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## GIVE Education Teams with Matthew McConaughey, Kicks off Second Annual "School the Nation" Campaign

In August, Procter & Gamble (P&G) and actor Matthew McConaughey teamed up with Communities In Schools to mark the start of a second annual cause marketing partnership. The P&G GIVE Education campaign educates consumers about how to solve the nation's dropout crisis and help thousands of students achieve in school. The campaign launched on Aug. 15 with an event at Venice High School, a Communities In Schools of Los Angeles partner school.

"P&G is committed to improving life for children around the world," said Karen Kei Schlosser, P&G North America, assistant director of U.S. Operations. "GIVE Education enables P&G to touch lives by bringing together the power of P&G's education commitment and reach, and Communities In Schools innovative programs."

The P&G GIVE Education initiative includes three fundraising components to support Communities In Schools:

- A social media campaign that started in May with the P&G myGIVE Facebook page. For every "Like," P&G myGIVE receives, the company will donate \$1 (up to \$10,000) to Communities In Schools. Consumers can spread the word about GIVE Education, encourage friends and family to learn more about the dropout crisis and inspire others to get involved. And on the Facebook page there are videos of three Communities In Schools success stories.
- A rebate program launched on August 12. By simply purchasing \$25 worth of select P&G products, consumers will get a \$5 rebate by mail, and P&G will give \$5 to Communities In Schools on their behalf.
- The P&G brandSAVER® coupon booklet was distributed on August 26 as an insert in newspapers across the country. For every GIVE Education brandSAVER® coupon redeemed, P&G is donating two cents to Communities In Schools.

*Continued on page 5*



Matthew McConaughey, actor and founder of the j.k. livin' Foundation, poses with students at the second annual GIVE Education "School the Nation" campaign kickoff, Aug. 15, in Venice, Calif.

Photo by Susan Goldman/P&G GIVE Education

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## President's Message

### Helping Students Soar

This past summer, we all were inspired by watching athletes from around the world take part in the Olympics. Many of the athletes had made great sacrifices and overcome tremendous hurdles to be able to participate in their event. Through dedication and hard work, and with the unwavering support of their coaches, team members, family and sponsors, they arrived ready to do what they had trained for their entire lives: unleash their potential and achieve.

As young people across the country head back to school, the caring professionals throughout the Communities In Schools network stand ready to help students make this a winning school year. We believe that all young people have tremendous potential to achieve, and we do everything in our power to remove obstacles so they can soar to new heights.

In this edition of *Inside CIS*, you'll read about Jamal Tate – a student served by Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C. Jamal beat the odds to get where he is now and is inspiring others with his story. You will also get a glimpse of “Team CIS” members across our network: site coordinators, an AmeriCorps member and a member of our Leadership Council who is a longtime youth advocate.

Site coordinators working directly with students are the backbone of our organization, acting as coaches, cheerleaders, mentors and friends. This month we are honoring five of these site coordinators with the annual Unsung Heroes Award. You can read more about them on our website.

Also in this edition, we focus on an exciting partnership with Procter & Gamble, which aims to bring national attention and financial support to Communities In Schools through an interactive marketing campaign. Now in its second year, this partnership is shining the light on our important work to benefit the 1.26 million students who are most vulnerable to dropping out.



Dan Cardinali, President, Communities In Schools.  
Photo by William Waybourn

There has never been a better time to get involved in Communities In Schools – as a volunteer, grassroots advocate or financial supporter. A recent economic impact study showed that for every dollar invested in Communities In Schools, \$11.60 is returned to society. That is good news for young people, for families, for our economy and for our country as a whole. I invite you to visit our website at [www.communitiesinschools.org](http://www.communitiesinschools.org) to find out more. ■

## Jamal Tate: The Sky's the Limit

### A Student Success Story

Nineteen-year-old Jamal Tate is the big man on campus at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, N.C. Now in his second year of college, the organizational and relational communications major just finished his freshman year with a 3.75 GPA, is already the president of a local Communities In Schools Alumni Network chapter, and is quick to make friends with his big smile and positive attitude.

A year ago, Jamal didn't even know that college was an option. The young man had been sent to jail three times since he was 17 and didn't see anything in his future but more of the same.

