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November 2020



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President's Corner

Thank you all...

for your continued commitment to participate, no matter the circumstances!

I hope you and your families are getting excited about the start of some cooler AZ weather these next few months! I know just the idea of cooler temps and the approaching holidays is definitely improving my personal outlook these days. We are also loving all of the festive fall decorations across the Valley, especially this year—as holiday gatherings are still a bit uncertain for many of us!

As mentioned in our recent communications, our Board has redirected some of our regular Special Events and Social budget funds from the fall to support **Small Class Gatherings**. Your class rep has received a check for virtual or socially-distanced gatherings of your class members' choice, and your class **should be voting this month on how to use those funds—if you have not already.**

Many thanks to everyone that joined us for our recent **Virtual All-Class Guest Speaker and Wine & Comedy Night Events!** Both events were so well attended and we offer our sincere thanks to our amazing Education and Special Events Directors for planning such unique and creative ways for us all to connect and engage this year.


Lastly, **NCPG Cares** will be hosting a **Christmas Angels** drive benefiting the **Salvation Army** again this holiday season. It has been so well received these last three years and thanks to your incredibly generous donations we are pleased to be partnering with them for a fourth consecutive year. Please be on the lookout in early November for a link to sign-up for your Christmas Angels online. More details to come from our Community Outreach directors in the coming weeks!

While we still hope to resume in-person learning later this year once Saint Barnabas on the Desert has reopened to groups, there are still many ways to get involved with NCPG! **It's never too early to start thinking about a Board position for next year.** We sincerely appreciate your support and understanding (and welcome your feedback) during this extraordinary year. As always, please reach out with any questions or concerns, I would love to serve as a resource and hear from you anytime.

Wishing you and yours a very Happy Thanksgiving!

xo,

Megan Garvey
NCPG Board President 2019-2021
president@ncpgaz.org



ncpg
north central parenting group



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NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization providing classes to parents of infant to middle school aged children.

ncpgaz.org Like us on Facebook: [f ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz)

Parent Times

It's finally starting to feel like Fall! Members, this monthly newsletter is for your benefit, so we want to ensure our team is publishing content that is valuable, useful, informative, and fun! Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Shoot us an email at communications@ncpgaz.org. Thanks for your help! Also, please send us photos of you and your family- we are always looking for photos of our community to include in the newsletter and on the NCPG website. Please keep in mind that when you submit photos, you are agreeing that we can use them in our newsletter as well as the NCPG website.

Editors – Ashley McFate & Amanda Shaw
Designer – Neill Fox, foxnoggin.com, neill@foxnoggin.com

Front Cover – Graham and Jett (Sons of Krystal and Chris Grogan)
Photographer: Briana Santiago Photography

The information provided by NCPG instructors should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



Member to Meet Mary Patterson

Class: 2A

Child & Age: Charlotte, 20 months

Spouse/Partners name: Jimmy Patterson

How did you meet your spouse/partner: We lived in the same dorm Freshman year of college at Santa Clara University and met through a mutual friend. We didn't start seriously dating until after college when we lived in San Francisco.

Years married: 4

Career or previous career Before having Charlotte, I worked in Marketing. I spent the first part of my career working for Deloitte in San Francisco and then most recently worked at Facebook.

Favorite family vacation spot? Anywhere with a beach!

Favorite family spot to dine in town? We don't have one yet! Would love some suggestions :)

Do you have a hidden talent? No : (

Favorite date spot or activity when you are child-free? Spa day and a nice, peaceful dinner out.

Favorite children's book to read? We love reading Little Blue Truck to Charlotte.

Where were you born and raised? Born in Memphis, TN, spent my childhood in St. Louis, MO, and then moved to San Diego when I was in middle school. My parents still live in San Diego which is amazing to escape to during hot AZ summers!

What do you miss most about being a kid? Not having many responsibilities and being carefree

When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do? Try to catch up on anything I can't do while Charlotte is awake!

What's your favorite thing to do with your child/children? I love spending time outside with Charlotte. She gets so excited to play at a playground or run wild at a park.

Most meaningful moment as a parent? Hard to pick one! I'd have to say watching Charlotte's little brain grow. I love seeing her make connections and learning something new that we've been working on.

What is your favorite family tradition? Anything related to the holidays. We've always made them really special by decorating, cooking together, and doing festive activities. It's so much fun to be able to do those things with Charlotte.

