

HLM Collaborative Meeting **HIGHLIGHTS**
May 5, 2017 1:00 PM- 4:00 PM
Kashmere Multiservice Center

Welcome

Lisa Helfman, Healthy Living Matters (HLM) Executive Committee Vice-Chair greeted members at the May HLM Collaborative Meeting. She welcomed everyone and introduced them to the meeting’s theme: highlighting the HLM priority neighborhood, Kashmere Gardens. The meeting’s purpose was to highlight issues and opportunities in the Kashmere Gardens community, discuss and leverage resources from Collaborative members to better serve the community, and provide updates on HLM’s current projects.

She then recognized and thanked the executive committee, special guest speakers, and city/ county agencies for their continued support and efforts to make Houston/Harris County a healthier place to live.

Speaker: Kashmere Gardens

Keith Downey, the Chairman of the ProUnitas Community Council, gave attendees a look into Kashmere Gardens community.

Kashmere became a bypass community with the construction of Highway 59. Mr. Downey spoke about some of the resources that the community used to but no longer has: a hospital, doctors’ offices, and parks for people to use. Additionally, unfortunately, most in the community don’t have healthcare. He emphasized that the environment in the community contributes to obesity and other chronic diseases, such as heart disease and stroke.



Mr. Downey stated the importance of eating healthy foods, playing in safe areas, and receiving a quality education. He spoke about how, “a child should not have to grow up, get an education, and leave the community to make a living.” Economic and educational capacity building is needed in Kashmere in order to raise the living standard and improve health.

“Kashmere Gardens is your new community.”

*Keith Downey
ProUnitas Community Council*

Mr. Downey remained optimistic that the collaboration with HLM will transform the community. He presented everyone with a Call to Action to help the community by advocating for the needs of children at Community Council meetings. The Council meets monthly and is made up of community members, including principals, teachers, and parents.

Keynote Speaker: Rhonda Skillern-Jones

Rhonda Skillern-Jones, Trustee of District 2 and Secretary to the Board of Education of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) spoke about some of the problems and opportunities in her district, which includes the Kashmere Community, and some of the work that HISD is conducting to address those problems.

Ms. Skillern-Jones noted that problems for children in Northeast Houston are results of poverty; there is a cyclic relationship with poverty, health, and the effects. Poverty forces people into unhealthy lifestyles, which cause obesity and absenteeism from school. Various factors create hyper-poverty situations in which generations of family are unable to break the cycle. Many children in these communities will have only travelled in a five mile radius and even that is for a school field trip so they are not exposed to other neighborhoods and expectations.

Food insecurity is another issue that Ms. Skillern-Jones discussed. The food available in high poverty neighborhoods are filling but lack nutritional value. “What would test scores look like if kids could focus because they are not hungry?” she asked. Program such as Breakfast in the Classroom help to combat food insecurity and poor nutrition. Hyper-poverty schools now even offer dinner and send home backpacks of food for students and their families.

In her time with HISD, the district has added 27 gardens, including a rooftop garden on the top of Averton Elementary. It has taught people how to sustain things for themselves. She challenged attendees to not just help, but to empower. “How can we harness resources and target where there can be a lasting impact in the community?” she asked. Ms. Skillern-Jones emphasized being intentional and purposeful in resource usage to avoid duplicate services or place resources where they are not needed.



“[This generation’s] challenges are very different, and they are going to need different solutions. Help is there as long as volunteers can be there... Teaching families to harness the resources that you provide them empowers them. Empowering them creates a lasting impact on people’s lives.”

*Rhonda Skillern-Jones
Houston Independent School District*

Panel

“Have you walked in the neighborhood? Have you actually walked the streets of the neighborhood that you are serving?”

*Ms. Florence Coleman
Kashmere Gardens Community Member*

A panel discussion featured **Kristi Rangel**, from My Brother’s Keeper, **Iliana Perez**, Principal of Roderick Paige Elementary School in Kashmere Gardens, and **Florence Coleman**, a member of the Kashmere Gardens community. **Adeeb Barqawi** of ProUnitas moderated the panel and guided the discussion to cover issues central to the Kashmere Gardens community.



