

# Review of the year



April - June 2010

## NEW BELFAST

In April, the eagerly awaited launch of the “New Belfast” mural was attended by clients, staff, and representatives from the Everton Day Centre and Belfast Trust.

**AMH New Horizons Belfast and the Everton Complex in North Belfast got together to design and paint a Mural in the grounds of The Everton Complex with a theme of ‘New Belfast’. The Mural was the idea of Geraldine Hamilton, Senior Occupational Therapist BHSCT.**

AMH staff; Shirley Larkin and Michael Miller worked alongside Geraldine

and Jim Gray, Everton Day Centre Manager to put the plan in action. William Spence, a New Horizons client, assisted with finding images of new buildings and sculptures in Belfast and with the creative talents of our clients; Belinda Roberts, Marie Kidd and Maria Bannon, along with some of the clients who attend the Everton Complex.

Also at the event were the local

Green Gym, who have worked hard to ensure the mural garden is blooming. A number of IT certificates were also presented to those who have been taking classes in the Everton Centre, with training provided by AMH.

Thanks to Brian Edwards and Kerry Maginnis for all their support and last but by no means last... a round of applause to everyone who has helped to make this project such a success.



## Kurling Gets Our Vote!



**It was quite a year for the VOTE Victors New-Age Kurling Team. Twenty one teams from around Northern Ireland battled it out in the New Age Kurling Senior Championships. After some close matches Vote Victors came away with the coveted trophy.**

The team were also recognised by Craigavon Borough Council during their Sports Personality of the Year Awards Ceremony. The annual prize night attracted a wide range of the borough's best and brightest sport's stars. Vote Victors were presented with the Fergie Dawson Community Sports Award, which was introduced in memory of the late Councillor Fergie Dawson to celebrate a contribution to community sport in the area.

New Age Kurling is a form of the original curling game, but adapted so that it can be played indoors on any smooth flat surface, rather than on ice. VOTE clients have participated in the regional Boccia and Kurling Championships.



# LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



**In May a group of filmmakers from AMH New Horizons Downpatrick, premiered their production of “Strangford Lough, The Land, The Place, The People”, which they created as part of a media production training initiative developed through the Turn O’ the Tide Programme from the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee (SLMAC).**

Members of the public were welcomed to a viewing at the St Michaels Centre in Downpatrick. This film was produced by the group, capturing the exceptional beauty of the Lough and its surrounding shores as well as interviews with specialists and local people that live in the nearby villages and towns.

Studio ON were commissioned to deliver the media production training. This is one of many *Turn O’ The Tide* initiatives that have been developed to engage local people and groups with Strangford Lough providing opportunities to explore our environment, landscape, heritage and traditions. *Turn O’ the Tide* is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ards Borough Council, Down District Council, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, and supported by The National Trust, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and the Strangford Lough Management Advisory Committee. The film can be viewed on our YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/actionmentalhealth>

## Jumble Sale!



In May, AMH Promote opened it’s doors for a Jumble Sale. Visitors had the chance to pick up bargains at the book stall, the bric a brack stall and the fashion stall! After a lot of shopping, visitors were able to relax with a cup of tea and a selection of goodies, made by our catering clients.

## The Green Team Volunteer down by the Lagan



**The Green Team from Belfast New Horizons have been taking part in the Project “Laganscape” whilst volunteering in the Lagan Valley Regional Park.**

Since the project began, over 2,000 oak trees have been planted, over 100 bird boxes built and erected to make the area more attractive to a wide range of bird species, wildflowers have been surveyed, local people have been trained as heritage guides and a lock chamber of the historic Lagan Canal has been restored, along with its Lock Keeper’s Cottage.

Laganscape made it through to the semi-finals of the National Lottery Good Causes Awards. It was the only environmental project in Northern Ireland to do so but unfortunately was pipped to the post by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust based in Stirling.

## AMH PROMOTE

Alerting locals to Learn Disability

**In June AMH Promote officially launched the Life Alert project. The project “Life Alert” began about three years ago to raise awareness of Learning Disability within the local community. Who better to raise awareness than those with learning disabilities, speaking about the problems and difficulties they face to a range of audiences including, school children, teachers, student social workers, District Policy Partnerships, local councillors, and more recently new citizen advocates.**

The group consists of Martin Mahood, Hilary Gammon, Louise McBride, Alan Webster, Josie Morton and Sarah Johnston. They are all supported by Elizabeth Lightbody (Bryson House Advocacy Service).

