



# Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

November 2014

## *Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries*

**His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America**



November 1, 2014

Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries

Saints Cosmas and Damian

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year we show our love and support for the philanthropic work of our Ecumenical Patriarchate by designating the Feast of the Holy

Unmercenaries, Saints Cosmas and Damian, as a day of prayer and support for the philanthropic ministries that are offered by the Holy Archdiocese of Constantinople. These ministries to orphans, the elderly, the sick and poor have been a vital and essential work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate since its founding, and they continue today as a witness of our calling by our Lord by offering compassionate healing and faithful service to those in need.

We are led in this effort by our National Ladies Philoptochos Society, and on Sunday, November 2, local chapters throughout our Holy Archdiocese will have a special offering for these ministries. I ask that you contribute generously to assist the work of our beloved Ecumenical Patriarchate at a time when critical needs there and throughout the Middle East are growing. As we are witnessing, long established ministries are challenged for resources as new humanitarian crises and desperate pleas for assistance are growing.

In our generous response in support of the vital work of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we offer a witness of our unity in Christ and our unity in faith. This is the witness of the early Church when offerings were collected and given to communities with great needs, nurturing the bonds of love in Christ. (Romans 15:26; I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8-9) This is the witness of the Holy Unmercenaries, Cosmas and Damian. While they were united by blood as brothers, they were also united in Christ and in the power of faith as they used their divine gifts to bring healing, comfort and hope to those in need.

Today, this is also our witness in a part of the world where ministry in the name of Christ is very challenging. In the midst of significant obstacles and opposition, our Ecumenical Patriarchate

under the leadership of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has continued to fulfill our sacred calling as Christians to help anyone in need. With compassion and quality care, the leaders and staffs of these ministries in Constantinople labor to provide comfort and hope. In their faithfulness to God and to those in need, they reveal the power of faith that comes from knowing beloved brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are giving and praying in support of their work.

On this Feast of the Holy Unmercenaries, I ask that you respond generously to the appeal of our Ladies Philoptochos Society. In addition, may we offer earnest prayers. In the midst of tragedy, violent conflicts, destruction and death, our Church and our Orthodox faith under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate offer hope, reconciliation, enduring peace, and grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

With paternal love in Him,



†DEMETRIOS  
Archbishop of America

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## *Archbishop Demetrios Appoints Maria Logus, Esquire National Philoptochos President*

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Photo Courtesy of Dimitrios Panagos

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, announced the appointment of Maria Logus, Esq. of New York as the new National Philoptochos President at the inaugural meeting of the 2014-2016 National Philoptochos Board held on October 17 at the Hilton Hotel in New York. Archbishop Demetrios praised Miss Logus for her commitment and service to Philoptochos.

National President Maria Logus is a lifelong resident of the New York City borough of Brooklyn and parishioner at Kimisis Tis Theotokou Church. She is currently a lawyer for the New York State Unified Court System, and has had three decades of legal experience. She studied at New York University and Brooklyn Law School.

She joined Philoptochos at age 18, following in the footsteps of her grandmother, and her mother, who held several positions in the organization. In 1986, Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America of blessed memory appointed Miss Logus to the Philoptochos National Board in the role of Parliamentarian. Multiple leadership roles followed, including Chair for two National Conventions and First Vice President under Presidents Mimi Skandalakis, Eve Condakes, and Georgia Skeadas. She was President of the Board of Saint

Basil's Academy for several years and served on the boards of Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology and St. Michael's Home.

Her paternal grandparents hail from Constantinople and her maternal grandparents are from the island Limnos.

On accepting the appointment and the charge of Archbishop Demetrios, President Logus states, "Our National Board is blessed with a dynamic group of women. I look forward to working with all of them to advance the values and the mission of the Philoptochos Society. We will embrace new members as we continue to give honor to our founders."

His Eminence gave the oath of office to the new National Board for the term of 2014-2016.



Photo Courtesy of Dimitrios Panagos

The members of the new Executive Board are: Aphrodite Skeadas, Past President and Advisor; Arlene Siavelis Kehl, First Vice President; Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, Second Vice President; Jeannie Ranglas, Third Vice President; Christine Karavites, Secretary; Martha Stefanidakis, Treasurer; and Georgia Vlitas, Assistant Treasurer. In advisory positions are Anita Kartalopoulos, Esq., Legal Advisor; Maria Stavropoulos, Protocol Officer; and Irene Steffas, Esq., Parliamentarian.