The panel focused on specific issues that the Kashmere Gardens community needs addressed. These issues can be seen throughout the community and stem from systematic poverty, as Ms. Skillern-Jones had previously discussed. According to Ms. Rangel, 60% of the sidewalks in the community are not walkable. There is an elementary school that is located across the street from a liquor store. Some of the road intersections do not have safe crossing infrastructure.

Cultural competency was another theme within the panel discussion. Each panelist pointed out that the members of the community are the best resources for learning what needs to be done, and volunteers need

to understand their perspective. Help needs to be given within the framework of the community. In particular, Ms. Coleman advocated for organizations to get “boots on the ground” in order to really understand communities, gain their trust, and implement programs that will be important to them.

Each panelist also discussed some efforts underway in the community to address obesity prevention and reduction. Ms. Perez talked about how teachers in her school will focus on obesity within their leadership training institute and how their school has a community garden. Ms. Rangel discussed summer programs which work with students on gardening.

Ms. Coleman summed up the discussion with a call-to-action: “We have a lot of issues in our community... and we still need a lot of help. I want to encourage you to go further with what you are already doing and do it faster.”

Action Break

For the action break, **Jennifer Hadayia** and **LaPorcha Carter** of Harris County Public Health gave attendees a training on resilience, taken from a TED talk by Professor Jane McGonigal. The four aspects that Ms. Hadayia and Ms. Carter discussed were physical, mental, emotion, and social resilience. All attendees had fun completing fun “challenges” such as looking at pictures of baby animals and shaking someone’s hand for six seconds in order to address all four aspects of resilience.

Breakout Groups

During the breakout sessions, attendees were asked to participate in the breakout that best aligned with the programs or resources provided by their organization. The three breakout sessions were Community Engagement, School Health, and Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time. Each session began with breakout members choosing which HLM policy priority they would like to focus on in their group. Breakout members were asked to prioritize policies based on what their organization would be able to bring to Kashmere Gardens.



Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Breakout was led by Keith Downey and Mark Solano, Engagement Specialist for Healthy Living Matters. The group chose to discuss the following policies:

- E6: Advocate for low-fat, low calories drinks in school and childcare facilities.
- P1: Support the development and adoption of “Safe Neighborhoods” Policy
- L2: Support a comprehensive “Community Health Literacy” strategy

In their discussion of these priorities, Megan Hoag mentioned Kids’ Meals, an organization that delivers meals to Houston’s hungriest preschool-aged children. Relating to E6, the YMCA has put together a healthy food and beverage toolkit that they are willing share with ProUnitas. Program models in other areas of Houston include Playworks’ recess and physical activity initiatives and YMCA’s community gardens and CATCH curriculum.

Moving forward, the group discussed the YMCA and Texas Hunger Initiative being involved with E6 and the Health Museum and Recipe for Success Foundation being able to aid in L2. Mr. Downey offered the Community Council as a resource to be used and invited everyone to attend and present.

School-based Initiatives

The School Health Breakout was led by Kelly Reed-Hirsch, Health Education Programs Manager at Harris County Public Health and Lisa Lauter, School Health Consultant for Healthy Living Matters.

No community members were part of this group. While ProUnitas represented the interests of the community, all participants in this session felt strongly that the next step is to seek input from community members to hear if the policy priorities focused on are shared by community members. The group focused their discussion on E6 - advocate for low-fat, low-calorie drinks in schools and childcare facilities – and gave insight into what these potential community partners have to offer that may lead to addressing these priorities.

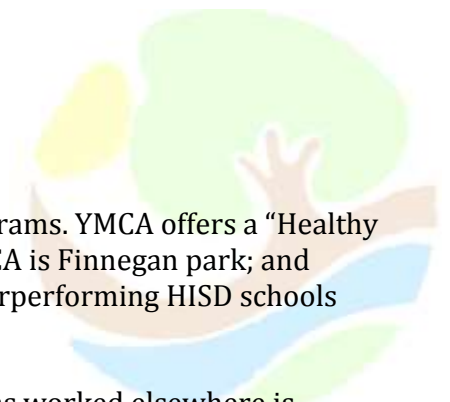
The group talked about how E6 could be important to the community because it:

- increases exposure to a wide variety of healthy foods to kids in schools which is important for the development of lifelong healthy habits;
- is important for educators to be the best model for kids through a commitment to making healthy choices;
- is important to consider ways to protect districts from losing funds from unhealthy district vending (or provide supplementary funds) if a shift to healthier vending options occurs; and
- increases the availability of healthier and more nutritious choices with associated messaging, modelling and nutrition education will lead to improved learning outcomes.

