of bean bag baseball.



Therapy at WHC can assist Parkinson's patients

It's Parkinson's Awareness Month, the perfect time to spread the word that three therapists at Western Home Communities have specialized training. They help people living with Parkinson's disease to maintain and improve movement, increase confidence, and stay safer with better strength and balance.

A program called LSVT BIG[®] provides a set of intense protocols for one-on-one therapy sessions four times per week for four weeks.



Physical Therapist Olive Frias

"We focus on both gross and fine motor skills, so there's more opportunity to strengthen and maintain everyday activities," says physical therapist Olive Frias. "Then people can stay in their homes longer and enjoy dayto-day life. That's why we like doing this."

"Parkinson's disease sends the message that regular movement should be smaller," explains occupational therapist Abigail Darby. "By doing



big reaches and steps in therapy, we retrain what the mind is telling the body."

Specialized speech therapy programs help with other symptoms.

Occupational Therapist Abigail Darby

"A classic feature of Parkinson's is a low volume of voice," says speech therapist Kate Chilcote. "LSVT LOUD® helps with volume; the program Speak

Out! helps produce a stronger, clearer voice.

Because some of the same muscles used for speaking are used for swallowing, we may also provide therapy for that."

Call the WHC therapy department at (319) 859-9343 for information on how to participate in these Parkinson's programs.



Speech Therapist Kate Chilcote



Other resources for people with Parkinson's

Support group

Monthly on the first Wednesday 3 p.m. in Prairie Wind third floor conference room (Open to residents and the public)

Exercise group

Weekly on Thursdays 1 p.m. at Grosse Wellness Center (Open to WHC residents only)

Abigail and WHC resident Dave Johnson working on BIG® movements.



Panthers cheered to victory

Residents and employees of Western Home Communities cheered on the UNI men's basketball team to their 68-54 victory against Valparaiso on Feb. 27. It was a surprisingly bitter cold evening, but residents showed up in force for a pregame reception in the Alumni Suite and to watch the game.



Fans Kay Jenkins (left), Jean Graham, Larry Graham, Director of Resident Relations Maria Murphy and Willard Jenkins.



Loyal UNI fans, Pat and LaVerne Middleswart, give Valpo fan, Chaplain Q Ochoa, a good-hearted sideways glance.



Kids of all ages enjoyed pregame fun including Digital Marketing Manager Jay Morales and his family!



The view from the Alumni Suite just before tipoff.



Transportation Assistant Dave Welter and Senior Director of Independent Living Cindy Wiles arriving at the pregame reception at the UNI Alumni Suite.

Windgrace and villa residents Freddie Holmes, Stan Paterni and Marty Johnson sharing good conversation and snacks before the game.



Villa residents Diane and Bruce Clark are ready to cheer!





Happy April birthday!

Shawn Fishel	WM	April 1	Donna Hansen	WM	April 19
Russell Schultz	WHAL	April 1	Mick Reifsteck	VTH	April 19
Clifford Hansen	TS	April 2	Joyce Willy	VTH	April 20
Scott Bittner	VTH	April 3	Mary Beekman	WHAL	April 21
Donna Todd	WC	April 3	Jim Duwelius	PW	April 21
Barbara Spates	TS	April 4	Susan Fauser	MS	April 21
Milly Anderson	WHAL	April 5	Peggy Lanigan	VTH	April 21
Jay Agness	VTH	April 6	Greta Magee	VTH	April 22
Bonnie Humble	VTH	April 6	Dennis McFarlane	WR	April 22
Bob Gunter	WM	April 7	Cindy Whitehill	WR	April 22
Dean Hutchison	VTH	April 7	Karen Zwanziger	VTH	April 22
Barb Jacobson	WR	April 7	Sheila Baker	WHAL	April 23
Eileen Kruse	WC	April 7	Dick Johnson	VTH	April 23
Russ Price	VTH	April 7	Roger Kussatz	VTH	April 23
Greg Robinson	WG	April 9	Jerry Mohling	VTH	April 23
Janet Sandell	VTH	April 9	Jean Brummel	WR	April 24
Jeff Bernard	VTH	April 10	Jean Graham	PW	April 24
Marilyn Moreau	WR	April 10	LaVerne Middleswart	VTH	April 24
Phyllis Steele	PW	April 10	Patricia Taylor	CTG	April 24
Barb Pershing	VTH	April 11	Howard Uehle	VTH	April 24
Marjorie Kohl	DS	April 12	Jacquelyn Eastman	MS	April 25
Jim Swisher	WR	April 13	June Green	VTH	April 25
Marlys Badger	WR	April 14	Reggie Schmitt	VTH	April 26
Larry Fox	VTH	April 14	Hans Isakson	VTH	April 27
Anita Kabele	VTH	April 15	Robert Mahncke	WR	April 27
Ethel Ann Koch	WM	April 15	Kathy Thompson	TS	April 27
Rob Hogan	WR	April 16	Frank Walter	PW	April 27
Evelyn Wohlwend	PW	April 16	Kathleen Washington	WR	April 27
Kathleen Aranza	PW	April 17	Greg Hankins	VTH	April 28
Pat Brickley	VTH	April 17	Timothy Noonan	TS	April 28
Maggie Hemmer	WG	April 17	Nancie Handorf	WC	April 29
John Kragt	PW	April 17	Vern Hansen	VTH	April 30
Christine Carpenter	VTH	April 18	Gordy Koch	PW	April 30
John Tucker	VTH	April 18	Jeanne Rogers	MS	April 30
Mary Cooley	CTG	April 19			