Working in partnership with the PSNI and in particular Ken Butler, “Life Alert” made its debut at South Eastern Regional College in Bangor, and since then the group have grown in confidence.

Some of the topics covered have included the range of difficulties our clients can face in their community in particular, bullying, housing issues, and accessing community services. They have also helped their audiences understand their disability and what it is like to have a Learning Disability. They have talked about how the community can help them and what upsets them. Our clients have discussed equal opportunities and how



they want to have the same rights as everyone else, for instance, the chance to go to college.

The Group has put together a “Life Alert” wallet to be handed out when they visit businesses, shops and centres. Posters have been distributed to promote the project. So if someone presents a “Life Alert” wallet to you, please take a moment to read the information, everyone should feel valued and part of their own community. Everyone deserves respect and understanding.

**You can contact the Life Alert group at AMH Promote T 028 9127 5953.**



# Northgate Staff Offer Support at AMH New Horizons

**Volunteers collaborate with staff and clients to improve our service.**

**Newtownabbey-based Northgate Managed Services was the first company to take part in a community volunteering initiative with Business in the Community (BITC) and AMH New Horizons, Belfast.**

A team of 15 from Northgate visited the Duncrue unit during the summer, as part of BITC's Cares Challenge, working together with clients to improve the front and back garden areas, recreation room and bistro, creating pleasant settings for AMH staff and clients to meet and train. In addition, the perfect opportunity was created to share some basic advice about employability skills and tips for re-entering the work place.



## KEY MOMENTS IN IRISH HISTORY COURSE

**In September some of our clients from AMH New Horizons Downpatrick, began a 10 week history course in Down County Museum, one morning a week. The tutor was Cathal McManus from Queens University, Belfast.**

Beginning with the arrival of Christianity to Ireland, students were introduced to St Patrick, Brian Boru, Strongbow, King William of Orange, Henry Grattan, Wolfe Tone, The United Irishmen, Daniel O'Connell, the Great Famine, Young Ireland and the Fenians, Charles Stewart Parnell, Edward Carson and James Craig, Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme!

## Minding Me

*Minding Me* is a personal development programme which aims to raise self esteem, increase self-confidence and help clients to cope better with stress.

The programme was held in Down County Museum, Downpatrick, between July and September. Organised by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and funded by Community Direct, the programme was attended by clients from AMH New Horizons, Downpatrick.

## FERMANAGH LEADS THE WAY FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME



**A new 5 year programme for young people in Fermanagh was launched at an event attended by Arlene Foster MLA.**

AMH is one of the partners in the programme which will challenge stigma and promote ways of improving the mental health and well-being of young people.

## Antrim New Horizons Celebration

**In July AMH New Horizons in Antrim held their awards ceremony.** Special guests were AMH Patrons Lynda Bryans and Lady McCollum. 113 clients were awarded a total of 199 certificates.

## Farewell to Ian Walters



**In September we bid farewell to our Chief Executive Ian Walters after 8 ½ years.**

Tributes were lead by Chairman Billy Kohner who thanked Ian for his dedication and service to AMH. We welcomed our new Chief Executive David Babington.



# A Morning of Celebration for AMH New Horizons

In October AMH New Horizons Craigavon & Banbridge held their annual award ceremony. This event takes place every year in the week of World Mental Health Day, and this year they also celebrated obtaining the Government’s prestigious Customer Service Excellence Award.

With an audience of special guests including Deputy Mayor Of Craigavon Borough Council, Cllr Kieran Corr; Fionnuala McAndrew, NI Health & Social Care Board, Director of Social Care and Children; AMH Chief Executive David Babington; Ian Sutherland Southern HSC Trust, Assistant Director of Mental Health Services; AMH staff and family and friends; certificates were presented to those who successfully completed courses in a variety of subjects ranging from horticulture, personal development, business administration, information technology and occupational skills.



## MENTAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT



**AMH Action Mental Health held their Annual Tughan Lecture to observe Mental Health Day at Malone House. The Tughan Lecture was established in memory of a founder of AMH, Fredrick Charles Tughan, CBE, and is sponsored by the Tughan Trust.**

Our speaker this year was Professor Bob Grove. Bob is Joint Chief Executive of the Centre for Mental Health in London. He has written widely on disability and employment issues. The title of the lecture was *“Mental Health and Employment – putting evidence into policy and into practice.”*

1 in 6 of us will suffer some form of mental illness at some point in our lives, it can strike anybody at any time and it can be even more devastating when it forces us to

take a lengthy absence from work. Yet work is not only central to most people’s lives, it has also been shown to have a positive effect on mental health. Work provides us with an opportunity to put some routine and stability into our lives and to regain our sense of self-esteem. Research has found that four out of ten unemployed people have mental health problems but many would like a job.

Bob began talking about the evidence of what works, **“We know from international experience and research how to offer effective support to enable people with mental health problems to work. Large numbers of people have and can be supported to secure and maintain competitive employment through Individual Placement and Support (IPS). IPS has seven key principles, each of which is needed for the service to work well. They include focusing on paid employment of an individual’s choice, not sheltered work or lengthy job preparation, and support that continues once the**

**person gets a job and that is provided together with clinical care and welfare benefits advice.”** Bob then continued by referring to a number of trials which have taken place throughout the world. It is clear that IPS is effective. Bob appealed to those decision makers in the audience, **“Supporting people with mental health problems into employment should be a top priority for health and social care providers and commissioners.”**

Bob talked about the South West London & St George’s Mental Health Trust – who have adopted the IPS approach and have produced positive results. However there are still barriers which need to be overcome. Employment is still not considered a priority for mental health services, or seen as a realistic goal for people who have experienced mental health problem.

Bob left the audience with a lot to consider and think about, he ended the lecture by acknowledging the work of AMH. The opportunity to work is recognised by

AMH as an integral part of recovery and of treatment for mental ill health. AMH through our Employment Programmes, have been helping people along the road to recovery from mental ill health back into the workplace for many many years. In the current economic climate this is proving particularly difficult, but we continue to form strong relationships with local employers who support our work and we continue to give our clients the skills and the self belief that they can work and they can compete in the job market.

For more information about Bob’s work see [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk)

You can watch the Tughan Lecture on our YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/actionmentalhealth>

World Mental Health Day is a global mental health education project of the World Federation for Mental Health and is commemorated in over 100 countries each year on 10 October.



## AMH New Horizons Belfast Recognises Achievement

**A certificate presentation was held in early November to celebrate the key successes of our Belfast clients over the course of the past year. The event was well attended by local employment representatives, mental health professionals and community organisations.**

Mr Pat McCartan, Chairman of Belfast Health and Social Care Trust presented some of the 110 certificates reflecting accredited training achievements in areas such as Catering, IT, Retail, and Administration. Achievements were also recognised in accredited personal development training, including Healthy Living, Digital Photography, Cooking for a Healthy Lifestyle and Developing Personal Confidence.

## Well2 launch

Well 2 was launched in October – an innovative project to help improve the lives of people with disabilities and mental health issues across the South Eastern Trust area. Funded by the Big Lottery, AMH is in partnership with Autism NI, Cedar Foundation and South Eastern HSC Trust.

## World Suicide Prevention Day

AMH Attended an event in Newcastle, to mark World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September.



# LAUNCH OF WEBSITE



In October we unveiled our new website:  
[www.amh.org.uk](http://www.amh.org.uk)

# Managing Mental Health in The Workplace

In November, AMH Action Mental Health, held a conference focusing on Managing Mental Health in the Workplace in the Canal Court Hotel in Newry. The conference revealed that stress in the workplace costs UK industry £100 billion per year. Over 70 companies were represented.

Speaking at the conference were Dr Mike Smith, a mental health professional with 26 years international experience and his colleague Marion Aslan, a Director of Crazydiamond Mental Health Training and Consultancy. Each gave informative presentations on the effect of poor mental health on their lives and discussed how employers can raise awareness of mental health issues in the workplace.

Dr Smith talked about the range of issues that employers face, “many employers are concerned about bringing up the

issue of mental health with an employee because of the stigma attached. There is also the question of boundaries. Many feel inadequate to provide the necessary support, due to their lack of knowledge, the fear of making matters worse, or a fear of litigation”. He went on to tell the audience that, “By attending this conference you are sending out a message to your staff that you are interested in their mental well-being and demonstrating your willingness to learn about your responsibilities”.