In addition, principals and community members attend one community council meeting monthly. The Community Council group vets any incoming programs. These meetings are held at the Kashmere Gardens Multiservice Center every 4th Thursday of the month. ProUnitas has the support and trust of school principals to bring in the “right” programs. Other partners identified were Recipe for Success, vendors and suppliers, and the District Food Services/ Child Nutrition Services Department.

Some programs in Kashmere that are conducting work around E6 include:

- CATCH and Recipe for Success providing nutrition education; and
- YMCA tackling physical activity as an entry point in after school programs. YMCA offers a “Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards” program, but the closest YMCA is Finnegan park; and
- “Achieve 180” as a mechanism through which underserved and underperforming HISD schools should have more choice with regards to budget priorities.



Moving forward, the group agreed that more research is needed around what has worked elsewhere is needed. The group stressed that an integrated approach to address childhood obesity is critical. Integration of nutrition education, messaging, and modelling through curriculum, vending, and other partners working with the same beneficiaries is key. Therefore, a good first step would be to engage staff involved on the campuses to be ready to launch at the beginning of the school year.

Early Care & Education/ Out-of-School Time

The Early Childhood & Out-of-School Time (ECOS) Breakout was led by Katie Chennisi, Public Health Analyst at Harris County Public Health, and Kristi Rangel. The group chose to discuss lack of nutritional food in afterschool programs.

The group discussed how Kashmere Gardens is a food desert and lacks quality nutritious options. After school programs and childcare facilities may lack the resources to be able to provide nutritious snacks for the children they serve. Childhood obesity, therefore, is related to various factors including poverty, lack of access to healthy foods, and lack of access to education.

The group also touched on the importance of active learning and an integrated approach across sectors. Connecting after school programs and early care centers to resources such as the HLM ECOS newsletter would help facilitate more nutrition and physical activity. Participation in the Texas Rising Star program would also be a good next step to promote among childcare centers.

Advocacy Update

Tim Schuaer with Cornerstone Government Affairs provided attendees with an update about the 2017 legislative session.

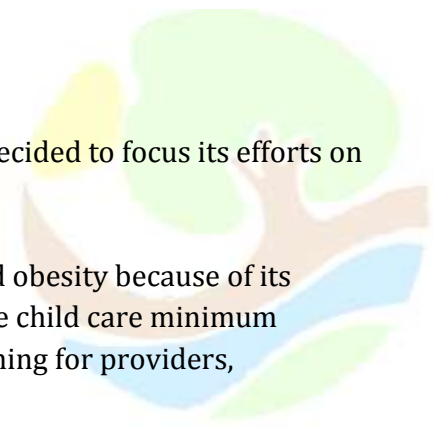
HLM has had an active agenda pushing several bills during this session, including Partnerships for a Healthy Texas and the American Heart Association. In total, 30 bills were introduced and some of those were moving forward.

Tim focused on two HLM bills:

HB 2884 – Representative Alma Allen sponsored a three-part bill that aimed to: 1) reestablish health in high schools as a mandate, 2) restore PE credits to what they were before 2009, and 3) directing the Texas Education Agency to come up with age appropriate recess policies. HB 2884 received a hearing; however, it also received some opposition from organizations who represent fine arts in the school who were concerned health would take away from an arts curriculum. Unfortunately, after trying to

negotiate, a compromise was not reached. Because of this, HLM instead decided to focus its efforts on the recess policy aspect of the bill.

HB 2664 – Representative Rick Miller has taken up the cause of childhood obesity because of its application to Mission Readiness and the military. HB 2664 would update child care minimum standards for active play, screen time, nutrition and physical activity training for providers, information for parents, and a Texas Rising Star rating system.



Some other bills that HLM has supported include a breastfeeding workplace bill and one to recognize before and after school programs that promote physical activity.