"I was on a really dark path," said Jamal. "I had a lot of energy and didn't know how to focus it in a positive way."

Today, Jamal credits Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg for believing in him when no one else would and giving him the resources he needed to forge a new, brighter path.

Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, in a partnership with the County Sheriff's Department and local schools, provides counseling and resources to juvenile offenders with the goal of helping them transition successfully back into school. Reggie Hester, a site coordinator who works within Jail North, made sure that Jamal had regular access to a psychologist and drug counselor while in jail. He also worked with Joe Rothenberg and Lisa Meadows, site coordinators at Jamal's school, to make sure that the young man stayed on top of his schoolwork.

"A guidance counselor, [Lori Di'pierno], and I would collect Jamal's work from teachers, put it in a box, drive it over to the jail, and turn it over to Reggie, who in turn gave it to Jamal," Rothenberg said.

When Jamal left jail for the last time, he knew without a doubt it was a place he never wanted to return to. But he didn't know where to go next. He toyed with the idea of military service after graduation, but Rothenberg knew that college was his true calling. The site coordinator registered Jamal for Summer Bridge, a Communities In Schools-sponsored program designed to help high school seniors acclimate to college life through summer courses. In addition, he helped Jamal apply



With the support of Communities In Schools, Jamal Tate has overcome tremendous odds, and now has a bright future to look forward to.

Photo by Christopher Record

for financial aid. Despite having a 1.8 GPA in high school, Jamal's intelligence shined through in his standardized test scores, and he earned a Pell Grant, a federal grant designed for low-income undergraduate students who demonstrate an ability to succeed in college.

"Communities In Schools didn't scrutinize me for repeatedly getting into trouble," Jamal said. "They saw what was in me that I didn't see myself."

Today, Jamal is channeling his extra energy into lifting spirits by telling his inspirational story. He travels to high schools to talk about his experiences in jail and encourage young people to make the right choices. And he's not just a member of the Communities In Schools Alumni Network, he's also the president of the first college-based Communities In Schools alumni group in the country. In the future, he hopes to be an established public speaker.

"Sometimes you have to peel back the rock, and what you have is a statue," Rothenberg said. "Jamal is simply...there are no words. I don't know how far this guy is going to go, but the sky is the limit." ■

## Where in the World is Bill Milliken?

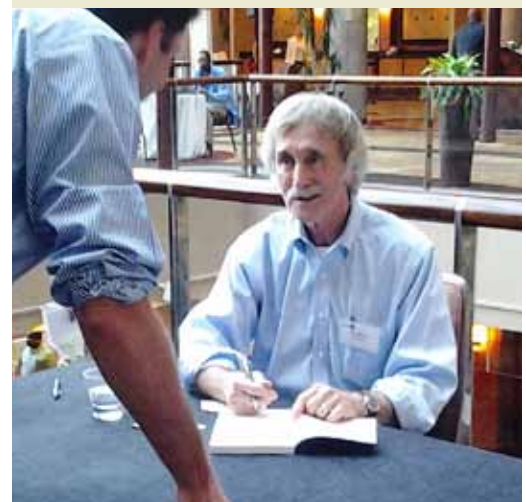
Today Show host Matt Lauer may be known for jet-setting around the country, but our own founder and vice chairman of the board, Bill Milliken, keeps a pretty busy schedule himself.

In June, Bill packed his bags and headed to the West Coast for the official launch of his new book, *From the Rearview Mirror*. The launch kicked off with a book-signing event at Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles, which also served as a "friend-raiser" for the two Communities In Schools local affiliates in the area. Communities In Schools National Board Chair Elaine Wynn spoke at the event.

During the summer, Bill was a keynote speaker and workshop presenter at several Communities In Schools network training events, including the Performance Learning Center Summer Institute in Atlanta, the Texas State Summer Training Institute in Austin and the Diplomas Now Summer Institute in Baltimore.

Also over the summer, Bill received the Visionary Ambassador's Award from R&B legend Usher and his New Look Foundation at a ceremony held at Atlanta's Emory University.