Continuing in their role on the Executive Board are Jennifer Constantin, Direct Archdiocesan District President; Irene Arsoniadis, Metropolis of Chicago President; Frances Levas, Metropolis of Boston President; Marian Catechis, Metropolis

of Denver President; Dee Nicolaou, Metropolis of Atlanta President; Margaret Yates, Metropolis of Detroit President; Rosemary Nikas, Metropolis of Pittsburgh President; Jeannie Ranglas, Metropolis of San Francisco President and Anastasia Michals, Metropolis of New Jersey.

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### *Philoptochos Society and Amazon Partnering for Philoptochos Social Services*

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National Philoptochos is pleased to announce a new way to support the Social Service Ministries of the Society.

Philoptochos has partnered with Amazon through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile). Shopping through this site is exactly like shopping on regular Amazon, with the same products, prices and services as well as the same look and navigation of the website. **The benefit of this program is it allows customers to select a charitable organization to which 0.5% of every purchase made will be donated.**

- Access Amazon through [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile). You will be prompted to select an organization, and the Amazon Smile Foundation will send their contribution to this selection.
- Please select **National Philoptochos (or tax ID 13-6147442)** as the charity you wish to support. It is extremely important that this specific name "**National Philoptochos**" be chosen in order to receive donations for Social Services.

The Christmas season is fast approaching and your Amazon shopping could be a gift, not only for the intended recipient, but also for a person in need, through the Social Service Ministries.

Help share the blessings of the season with others by supporting our partnership with [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/smile). Please note that this program is in effect 365 days per year.

*November National Commitment*

Ecumenical Patriarchate

National Sisterhood of Presbyteres  
Benevolent Fund

*November National Event*

Family Outreach Sunday

*December National Commitments*

United Nations International Children's  
Emergency Fund

General Medical Fund

*The APC and NSP Benevolent Fund*

Presvytera Pauline Pavlakos, President  
National Sisterhood of Presbyteres

The Archdiocesan Presbyters Council (APC) and the National Sisterhood of Presbyteres (NSP) have been providing short-term financial support to clergy families in a time of crisis through their joint Benevolent Fund since 1996. (For 14 years prior to this, they had separate funds.) The APC/NSP Benevolent Fund is supported by our Clergy and Presbyteres through our annual “*Gifts of Love*” campaign each February and the National Philoptochos.

Prior to Philoptochos making the APC/NSP Benevolent Fund a line item in 2006, requests for assistance sometimes ran over the amount of money collected. The National Philoptochos’ gracious and generous support of this fund has made it possible to help more people “during a family crisis, medical emergency, and/or extreme financial need.” For the period of July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014, the National Philoptochos donated \$62,000 to the Benevolent Fund. (Thank you, thank you, thank you!) During that same time period, \$98,080.61 (119 payments) were disbursed to clergy and/or their families.

I am very proud that I have been a member of Philoptochos—such a wonderful philanthropic organization—since I was 18 years old. I firmly believe that every Greek Orthodox Christian woman should be a member of Philoptochos and do her utmost to support their endeavors.

We thank you and we thank God for your generous support of our ministry. May God continue to bless you as you continue your charitable works.

If you would like to read more about the APC/NSP Benevolent Fund, please visit [nsp.goarch.org/about\\_us/apc\\_nsp\\_benevolent\\_fund](http://nsp.goarch.org/about_us/apc_nsp_benevolent_fund).

*Honoring Our Heroes*

Katherine Siavelis and Peggy Vranas  
New Philanthropic Initiatives Co-Chairs



During the Veteran's Day season, we remember the brave ones who are currently fighting or who so bravely fought to protect our freedom. Some of those men and women were able to come home safely, some who fought came home with injuries, both physical and emotional, and yet others were not fortunate enough to return home. We must pray for all of them.

At this year's National Philoptochos Biennial Convention in Philadelphia, there was a moving tribute to our Veterans. To view this tribute, please go to our website at: [www.philoptochos.org](http://www.philoptochos.org). and scroll down to “**The Brave Ones**” video presentation. You might also do a similar tribute in your own parish this month or in 2015 to remember our servicemen and women by asking the community to bring in

pictures of family members who served in the armed service with information on the branch of service they were in and where they served. These pictures can then be made into a slide presentation and shown after church during coffee hour. A Memorial Service might also be offered in memory of these deceased servicemen and women.

Another alternative is to honor those in our church community whose family members are presently serving in the armed forces and offer an Artoclasia for their well-being. If there is a Veteran's Hospital near-by, members of the Philoptochos might contact the hospital and ask how they might best volunteer to help those in the hospital as well as their families.