Announcements

- Dr. Austin discussed Community Cares, a medical home program from Texas Children’s Hospital. Dr. Austin disseminated a document that focuses on children’s health. The Community Cares program has grown to encompass six sites that take care of 35,000 children. Dr. Austin said that he will continue this work and explore potential options in the Kashmere Gardens area.
- Hope Farms from the Recipe for Success Foundation is officially open. Pop up markets will also be occurring during Family Night at the Health Musuem.
- The ProUnitas Community Council meets the 4th Thursday at Kashmere Multiservice Center. All HLM partners are invited.

Closing & Adjourn


Mark Solano encouraged all partners and members to complete the HLM Engagement survey so that HLM can better determine our partnership and membership base.

Lisa Helfman thanked all members for their attendance and continued commitment to HLM and the Kashmere Gardens community.

The next Healthy Living Matters meeting will be in August. Please sign up for the HLM newsletter for updates.

Meeting Attendees

Abhirami Rajagopal, Harris County Public Health
Adeeb Barqawi, ProUnitas Inc
Albert Cheng, Harris County Public Health
Albert Wei, ProUnitas Inc
Ann Barnes, Legacy Health
Andi Nelson, Recipe for Success Foundation
Angelique Harding, Houston Health Department
Ann Smith Barnes, Legacy Community Health Services
Beverly Gor, Houston Health Department
Brandy Bowlen, Klein ISD
Catherine Chennisi, Harris County Public Health
Cheryl Howard
Dedra Shealy, Harris Health
Elizabeth Love, Houston Endowment
Emily Dean, Harris County Public Health
Florence Coleman, Kashmere Gardens community
Frances Nguyen, Harris County Public Health
Gwen Sims, Harris County Public Health
Heidi McPherson, American Heart Association
Hester Arceneaux, Champion Nurse Resources
Iliana Perez, Paige Elementary School
Jeff Taebel, Houston-Galveston Area Council
Jeffrey Drozel-Fitzwater, Playworks
Jennifer Hadayia, Harris County Public Health
Jolene Norbert-Harrell, Harris County Public Health
Jometra Hawkins, American Health Association
Justin Rahman, The Health Museum
Keith Downey, ProUnitas Inc
Kelly Reed-Hirsch, Harris County Public Health
Kristi Rangel, City of Houston
Kristin Bennett, Harris County Public Health
LaPorcha Carter, Harris County Public Health
Lawrence English, Playworks
Linda Forys, Harris County Public Health
Lisa Helfman, HEB/Brighter Bites
Lisa Lauter, Harris County Public Health
Marie Arcos, MD Anderson YMCA
Maryiam Saifuddin, Houston Food Bank
Mark Solano, Harris County Public Health
Megan Hoag, Baylor College of Medicine
Nohemi Castillo, Harris County Public Health
Rebecca Luman, Healthy Tweaks LLC
Rhonda Skillern-Jones, Houston ISD
Robert F. Austin, R J Austin Consultant



Rocaille Roberts, Harris County Public Health
Rose Haggerty, Houston ISD (retired)
Sandy Bristow, Oliver Foundation
Shiny John, Houston Health Department
Thy Ho-Phan, YMCA Greater Houston
Tim Schauer, Cornerstone Government Affairs
Trista Bishop-Watt, Harris County Public Health
Tylynn Preston, City of Houston

Sector Updates

Healthy Living Matters Pasadena

- Partnered with Urban Harvest to submit a grant application for training community residents to become backyard farmers for the purpose of selling their produce at our future Farmers Market
- Our first Bike to School Day event will be held on May 19th and our partner school is Red Bluff Elementary. To date we have raised enough money to purchase 50 bikes and helmets for participating students who don't have them. Volunteers needed!
- Partnering with Air Alliance Houston, Mi Familia Vota, The Metropolitan Organization, and St. Peter's Episcopal Church on a Mayoral Candidate Forum after the run-off, to ensure that questions related to health and social determinants are asked to the candidates.
- Next meeting: Thursday, May 18, 2017 from 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM at Pasadena Public Library, 1201 Jeff Ginn Memorial Dr, Pasadena, TX 77506
- *For more information, please contact Katie Chennisi at cchennisi@hcpbes.org.*