Bill's schedule is not set to slow down this fall. He'll be a featured speaker at the annual Texas Book Festival in Austin, the Leadership Foundations international summit in Pittsburgh, Pa., and the University of Virginia Youth-Nex Conference in Charlottesville, all in October. Stay tuned as we continue to track Bill's excellent book adventures and update you on his whereabouts. ■



Bill Milliken at a book signing during a Diplomas Now event in Baltimore in July.

Photo by Jocelyn Hill

## Communities In Schools and AmeriCorps: Partners in Success

At Communities In Schools our work to help students succeed can't be accomplished without the support and passion of partner organizations. These partnerships increase the number of schools we are in, the number of students we serve and the impact we make.

During the 2010-2011 school year, 579 AmeriCorps members were integral to the Communities In Schools mission to empower students to stay in school and achieve in life by serving as mentors and tutors. To make sure they are prepared to make a difference, AmeriCorps members receive extensive training by Communities In Schools staff. Their work is also overseen by a site coordinator on the school's campus.

Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans has partnered with AmeriCorps for the past five years, and during the 2011-2012 school year had 32 AmeriCorps members making an impact in the lives of students across the city.

One AmeriCorps member, Chris Senac, considers his work with the two organizations to have been a transformative experience. Senac, 26, was employed as an associate

analyst at a local hospital but knew that his true calling was to work with students. He began volunteering with Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans, and in 2011 left his job to support the organization full time as an AmeriCorps member.

During his 11-month tenure with AmeriCorps, Senac was a facilitator for a program called ScienceREACH! at George Washington Carver High School. He worked one-on-one with students to help them learn STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects, and organized activities to get them inspired to seek STEM careers.

Senac also acted as a transportation coordinator for Communities In Schools during the 2012 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Youth Gathering, held in New Orleans. Part of the event was for all 35,000 participants to take part in a day of service with local nonprofits. Over the course of a week, Senac organized 10 U-Hauls and helped deliver 15,000 school kits for every third and fourth grader in greater New Orleans, as well as 9,000 snack kits.

The AmeriCorps member completed his



AmeriCorps member Chris Senac supported students at Communities In Schools of Greater New Orleans' George Washington Carver High School. Photo by Scott Henrichsen Photography

time with Communities In Schools and AmeriCorps in July, but the influence the two organizations had on his life goes on. Senac continues to inspire children by using skills from his hobby, playing in a band. He has embarked on a new career as an elementary school music teacher.

"I'm really thankful for having worked with Communities In Schools," Senac said. "I've made a difference in the lives of kids who would not have gone to college if I had not tutored them. And the impact these students made on me is immeasurable." ■

## Georgia State Office Celebrates Student Achievement Month

When it's May in Georgia, then it's time to celebrate Student Achievement Month (SAM). The annual contest, organized by the Communities In Schools of Georgia state office, honors students throughout the state for academic achievement. This year, the statewide winners were celebrated at a luncheon held at the Georgian Terrace.

SAM provides an opportunity to encourage students who are struggling in school and recognize them for their achievements. More than 150 K-12 students throughout the state competed at the local, regional and state levels in four categories: written expression, public speaking, creative expression and computer technology. State winners received prizes valued up to \$1,000.

At the student success luncheon, Jamecia Dukes, a high school computer technology winner from Burke County High School, noted the impact SAM has had on her

continued education. "Winning has definitely boosted my confidence to continue to do better in school. I know if I keep pressing on with my school work, I will be able to accomplish more."

The contest helps students achieve new goals and gain a better understanding of the importance of academic achievement and staying in school. Dedicated staff members and volunteers encourage students to complete SAM entries, which helps them assume responsibility for self-improvement and self-discipline.