If you could give your pre-baby self advice, what would it be? Don't have too many expectations! As much as you might want to be in control, kids always seem to have a different plan!

Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group? When I moved to Phoenix last year it seemed like everyone I talked to mentioned NCPG and how it was a great organization to join. I was too late to sign up last year, but am so glad I was able to join this year.

Best thing learned in NCPG? I loved our session on discipline. Very top of mind for a parent with a toddler.

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2020-2021 Calendar

NOTE: Classes will be offered virtually until in-person classes are able to resume.

Class Schedule

8:45 am	Nursery opens
9:00-9:40 am	Refreshments served
9:45*-11:30 am	Classes are held
*Teachers will start promptly at 9:45!	
11:45 am	Nursery closes
11:30 am-1:15 pm	Pre-Infant & Pre-Teen Class

Class Dates

November 18th	February 3rd **
December 9th **	February 17th
January 6th	March 3rd **
January 20th	April 7th **
	April 21st
	May 5th **

** Parent Times magazine distributed.

Board Meeting Schedule

December 7th	March 1st
January 11th	April 12th
February 1st	May 3rd



Saint Barnabas on the Desert Episcopal Church
6715 N. Mockingbird Lane
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Board

Announcements

Membership

Spots remain available in a handful of classes for the 2020-2021 year! Space is limited so please contact membership at membership@ncpgaz.org for additional information about open classes and registration..

Communications

December is around the corner and we are on the hunt for a

FESTIVE COVER IMAGE!

Send us your high-res photos of the kids all ready for the holidays for our photo spread and your kid may end up on the cover!

Please also send birth announcement pics, snapshots of NCPG kids and parents, and any professional photos to communications@ncpgaz.org.



Public Relations



Please follow along on our private **NCPG Instagram** @ncpgaz for helpful information and updates!



Please continue to use the members-only **NCPG Facebook Group** to ask questions, share advice, local events, deals and to buy & sell. We ask that we keep everything positive and respectful on the page. Please request to join the group, if you haven't already and join the fun!

Childcare

Our number one priority at NCPG NCPG Childcare is the safety of your children. Childcare will remain closed until we have consistently met the benchmarks set forth by the CDC and Arizona Department of Health for childcare settings, our facility lifts their restrictions on groups, and when we confidently feel that we can safely offer childcare.

In the meantime, if you need childcare during the virtual meetings, **Busy Bees Babysitting**, our trusted provider, is currently offering in-home sitters and has implemented procedures and guidelines to ensure the safety of your children and their Bees. If you don't already have an account, please feel free to reach out to us at childcare@ncpgaz.com and we can help get you registered.

We look forward to serving you and your children again soon. Thank you for your patience during this time.

New Website Launches!



We are thrilled to announce the launch of our brand new website. Please take a moment to check it out at ncpgaz.org

And thanks to everyone who helped with this exciting project!

Education

We are thrilled to team up with an NCPG sponsor, **Premiere Martial Arts**, to provide a virtual self-defense and safety tips presentation on **Thursday, November 12 from 6:30-7:30pm.**

Please email education@ncpgaz.org with questions or topics you would like covered during this event!



Virtual Self-Defense Seminar Thursday, Nov. 12, 6:30-7:30pm

Please join our NCPG sponsor Premier Martial Arts as they present a Virtual Self-Defense Seminar via Zoom!

There will be a 45 minute presentation (simulation/tips/etc.) followed by 15 minutes of Q&A.

Members are requested to email education@ncpgaz.org with any specific topics or questions they'd like included/discussed that evening.



ZOOM!*
CLICK HERE

Meeting ID:
384 140 9028
Passcode:
NCPG

* Zoom URL: <https://zoom.us/j/3841409028?pwd=Q0ZlRTdMOUtrR2J6ejBvS3RJKzBGZz09>

Survey Coming Soon!

*In the coming weeks, please be on the lookout for our **Mid-year Evaluation Survey.***

Your feedback is greatly valued as we continue to strive to provide the best experience possible.

Tips & Tricks for Hiking in Phoenix with Kids

by Jana Tingom



We love hiking in Phoenix with our kids! Did you know there's a seasonal waterfall you can enjoy? Streams to play in? Or what about the popular Hole in the Rock? This may be the desert, but there is beauty and so many unique aspects of this Phoenix desert to explore. Not to mention, there are fabulous kid friendly hikes anywhere from 1-3 hours drive that make for perfect day trips.