Healthy Living Matters Near Northside

- HLM continues to promote its policy priorities in Near Northside by partnering with GO Neighborhoods.
- The Near Northside GO Health Team was recently expanded to include the Northline area (north of 610/Near Northside). The team has been re-branded as the *Greater Northside Health Collaborative* and meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 1:00 PM at a rotating location in Greater Northside.
- At the last meeting, attendees provide input on the nutrition, physical activity, and built environment components of the new Northline Health Equity Plan (in development).
- *For more information, please contact Katy Atkiss at katya@avenuecdc.org.*

BUILD Health Challenge (north Pasadena)

- *2017 has seen national recognitions, local media coverage, and a continued new local food system for BUILD!*
- *The BUILD Partnership had a two-day site-visit in March with the national BUILD evaluators after being named a BUILD Exemplar site. We will host the GE Healthy Cities Leadership Academy team for a site-visit in June.*
- *Our local PR campaign officially kicked off with a new Pasadena Channel (Channel 16) video about BUILD.*
- *A new site has been identified for the BUILD urban farm in north Pasadena.*
- *BUILD is recruiting students for paid summer internships. Interested students can apply [here](#).*
- *We also received a no-cost extension from the BUILD funders, which means our BUILD Partnership efforts will continue through December 2017. Funding from GE Healthy Cities will help sustain some program components.*
- *For more information, please contact Jennifer Hadayia at jhadayia@hcpbes.org.*

Youth Sector

- HLM-Youth Council has established partnerships with The Oliver Foundation Teen Board, ProUnitas, My Brother's Keeper, YMCA Youth and Government and Pasadena ISD.
- Continuing engagement efforts and seeking new partner organizations for future projects
- Seeking youth related community service projects
- Finalizing and publishing HLM-Youth Council collateral
- Currently engaging youth serving organizations to build capacity surrounding youth advocacy within the 85th legislative session
- *For more information, please contact Mark Solano at msolano@hcpbes.org.*

Early Care & Education/Out-of-School Sector Updates (ECOS)

- Have started recruiting for our OLE! Texas project, a training for landscape architects and design student on how to design child care playgrounds using Preventing Obesity by Design (POD) best practice indicators. Partnering with Gulf Coast Community Service Association's (GCCSA) Pasadena Head Start center to be the demonstration site for this project.

- Partnering with Gulf Coast Area Association for the Education of Young Children (GCAAEYC) on their Spring Conference Healthy Beginnings. This conference will take place on Saturday, May 20th at University of Houston – Clear Lake.
- Next meeting: May 25, 2017 from 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM at Harris County Public Library, 5749 South Loop East, Houston, TX 77033
- *For more information or to sign up for the ECOS monthly newsletter, please contact Katie Chennisi at cchennisi@hcphe.org.*

Healthcare Sector Updates (HSAT)

- *HSAT partners have voted and agreed near unanimously on the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Core Measures Plus, which will serve as a guide for those considering or already screening for SDHs.*
- *In addition, though not to the exclusion of other SDH screening tool, but as the recommended HSAT tool, the partners voted near unanimously the PRAPARE tool.*
- *The next steps will involve agreeing on ranking the SDH Core Measures (to guide those slowly growing their screening implementation) and agree on uniform questions. These and other actions on this priority will need to be in balance with and keeping in mind the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Accountable Health Communities grant as well as other parallel initiatives.*
- *Next meeting: May 15, 2017 from 9:30 AM-10:30 AM at Harris County Public Health, 2223 W Loop South, 77027 - Room 532 (5th floor)*
- *For more information, please contact Tanweer Kaleemullah at tkaleemullah@hcphe.org.*

Education (K-12) Sector

- HLM awarded funding for a School Health leader to attend Action Based Learning training in Houston in June. Action Based Learning training serves to equip educators with the tools and skills needed to implement more kinesthetic or movement based learning in the classroom.
- Representatives from the School Health Sector were key participants in HLM Advocacy Day in Austin, April 3, 2017. The day was spent visiting State Representatives, informing them of the issues of childhood obesity and how supporting HB 3145, HB 2884 and SB 355 would improve child health outcomes through physical activity, health education and recess.
- HLM members and school health leaders also testified in support of these bills before the House and Senate Education Committees on April 11th and April 27th.
- Legislative updates were presented to more than five School Health Advisory Committees (SHACs) and instructions on calling your Elected Official were shared in this manner and also through the HLM School Health Newsletter.
- HLM participated in the April 23rd Cigna Sunday Streets event to support community engagement and healthy lifestyles in Spring Branch ISD.
- The School Health Leadership Group met on May 2nd, 2017 and was attended by over 50 school administrators from across Harris County and is chaired by Kelly Reed-Hirsch, HCPH Health Education Programs Manager.
- *If your agency, NGO, or non-profit would like to present to the Harris County Public Health School Health Leadership Group, please contact Kelly Reed-Hirsch kreed@hcphe.org.*
- *For more information, please contact Lisa Lauter at llauter@hcphe.org.*