To view the 10 winning entries, visit the Communities In Schools of Georgia website



The proud Communities In Schools of Georgia Student Achievement Month winners. Photo by Marilyn Suriani

at [www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org) and their Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CISGeorgia](http://www.facebook.com/CISGeorgia)). ■

## What We Did On Our Summer Break

Camps and Service-Learning Programs Keep Communities In Schools Students Engaged

Each summer, thousands of students across the Communities In Schools network get to participate in camps and programs that mix fun with education, and enhance the progress they've made during the school year. Site coordinators, executive directors and volunteers all pitch in to create structured activities that include academic enrichment and prevent the "summer slide" in reading, writing, math, behavior and attendance. These three affiliates engaged their students in service-learning and creative camps this summer. ■



▲ **Young advocates:** For nearly 20 years, Communities In Schools of Chesterfield, Va., has provided some of the elementary school students it serves with Camp Adventure. This year, about 20 rising fourth and fifth grade students from Bellwood Elementary School attended the service-learning camp, where they visited and made lunches for a homeless shelter, volunteered at a local animal shelter and, as pictured, learned about advocacy at the Virginia General Assembly.

Photo by Jay Swedenborg



▲ **Sounds of summer:** Nearly 100 students, from Communities In Schools of Aurora, Ill., attended drama camp and percussion camp. For four weeks, the two camps collaborated on a production of "The Jungle Book." Not only did the students act, sing, dance and play the musical instruments, but they also were in charge of lighting, sound, staging and all other aspects of a full-scale musical production.

Photo by Tina Moore



▲ **A fit field day:** Communities In Schools of Jacksonville, Fla., joined United Way of Northeast Florida for a field day put on by Florida Blue employees. TEAM Up summer camp students at Fort Caroline Middle School participated in activities that included a hula hoop contest, jump rope, Frisbee golf, and the Sponge Bucket race. The organizations encouraged campers to participate in at least one hour of exercise a day to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Photo by Erin Ocobock

## GIVE Education Teams with Matthew McConaughey

Continued from page 1

Partnering with P&G GIVE Education allows McConaughey to continue fulfilling his commitment to making a difference in the lives of youth. The actor, known for starring roles in *A Time to Kill*, *We Are Marshall* and his latest blockbuster, *Magic Mike*, started the j.k. livin Foundation in 2008. The foundation provides after-school fitness and wellness programs for at-risk youth, with the goal of teaching the

importance of decision making, health, education and active living.

"I am a firm believer in the power and necessity of mentorship, and by teaming with GIVE Education, we're ensuring that people learn about the inspiring and effective work mentors are doing across the country to combat the dropout crisis," said McConaughey.

The P&G campaign will help deliver human, financial and community resources to students and their families served by Communities In Schools, including tutoring, mentoring, individual or family counseling, health services, food bank access and college visits. ■

## Lessons in Leadership

### National Leadership Council Member Profile

A member of Communities In Schools' National Leadership Council, Simone Levinson discovered something at an early age that has guided much of her life since then. She learned that fun, combined with purpose, results in fulfillment. Her teacher for this lesson was her mother; her classroom was the Boys & Girls Harbor summer camp where the family volunteered. Describing the weekends spent there, Levinson recalls "I would get much more out of it than I put in. It was a very fundamental lesson."

Paired with her love of children, this lesson continued to shape Levinson's adult life as she became a mentor at Harlem Village Academy. "Every opportunity to work with the children, either one-on-one or in the classroom, was rewarding," she said. "But I would walk away from the school knowing that there were a million more students in New York who still needed a helping hand."

Levinson's determination to do something about the greater need grew with time. "I firmly believe that children deserve a quality education because education is the most effective way to provide all children with the possibility of being successful. And not just economically successful. Education allows children to discover themselves, to learn what they can contribute individually to a community and to gain the skill sets they need to fulfill their life's purpose."

During this period of reflection to determine how best she could impact education, Levinson underwent another major life shift – she became a mother. What had started as a love of children took on new meaning when her own children were part of the equation. "Parents are looking to prepare children for the future. My husband David and I look at our children and question the future they are going to inherit. What happens if the dropout rate continues? What happens if one-third or one-half of children aren't prepared to support themselves and contribute to society? I have to make it my business to ensure my children inherit a future that will provide them with the opportunities we have today, which means I also have a custodial responsibility to city, state and country.

"There are problems to address and there are root causes to the problems that require

bigger change. I am only one individual, but I realized I could leverage my time and resources through organizations working to correct the root problem. And it's to those organizations I believe are making a lasting impact that I commit my time."