But let's face it, hiking with kids is never easy. Even a mile trail can seem an eternity for little legs. Nature may call, and hearts may answer — so how do you get the body to follow? We currently have three children, ages 9, 5, and 20 months and have been hiking since our oldest was a few years ago. We are definitely not experts, or 5 milers! We do, however, enjoy a few miles of hiking trails with our kids and here are some tips and tricks we've learned over the years.

Choose The Right Trail For Your Family

If you're beginners, don't aim for 3 miles the first couple months. Start with a 1 mile nature trail! Build up to that longer hike you have bookmarked. Take in to consideration the ages of your kids too, and bring along a carrier for toddlers that may not be able to make it the entire distance (we love our Ergo and Tula!). Not sure where to start for easy trails? Here's a list of our favorite stroller friendly hikes that can easily be done without a stroller as well due to their short length.

Research, and Research More

There was one time we joined some friends in hiking to the **Aqua Fria River** near Black Canyon. This mama was 28 weeks pregnant and doing good, so a 3 mile round trip exploring time to play in a river sounded doable! Well, the hike ended up being almost 5 miles round trip – we survived, but should have read the description more carefully to be prepared. For hike ideas, we have a nice handful on our blog, and also love **AZ Utopia** and **AllTrails** (although sometimes the status of trails being open or closed is inaccurate).

Hike With Friends

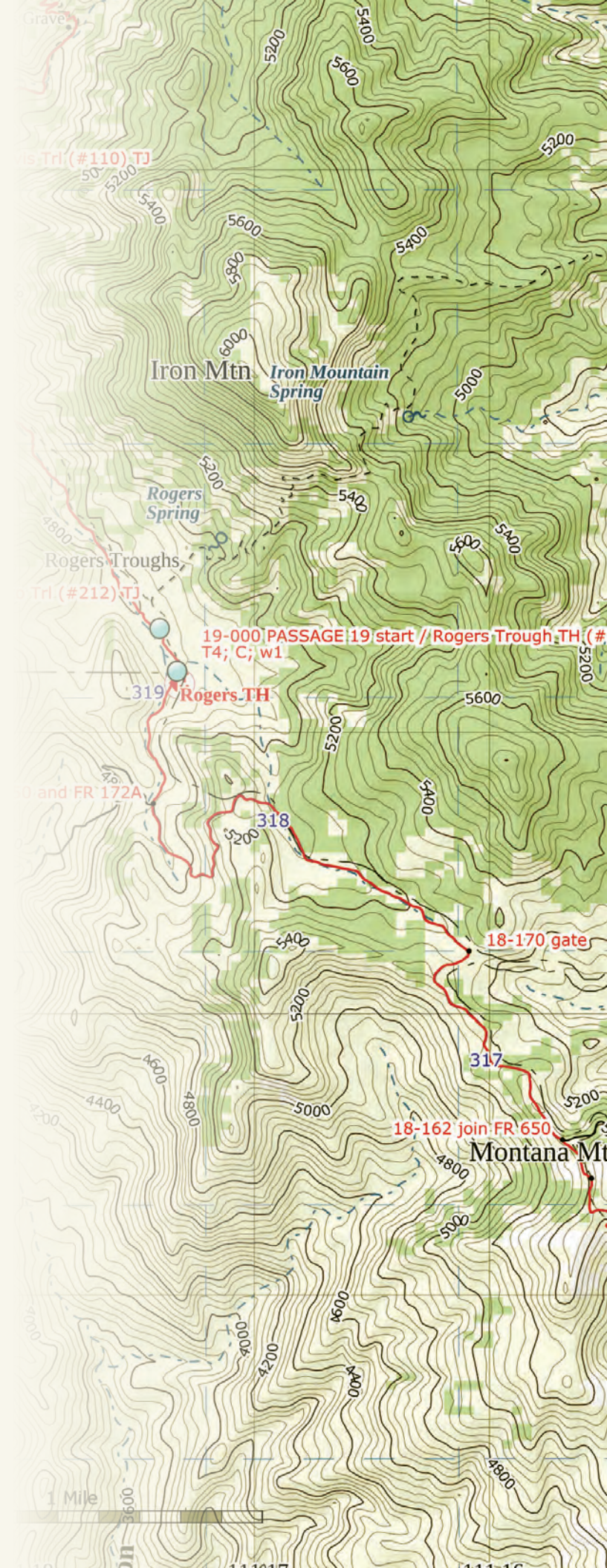
Everything is more fun with friends! Find buddies who are interested in exploring too and plan to meet and hike together. It makes any challenges more bearable for sure. Have you heard of Hike it Baby? There are local beginning hiking groups that welcome children and a super fun place to start! Our favorite (and most memorable) hikes have always been with friends, like going to **Fossil Creek** or the **Waterfall Trail**.