Healthy Living Matters Policy Priorities



GLOBAL POLICY ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY – G1. Advocate for Texas legislators to develop a statewide strategic plan to address hunger, nutrition, physical activity and obesity in children and families.

EAT: The following policy strategies are endorsed by HLM to support access to, and age-appropriate sizes of, healthy foods for all children in Harris County.

E1. Support legislation and policies at the state level that incent the purchase of healthy foods with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars.

E2. Advocate for the development and passage of a state law to create a grocery/food* store loan program to address the problem of food deserts. (*Not limited to grocery stores, may include local grocers, convenience stores, etc.).

E3. Support development and adoption of local laws to promote breastfeeding in Harris County, including recognizing designated breastfeeding-friendly hospitals, legally protecting breastfeeding mothers from harassment in public and while at work, and ensuring mothers are guaranteed a *Mothers' Bill of Rights*.

E4. Encourage use of available public lands in Harris County for the development of community gardens and farmers markets.

E5. Encourage school districts and appropriate public programs to increase awareness and promotion of school food options for low-income students during the summer.

E6. Advocate for low-fat, low-calorie drinks in schools and childcare facilities.

PLAY: The following policy strategies are endorsed by HLM to promote opportunities for safe, adequate, and appropriate physical activity for all children in Harris County.

P1. Support the development and adoption of "Safe Neighborhoods" Policy:

- Eradicate abandoned houses;
- Ensure sufficient public safety officer coverage, encourage community policing approaches;
- Improve animal control efforts to reduce stray animals;
- Fix streets & sidewalks, promote Safe Routes to Schools efforts, build sidewalks in new developments, promote Complete Streets policy;
- Improve lighting in streets and parks; and
- Support the ongoing development of safe trails and parks, such as the Bayou Greenway Initiative and Utility Corridor Improvements.

P2. Support Harris County School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs) in implementing policy that requires physical activity (PA) subcommittees and recommendations for joint-use agreements or community/school partnerships.

P3. Increase middle school physical education (PE) requirements to include moderate to vigorous activity for 6 semesters, high school PE requirements to 1.5 semesters, and make 1 semester of health education required for graduation.

P4. Institute a Texas policy on recess that encourages age-appropriate outdoor playtime.

P5. Conduct a study and encourage the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish guidelines for outdoor features on public school campuses to maximize outdoor physical activity.

LEARN: The following policy strategies are endorsed by HLM to promote health education opportunities related to nutrition, physical education, and general healthy living for all children, families and caregivers in Harris County.

L1. Develop guidelines to educate and incent administrators, school teachers, child care providers, and other staff to eat healthy and be physically fit as role models for children.

L2. Support a comprehensive "Community Health Literacy" strategy:

- Support a campaign for healthy eating for families;
- Expand community education programs on how to cook healthy;
- Expand public programs that teach community and backyard gardening; and
- Support a policy to expand coordinated school health strategies to grades 9-12.

L3. Establish state, city, and/or county healthy schools and healthy child care recognition programs with a training component.

L4. Promote outdoor classrooms and incorporate active learning into core curriculum subjects to increase physical activity in Harris County school districts.

Commit to Action Card



**HEALTHY LIVING
MATTERS**
Connecting Policy to the Future

As a Healthy Living Matters advocate, we encourage you to commit to take action today!

Place a check mark by the actions listed below to let us know how you plan to advocate for children and their families!

I commit to action in Kashemere Gardens in the following ways:

- School-based initiatives: _____

- Early Care & Education/ Out-of-School Time: _____

- Community Engagement: _____

- Other: _____

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