Levinson cites three criteria that she looks for in an organization before getting involved: a mission-driven program that has proven outcomes; a self-sustaining model that continues to show results; and efficiency that allows for scale. In addition to her time spent as a member of Communities In Schools' National Leadership Council, she serves as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for Turnaround for Children, an organization striving to transform public education so that high-poverty schools across America are designed to confront the predictable and recurring challenges of poverty as they manifest inside schools.

"What I love about both organizations is their commitment to adopting a whole-student and whole-school approach," said Levinson. "They address the barriers facing children by building permanent and sustainable capacity in each school. The focus is not just academic achievement, but also the social and emotional growth of children, which in turn supports their eventual success as learners. Turnaround changes the understanding and competencies of all the adults in the school while Communities In Schools' comprehensive approach to integrated student services harnesses resources for students from local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, parents and volunteer organizations."

Importantly, she adds, "Both organizations also have a strong return on investment – both in terms of human and financial capital. They combine best practices with smart spending."

This eagle-eye on efficiency and finances is also helpful in Levinson's role as an appointee to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's Spending and Government Efficiency Commission, which is tasked with undertaking a comprehensive review of every agency of state government and recommending structural and operational changes to it.



Nafi Diouf, Simone Levinson, Erick de la Cruz and Pavia Monserat at the Turnaround For Children Third Annual Impact Awards Dinner at The Plaza Hotel in New York, April 18, 2012.

©PATRICK MCMULLAN.COM

Tackling these big issues isn't daunting to Levinson, who speaks about education reform like a leader rallying the masses. "Public schools are in a crisis, and we have the ability to fortify them, to supplement the services they provide, to add another layer so children can be successful. No doubt this is a heavy lift. And the measure of success, I feel, will be greatly determined by the level of participation by all of us. Resignation and apathy are luxuries we simply cannot afford. Nothing less than the future of our country is at stake. And I feel strongly that each one of us has something unique to contribute."

As a mother and an advocate, that's a lesson that Levinson is happy to continue to teach. ■

# Spotlight on Success

## News Briefs from the Network

The New Century Scholars Program at **Communities In Schools of Wilkes County, N.C.**, benefitted from funds raised by the Headed for College Race in May. Each year, New Century Scholars awards Wilkes Community College scholarships to two dozen Wilkes County sixth graders. Students in the program receive ongoing support throughout middle and high school and participate in Communities In Schools-organized, service-learning projects. The Headed for College race has been one of the area's top running events since 2003. The race begins at the middle school, runs past the high school and finishes at the college, thus the name Headed to College.

**Communities In Schools of Kent, Wash.**, hosted its annual fundraising breakfast in May at the Kent Phoenix Academy. The event raised \$21,000 after expenses, which was an \$8,000 increase over the year before. The event highlighted the successes of Communities In Schools' volunteers, and the importance of cultural competency.



Communities In Schools of Kent, Wash., Executive Director David de la Fuente presented board president Tom Wood with the Volunteer of the Year Award.  
Photo by Dee Klem

**Communities In Schools of North Texas** celebrated its annual Texas Star Gala in June, raising a record amount of \$65,000 to support dropout prevention programs in four different school districts. More than 325 people joined honorary chair, Congressman Michael Burgess and the Communities In Schools of North Texas staff to recognize the individuals and organizations that contributed their time and money to make the past school year a success.

Students from **Communities In Schools of Charleston, S.C.**, hit the waters in July in an 18-foot canoe they built themselves. Students from Baptist Hill Middle School launched the canoe at Edisto Beach, just over a month after they began building it as part of the Charleston Area's Wise Guys program. Communities In Schools partnered with Learning Through Loggerheads to provide the materials and volunteers to help guide the students along the construction process. The canoe building was intended to be a learning tool for the students by teaching them real-world applications of math, problem solving and teamwork.



Students from Communities In Schools of Charleston, S.C., and the 18-foot canoe they built.  
Photo by Ashley Keyes



Job shadowing for these students took place at the Miracle Mile Shops in Las Vegas, Nev.  
Photo by Nassim Agange

**Communities In Schools of Nevada** gave 37 students from Canyon Springs High School an up-close look at jobs inside the Miracle Mile Shops at Planet Hollywood. The shops welcomed the students enrolled in the Communities In Schools Academy for the three-hour job shadow opportunity. Students were paired with members of Miracle Mile Shops' management team to observe their daily activities and learn the skills that go into running a major shopping center.