Take Snacks and Water

This may seem obvious, but can be easily overlooked. Bringing along water is a must when hiking in Phoenix with kids, no matter what the time of year. This is the desert and even in the winter, it's needed. And snacks are the easiest motivator! We like to bring along special treats (like donuts) to enjoy at our destination, or halfway point, and often have another snack waiting back at the car.

Experience Over Distance

With kids, plans are almost always flexible. And it's even more so with hiking! For toddlers, let them lead sometimes and see what they find. Yes, you may only go less than half a mile, but the experience will be memorable for them, and exploring is just as valuable as mileage. For older kids, don't push for



speed. Of course, dragging feet will result in a longer hike, but talk about what you see, sing songs, tell stories, or use the time to let them talk about whatever is on their mind. Making a game of the hike, a sort of I Spy version, is our favorite game. For any age, breaks are also important. Even a couple minutes can do wonders.

What to Bring

While we have hiked in flip flops and sandals before, we don't recommend it. Closed toed shoes are the way to go, and bring hats and sunscreen too. If you're destination is water based, water shoes, buckets/shovels, and nets would be a fun addition! For hikes over 2 miles, we bring a backpack as well, with snacks and extra diapers/wipes for the toddler, a small first aid kit, and water. Always bring water on hikes in Phoenix. Always!


Trail Safety

Always let someone know where you are hiking and ETA for return. Maps are also a must, paper or digital, or take a snapshot of a map at the trailhead if applicable. Use your ears and eyes to be on the lookout for rattlesnakes and other creatures that live in the desert. (Yes, we've come across rattlesnakes while hiking. Also tarantula hawk wasps, desert centipedes, lizards, tarantulas, spiders, etc.) Don't be scared of them! Just be aware.

Even with all these ideas...sometimes hikes just don't work out. A great example was the day we joined friends explore at **Lost Dutchman State Park**. The youngest was 2.5 months at the time. She cried the entire 45 minute drive. We finally arrived, frazzled, but eager to be outside. Not even 10 minutes in to the hike, our 7 year old was done. And in turn, the 4 year old was done and wanted nothing more to go home, complete with complaining and feet dragging and tears. This mama broke down in tears too. We ended up turning around, going back to the car, and driving straight home (yes, with a crying baby again).


That was not our favorite hiking memory. But we didn't stop hiking! There are ups and down, just like in every day life. Get outside and stretch your legs, explore some new places, and enjoy the family time. And if you see us on the trails, please say hi!





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FALL FESTIVITIES



Social Skills Start Young at St. Francis Xavier School

By Sue Milano, Educational Resource Specialist at SFX School



“Good morning, Frankie”

This is how every morning at St Francis Xavier preschool begins. While I wear many hats at the school, the one that brings me joy at the beginning and end of the day is greeting the preschoolers. My job is simple: open the gate, take temperatures, check mask wearing, and help the littlest of our students separate from their parents. This is what it looks like from the outside, but my intentions and motivations go much deeper than that.

I know that I am the first adult these children will see for the day that is not their parent or guardian, and I’ve taken it as part of my job to make sure these students feel welcome at school and start to build their social skills.

“Good morning, Ms. Milano”

Three, four, and five year olds are at very different stages of development. Some are super talkative, some are shy and withdrawn, others are nervous and scared to leave their parents.

So how do you begin to build social skills at such a young age? For me, it starts with their name. I try to learn every child’s name so I can greet them with intention. In return, I introduce myself and model that they should say “Good morning Ms. Milano”. It really helps when parents join me in the modelling process!