Chapters might also consider donations to the following agencies:

**Homes for Our Troops** - Founded in 2004, this organization is committed to helping those who have selflessly given to their country and have returned home with serious injuries or disabilities. They assist severely injured servicemen and women and their immediate families by raising donations of money, building materials and professional labor, and then coordinating the process of building a new home or adapting an existing home for handicapped accessibility. The finished home is then given to the veteran. All services provided by Homes for Our Troops are at no cost to the veterans and their families. For information: <https://www.hfotusa.org/>

**Armed Forces Foundation** - The Armed Forces Foundation is dedicated to providing solace to members of the armed forces community during their time of greatest need. An effective 95% of all donations go to the military members and their families through these programs. This organization provides direct financial support to service members and their families for: Essential living expenses; Bereavement assistance; Psychological health and traumatic brain injury outreach; Morale boosting recreation events; Military children's events; and Hospital outreach, Assisting military families. For information: <http://www.armedforcesfoundation.org/>

Today, we lift up our voices in prayer to express gratefulness and honor to these military troops from the past and present. Jesus Christ, please keep and protect these heroes and their families.

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*Saint Mary's Philoptochos Chapter  
Chapter Challenge Best Practices  
How Our Challenge Became Our Blessing  
By Andrea Tiggas*

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At the 2012 Philoptochos National Convention, St. Mary's Philoptochos Chapter in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was named one of the Chapter Challenge participants. That being my first National Convention, it was my initial exposure to the Chapter Challenge and I was impressed with the Challenges presented. It didn't take long for excitement to turn to bewilderment. What would we do and how in the world would we do it?! We decided to come up with our own plan. This article contains the processes or best practices our Chapter utilized to achieve not only a successful Chapter Challenge, but a project that blessed our Chapter and Parish in a number of ways.

**Involve members in selection process:** Our first priority was to decide on a project. We solicited ideas at our meeting, through email to our members and an article in our Parish newsletter. We considered what organizations or programs that the Challenge would benefit, how our Parish at large could be involved and what activities we could create to raise funds and awareness.

Our Philoptochos Board reviewed the submissions and selected Healing House, a Christian residential recovery program which provides real help to those suffering from addiction, poverty, homelessness and abuse.

**Leadership:** We had a Steering Committee dedicated solely to the Chapter Challenge and two chairpersons who had experience in project planning and the ability to keep the project on target. In addition, these two excellent leaders had experience in both non-profit work and fundraising.

**Organization:** The Steering Committee decided on the necessary subcommittees, created an organizational chart and recruited committee members based on their strengths to match the tasks to be done.

**Goals:** The next task was to set goals and milestones to make sure we stayed on target.

The goals we set for the next 18 months were:

- 180 Unduplicated Volunteers
- 1,800 Volunteer Hours
- Raise \$10,000
- We made it a priority to incorporate National Philoptochos goals to:
  - Involve and engage entire Parish
  - Create greater awareness of Philoptochos in community outside of Parish

**Collaboration with Healing House:** In January 2013 we met with the Directors of Healing House to learn their needs, which included new cribs and volunteer interaction with the resident mothers and their children. Having Healing House's input made this a partnership between our ministries.

**Marketing Plan:** In order to introduce our Chapter Challenge and Healing House to our Parish we created a strong marketing plan which included: Facebook presence, frequent Parish announcements, volunteer recruiting, Parish organization involvement and Healing House tours.

**Big Kick-Off:** We kicked off our Chapter

Challenge in church with a "Sweet Sunday" and used the funds raised to purchase cribs for Healing House. We had speakers from Healing House who spoke about its mission. It was well received and raised \$1,200, which was used to purchase four child care compliant cribs.

**Fundraising and soliciting of in-kind donations included:**

- 2013 & 2014 Sweet Sunday Fundraisers, Parish-wide Red Wagon drive for new and used books, toiletry donations, Dawn of Hope breakfast.

**Outreach:** We sought to bring direct impact and exposure to Healing House by engaging the general public of the Twin Cities and beyond. Direct Mail solicitation of Metropolis Chapters was very successful and also gave our sister Chapters ownership of our Challenge.

**In-Reach:** Our entire Parish provided a variety of ministry opportunities for Parishioners of all ages to help Healing House. Some special projects included warm handmade blankets for women and children, the establishment of a new library serving all residents with new and used books, planting a garden, front office receptionist assistance & family field trips.

**Ongoing collaboration** with Healing House to keep abreast of their needs, which eventually included donations of new highchairs, carpet and windows. Parishioners also proposed projects based on their own interests which gave them a sense of co-ownership with Philoptochos and created connections between individuals and Healing House.