N AS



Congratulations!

This month we recognize the following employees for their milestone anniversaries, and thank them for their dedicated service.

DOROTHY BOLL 41 years April 4 CMA-RA, Thalman Square





CHERYL BEARBOWER-STATON 37 years April 6 Customer Experience Specialist

DANA ERICKSON 5 years April 8 Housekeeper





5 years

April 8

TYLER MANIRE

Chef, Jorgensen Plaza

TABITHA TJADEN 5 years April 22 Administrator, DS and MS

KIRBI HEIPLE 15 years April 24 CMA-RA, Windhaven





PHYLLIS BOWERS 10 years April 30 Cosmetologist

Stop by Gilmore's and have a bite! Give April's features a try — they're sure to delight.

April 4, 5 & 6 • Southern Chicken Farro \$14 Roasted boneless chicken thigh paired with andouille farro and tomato gravy, garnished with green onion.

April 11, 12 & 13 • Skirt Steak Sandwich \$20 Grilled marinated skirt steak, arugula, caramelized onions, Brie cheese, lemon aioli and a fig sauce, all pressed between a toasted hoagie.

April 18, 19 & 20 • Stuffed Pork Loin \$20 Pork loin stuffed with cream cheese, fried onions and cashews, served with smoked bacon polenta and marinated mushrooms, then drizzled with an orange balsamic glaze. April 25, 26 & 27 • Brisket \$26 Local smoked brisket served with a loaded baked potato and a seasonal vegetable.

GILM®RE'S EST. PUB 2018

Tuesday–Saturday • 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

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Meet the Employee of the Month, MARY FRANA



Mary works as a CNA at Deery Suites and has been part of the Western Home Communities family since September 2022.

Here are a few of things coworkers said about Mary:

- I am always happy to see Mary on the schedule because I know the residents are taken care of and happy.
- All the residents of Brom Cottage at The Deery Suites know Mary by name and are excited when she works.
- She always allows residents to pick their routine.
- Mary brings them treats they love.
- She knows what the residents want before they ask.

Your Western Home Communities family congratulates you, Mary, on being named our employee of the month for March 2024.

Note of appreciation

Thank you so much for your years of exceptional care and love! Your kindness and concern have meant so very much and will always be remembered.

The family of Jim Mudd

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Building Abbreviations

Cottages, Nation & Thuesen	CTG
Deery Suites	
Martin Suites	
Prairie Wind	PW
Stanard Family Assisted Living	
at Deery Suites	SFALDS
Thalman Square Memory Support.	TS
Villas & Townhomes	VTH
Windcove	WC
Windgrace	WG
Windhaven Assisted Living	WHAL
Windermere	WM
Windridge	WR

The Journal is a monthly publication of the WHC office of communications and public relations. To subscribe, ask questions, offer content suggestions or unsubscribe, please contact Linda Maughan, editor, at (**319**) **222-2025** or <u>Linda.Maughan@WesternHome.org</u>.

IN SYMPATHY

Dan Mallaro, CTG	March 21
Miriam Krallman, DS	March 15
Bob Hogan, WR	March 14
Jan Burrington, DS	March 13
Don Walton, WM	March 12
Kathy Albrecht, MS	March 8
Jo Potter, CTG	March 1
Donald Pankow, MS	Feb. 26
Roger Jeys, MS	Feb. 24
Allen Baker, MS	Feb. 23
Jim Mudd, Sr., PW	Feb. 20



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NEW! Join us on Sundays. Turn to page 14 for the April weekly specials.





OMELET BRUNCH



Sundays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. \$14.99 / person

omelet - breakfast potatoes - cinnamon roll or muffin - sausage, bacon or fruit cup - coffee, juice or soda



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