**Communities In Schools of Greater Central Texas** was the recent recipient of a grant of more than \$295,000 awarded to provide support for children of veterans and active-duty service members. The money is part of more than \$2.3 million in grants awarded to 11 government and nonprofit organizations statewide by the Texas Veterans Commission. Communities In Schools of Greater Central Texas plans to use its funding to monitor the academics, behavior and attendance of military children, as well as offer on-campus support services for students and their families. ■

## Communities In Schools of Miami Executive Director Pens Memoir

Connects Life and Her Life's Work

Communities In Schools of Miami Executive Director Elizabeth Mejia recently became a published author with the release of her first book, *Life From the Stoop*. An affirming memoir of faith, perseverance and hope, *Life From the Stoop* chronicles Mejia's childhood with her loving but dangerously dysfunctional family. Through her faith, determination and loyalty, Mejia was able to overcome the barriers she faced and become an advocate for both women's and children's rights.

*Life From the Stoop* chronicles Mejia's path to Communities In Schools and how the organization's work helps youth living in situations similar to the ones she herself experienced as a child. Mejia recounts moments from her childhood that reinforce the importance of relationships, making the connection that Communities In Schools also stresses this basic tenet. And she gives the reader a glimpse at how her commitment to making a difference in

the lives of young people led her to work with Communities In Schools. By telling her life story, Mejia affirms the importance of education as a foundation for future success. "We hear it constantly, and I cannot stress the truth behind the words, but education is truly the key that breaks the cycle of poverty," Mejia said. "As my memoir recounts, education opened a whole new world not only for me but for the subsequent generations in my family. Once the first person graduated college, a whole new generation followed."

"Communities In Schools is that key for many students, their families and future generations," Mejia added. "We must remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure that every child graduates, and continue to be a supportive angel in their lives."

*Life From the Stoop* is available for purchase at Create Space:  
<https://www.createspace.com/3825238> ■



Communities In Schools of Miami Executive Director and *Life From The Stoop* author Elizabeth Mejia.

Photo by Jorge Goizueta

## Accreditation Update

Communities In Schools Local Affiliates Meet Quality Standards to Improve Student Outcomes

Several Communities In Schools local affiliates were accredited this summer under the Total Quality System (TQS). Communities In Schools launched TQS in 2008, with the goal of promoting uniform quality and improved outcomes for students being served by the organization. TQS establishes a common set of operational and business standards adopted by the Communities In Schools national office. These standards, based on nonprofit best

practices, define what it means to be a successful Communities In Schools affiliate and/or state office serving students.

These organizations join the more than 70 Communities In Schools affiliates who have been reviewed and received their accreditation. There are 14 state offices and nearly 200 local affiliates in the Communities In Schools network in 24 states and the District of Columbia. ■

Congratulations to the board of directors, executive leadership and staff of the following most recently accredited affiliates:

**Dodge Connection-Communities In Schools of Dodge County (Ga.)**

**Turner County Connection-Communities In Schools of Turner County (Ga.)**

**Communities In Schools of Walton County (Ga.)**

**Communities In Schools of Greenville (S.C.)**

**Communities In Schools of Lake County (Ind.)**

**Communities In Schools of Jacksonville (Fla.)**

**Communities In Schools of Burke County-Family Connection (Ga.)**

**Communities In Schools of Philadelphia (Pa.)**

**Communities In Schools of Washington**

### ATTENTION LOCAL AFFILIATES!

Help us tell your story to a national audience. Send story submissions to [salamatm@cisnet.org](mailto:salamatm@cisnet.org) or [reavist@cisnet.org](mailto:reavist@cisnet.org). Please include "Inside CIS Story" in the subject line.

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*Inside CIS* is published quarterly by  
Communities In Schools, Inc.,  
2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 801  
Arlington VA 22202.

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Newsletter designed by Ainsley Adao.



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