**Regularly scheduled meetings** of our Chapter Challenge Steering Committee served to keep the project on track. The Steering Committee meetings evolved into potluck dinner meals and created strong bonds of friendship between these women.

As a result of our intensive planning and organization the results of our Chapter Challenge were a resounding success. Our original goals were far surpassed:

In 18 months:

Planned	Actual
180 Volunteers	184 Volunteers
1,800 Volunteer Hrs.	2,002 Volunteer Hrs.
\$10,000 Raised	\$23,032 Raised

We successfully engaged our entire Parish and created a greater awareness of Philoptochos outside of our Parish.

**Blessings:** Our outreach to the Parish and our sister Metropolis Chapters created bonds we did not foresee along with the serendipity of adding 30 new members during our 2014 membership drive. Our ongoing service to the families of Healing House continues to encourage our members to step outside of their comfort zone, enriches the spiritual life of our Parish and helps change the image of Philoptochos from women in the kitchen to women making a difference in the world. Finally, our Challenge experience has broadened our Chapter's vision of what we can accomplish for our Lord.

- Put out a sign-up sheet and keep in touch with those who attended.
- Consider partnering with other organizations for local walks/bike rides and fundraising events.

Please take as inspiration the notes from a successful Chapter in the Metropolis of Detroit. **Barbara Kuvshinoff, Philoptochos President-Chapter 7035** summarized some of the philanthropic endeavors that have gained traction in Buffalo, NY:

Our Philoptochos, working with the Parish Council, came up with the idea of having parishioners form a "church team" to participate in several of the fundraising walks/bike rides for local and national charities. Since we are the Hellenic Orthodox Church of the Annunciation we named the team the "Hellenic Angels."



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*Membership Corner*  
*Increase Membership to Give Your*  
*Philoptochos Chapter Greater Impact*  
By Rania Richardson, Communications Manager

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### How to Plan Activities to Draw Members

- What will entice people to offer their time? Philanthropy? Faith? Family?
- Discuss activities that have worked well in the past in your Chapter or others, or other organizations.
- Consider the timing, location, and promotion that would make them successful.
- Promote activities with flyers and on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and email.

Having a church team opens the door to engage younger parishioners who are eager to "live Orthodoxy" through a charitable action or project. It also encourages families to participate, and thus provides parents a way to model the importance of philanthropy. Having a team associated with the church increases community awareness of who we, as Orthodox Christians are, and promotes a spirit of unity and identity within the parish itself. Our team is flexible-- parishioners may choose to join for some events-- or all of them-- depending on their schedule and interests.

In 2014 we participated in three different events-- the Summit Autism Awareness Walk, the Ride for Roswell, and The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Light the Night Walk.

The Summit Autism Awareness Walk raised funds for Summit Educational Resources. They provide a broad spectrum of comprehensive resources for children and young adults with autism and other related developmental disabilities. The walk is a family-friendly 2.2 mile walk that took place in late April. Even though it was rainy and cool, we had 11 walkers from the church participate and the Hellenic Angels raised \$925. This Walk was chosen because we have several families within the Parish who benefit from the excellent services provided by Summit.

The Ride for Roswell is a huge event in Buffalo and raises funds for Roswell Park Cancer Institute, a National Comprehensive Cancer Center that is located in downtown Buffalo, not far from the church. According to its organizers, it is the single largest 1-day biking fundraiser in the country. This year, \$4.4 million was raised by 8,216 riders. Eleven of those riders were Hellenic Angels who raised \$2,960! Team members could choose from several different bike routes. Our team members rode in the family-friendly 3-mile ride, the 20-mile river ride, and the 44-mile country ride. One team member even rode in the 104-mile country ride. We chose to participate in the Ride for Roswell because so many of our parishioners have either battled cancer personally, or known a loved one who has fought cancer. Our team captain for this event was a surgeon at Roswell Park.

Our last event for 2014 took place in September and was the Light the Night Walk for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Like the Summit Walk, this family-friendly event is a 2-mile walk around Delaware Park, located very near the church. Three thousand people participated in the walk, raising a record \$425,000. The Hellenic Angels were present with 12 walkers, (4 of them from GOYA!) and raised \$500. It was a beautiful evening and walkers carried red lanterns that could be seen stretching around the park in the twilight.

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*Philoptochos' Initiative  
on Domestic Violence  
Reprinted from The National Herald  
October 4-10, 2014  
The National Herald Staff*

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NEW YORK – Domestic violence is a complex and painful enough reality in any context. Unfortunately, the attitudes and conditions that make it possible, like secretiveness, are among the darker Greek-American traditions passed down through generations.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and The National Herald spoke to Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW about what community organizations and individuals can do about it.