Eye contact is important. I’m not the tallest of individuals but I still crouch down so that I can meet the child at their



level. If I’m able to meet their height, I ask that they meet my eyes. When you can look someone in the eye, you can start to see how they feel. This is the beginning of building empathy, which is one of the most important skills a child can learn.

The other key element to building social skills is consistency and determination. I never give up. Maybe today



the child doesn’t say “Good morning”. I might just get a wave or a high five. That’s ok. It’s a process. But I never stop trying or deviate from the goal. Soon they learn that there is someone that cares, and they trust that I’m safe. It might take a week or a month or an entire year but teaching children that they are valued and loved doesn’t have a timeline.



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**Monroe Brittan
Fee**



Alex Dembow
welcomed baby boy,
**Declan
Dembow**

TEACHER'S CORNER



Chelsea



Kristin

What should I do if my child is fearful,
especially seems fearful of everything?

Chelsea Kunde: 3A

Don't push them. Encourage but be respectful of fears. Talk about fears when they are not in the middle of the situation. Read books about feelings and fears and talk about the situation prior to it occurring. Don't spring things on a sensitive child.

Kristin Klecka: 2B

Listen and show compassion. Nobody likes to feel dismissed, especially children. Once you have been an active listener simply say, "How can I help?" They may not be able to answer that question but you can start brainstorming solutions together."

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Recipe: Instant Pot Beef Ragu

<https://thedomproper.com/instant-pot-beef-ragu>



PREP TIME: 10 minutes
SERVES: 8

COOK TIME: 1 hour
CALORIES: 505

Dairy Free, Gluten Free, Low-Carb, Whole30

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp Olive oil
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 2 Ribs celery, finely chopped
- 2 Large carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 5 Garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Freshly ground pepper
- 3.5 lb Chuck roast, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 (28 oz) can Whole stewed tomatoes
- 2 Thyme sprigs
- 2 Bay leaves
- 2 tsp Allspice, ground
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1 cup Beef stock

Instructions

1. Set your Instant Pot to sauté mode. Heat the olive oil and add in onion, celery and carrots. Stir until vegetables are soft, about 5-7 min. Add in remaining ingredients, squeezing the whole tomatoes with your hands to crush them before adding them and their juices. Give ingredients a quick stir and close the lid.
2. Set instapot to the meat/stew mode and allow to cook for the set high pressure 35 minute cook time. Once finished, leave the steam valve on natural release until the float valve is all the way down.
3. Open lid and remove beef to shred, discarding any large pieces of fat in the process. Once shredded stir beef back into the pot and return to saute mode. Allow to cook until sauce thickens.

Serve over polenta, fresh pasta, zucchini noodles or spaghetti squash.



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Creator/Author: Landee Anderson

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For the past few years one of my favorite things my family and I do in the fall is sit down and write all of the things we are grateful for. I have tried displaying these things in different ways (see Vinyl Thankful Tree and my Be Thankful Mantel) but I've been wanting to come up with something we could pull out and use each year. So I designed a printable Thankful Tree and I love it! I'm sharing it with you today so you can make one too! It's the perfect family night activity. It's fun to see what my kids put year-to-year... for example, my boys are currently binge watching The Office and so that made the tree (twice). Ha! In years past Pokemon, Dora and The Indianapolis Colts have all made it on to the thankful tree as well. So cute!

All you need to do is download the tree print (<https://app.box.com/s/xnanazy2eka7b0pm1elffh5so59ffaea>) and print the tree as a 16x20 (I printed mine at Costco). Then put it in a frame or display it some how in your home.

Then download the leaves also (<https://app.box.com/s/5u6xyrh22s1a15wd13dtw2m1o8ms5j12>) or use the ones on the opposite page and print out a sheet for everyone to write something they are thankful for on each leaf.

Then cut out each leaf (I would have everyone cut out their own if they are able) and adhere them to your tree!

I had fun placing some of them off the edge of the mat for a more 3D effect. You could also slightly curl some of the leaves or fold them in half down the middle to create a more leaf-like appearance!

I love this tradition and am so happy to have a way to re-create it each year so easily!

Does an NCPG family need support?



We want to HELP...

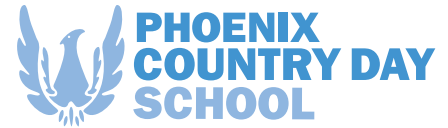
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NCPG♥CARES

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