She knows the community and the problem of domestic violence well after growing up at St. Spyridon in Manhattan and two tenures between 1994 and the present in the Department of Social Work of the National Philoptochos.

A month does not go by when she does not get a domestic violence case, and the vast majority of victims are women.

In 2012 she produced an awareness manual that was distributed at the National Philoptochos convention in Phoenix, AZ where a panel was presented consisting of a clinician, the chief of police of a nearby city and Fr. Nick Anctil of Holy Trinity of New Rochelle.

That is a model for events that every parish can present in October, but even one expert speaker is sufficient to generate vital awareness.

The Domestic Violence Manual is filled with valuable information, but the Appendix is especially valuable.



Attachment A, "Does Your Partner...?" is checklist of behaviors of abuses that will help victims understand what is happening to them.

Ironically, many women don't know they are being abused. They think they are in a normal relationship based on what they are used to.

Attachments B and C are "Safety Plan Guidelines" and "Developing a Safety Plan." They are crucial because the most dangerous time for the woman is when she takes steps to end the marriage. "That's when she is most likely to be killed – she will be stalked" Geanacopoulos said.

If someone fears another is being abused, lending an ear is important, as are encouraging words like "You have the right to be safe."

It does not help, however, to tell the victim to leave – the person must make that decision on her own – but when she is ready a friend can help them develop a safety plan.

"Have a set of keys in a safe place, have some money set aside, figure out through which door you will exit... If there are children tell them what they need to do," Geanacopoulos said.

Geanacopoulos emphasized the important facts and conditions.

The most important issue is properly approaching the victim as opposed to the abuser.

"Women need to be vigilant of the relationship they are in because domestic violence does not get better and the women cannot stop the abuse....it will stop only when the abuser takes responsibility for his actions."

One of the challenges is that the women tend not to be believed. Often "the abusers are pillars of the community," she told TNH.

It is vital for information to be made available to victims, so they know they are not alone or at fault – and to inform them of options and actions they can take to protect themselves.

The abusers often tell them they are being punished for wrongdoing – not cooking meals

the way his mother did, not raising the children as he sees fit, etc. and some victims believe God is punishing them for their sins.

The abusers are also clever. If they bruise the women, they make them wear clothing that covers them up.

It is important to look for clues – a woman wearing a sweater in summer for instance, or suddenly stopping work, or learning the husband controls the finances – which make it difficult for her to leave.

Geanacopoulos and the literature emphasize that the deeper issue is control, that the men's behavior is rooted in deep his personality, not in losing his temper.

"They do it because they think they have the right to control their partner. It's all about power and control," she said.

She noted that parish priests are becoming more helpful. "They may not be speaking out from the pulpit, but they are more aware about how they should speak to abused women...Some will still tell them to just go home and pray, but praying will not stop the abuse."

She has strongly urged Philoptochos Chapters across the country post the number for the national domestic violence hotline 1-800-799-7233 which is staffed with experts 24/7, and make literature available in areas for women in the parish.

The material, some of which is in Greek, appears at [Philoptochos.org](http://Philoptochos.org) and has been distributed to priests and chapter presidents.

Geanacopoulos' main point is that domestic violence is learned behavior. "We need to start young," she said, and to at least talk about dating violence among teens.

### **From the Philoptochos' Domestic Violence Manual**

#### **IMPACT ON WOMEN:**

- Nearly 85% of all reported cases of adult domestic violence are women.

- Women are victims of domestic violence regardless of race, age, ethnicity, religion, education, income, employment, profession, immigration status, marital status, sexual preference or physical ability.
- More than 1 million women are stalked by their partners each year.
- A victim's risk of getting killed increases when she attempts to leave or has just left. Of women who are killed by their partners, 75% are killed after they have left the relationship. On average, three women die at the hands of a current or former intimate partner every day.

#### **MORE INFORMATION:**

The Social Services Department of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society published a manual entitled, **“Domestic Violence: Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence in the Greek Orthodox Community”** to raise awareness about this issue and ways that we, as a women's faith-based organization can respond.

This is the site which includes a guide to “Developing a Personalized Safety Plan”: <http://bit.ly/1r2ZorW>

This is the Social Services Department webpage: [philoptochos.org/socialservices](http://philoptochos.org/socialservices)

Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW  
 Director, Department of Social Work Services  
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The Department of Social Work Services operates Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday from 10 am to 5 pm.

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## *National Philoptochos Social Media Sites*

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PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY



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