Also discussed was the need for those suffering from poor mental health to become involved in the world of work and how important this is to their future well-being.

The conference was a great success with many commenting that they found the presentations and workshops to be “very inspirational”, “very enjoyable”, “worthwhile and engaging”, and “thought provoking”.

This event was supported by Department of Employment & Learning and The European Social Fund.



# PULL UP A SEAT FOR MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2010

Local mental health organisations from the Newtownards area including AMH New Horizons organised a ‘Stress Free Day’ event at Ards Shopping Centre and Bloomfield Shopping Centre to raise awareness for World Mental Health Day on the 10th October.

# Inspirational’ Film Project Focuses on Downpatrick

AMH New Horizons Downpatrick proudly premiered a movie made by its clients, focusing on the changing face of Downpatrick from the 50’s to the 80’s at the Eclipse Cinema. The film, called ‘Downpatrick, Life in the 1950s - 1980s’, was made entirely by clients of AMH New Horizons, Downpatrick, had its premier in December, marking the culmination of five months’ work.

The film, features interviews with local civic leaders such as Maurice Hayes, and well known local characters. Joanna Miskelly of Action Mental Health said that she was immensely proud of the film, “The clients were responsible for directing, producing and interviewing the local characters who feature in the film. The final piece is a credit to their hard work and dedication. This project has been a real inspiration to those involved, and we look forward to rolling out the red carpet this Thursday evening.”

The film has been supported and funded by the PEACE III Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and delivered by the North Down, Ards and Down District Council cluster. The community history project organised by Down County Museum and the Somme Heritage Centre has seen 20 community groups from Down, North Down and Ards engaging in a series of educational activities designed to



promote greater understanding of local culture and traditions and enhance awareness of cultural identity and diversity in the region. The clients wanted to do something which they could be directly involved in, which was going to challenge them and which would also be fun!

Joanna said the project grew from there, “Initially we were going to look at one decade in the history of Downpatrick, but as we examined them individually, it was evident there had been quite a bit of change, so the clients thought that it would be more interesting to look at Downpatrick from the 1950’s - 80’s and in doing so, see how it has changed. Clients thought that interviewing characters who had actually lived and worked in the town during this period would give us a ‘birdseye’ view of how the town was and how it has changed over the years.”



# AMH Manifesto 2011 Launch



David Babington, CEO AMH and Alastair Campbell

**At the launch of our Manifesto we called on the Executive to let the community and voluntary sector do what they do best, provide high quality, life-changing services, in a cost effective manner. We also called on the public sector to lead by example in relation to mental health in the workplace by helping eliminate the stigma attached to mental health problems, and to take the lead in helping people who have mental health issues return to the workplace through work placements and training programmes.**



Jim Wells MLA

Since 1963, Action Mental Health has focused on the link between work and good mental health and believe that finding you have “something to give” as well as seeking help, is central to building self esteem and this is at the heart of recovery. Chief Executive David Babington, speaking at Stormont at the launch of the organisation’s manifesto said that whilst the private sector has engaged well in recent times, the public sector needs to open itself up in the same manner.

“Work is not only central to most people’s lives; it has also been shown to have a positive effect on mental health. AMH deliver training programmes and support work based training and employment placements with a view to helping our clients re-enter the workforce, helping more than 1,700 people each year. We have developed very positive links with many businesses in the private sector, but the largest employer in Northern Ireland, the public sector needs to engage further than it has to date.

With the cooperation of the public sector, these schemes could be extended at little cost, with huge benefit both to the people involved and to the wider economy.”

The call for positive engagement from the public sector comes at a time when the impact of the recession on AMH services is already being felt, with an increase in referrals to its services. Many of the effects of the recession – repossessions, money problems and unemployment – are well known triggers for mental health problems. The belief among social care, NHS and voluntary sector organisations is that this demand will only continue to increase. A recent report, issued by the University of Ulster, outlined that Northern Ireland has one of the highest incidences of mental illness in the developed world.

Further research by the University of Ulster has shown that out-sourcing day-services to AMH has saved DEL and the Health and Social Care Trusts almost £7.5m in the past three years. AMH programmes can reduce the impact on acute mental health services. Their services also allow people to overcome mental illness and go back to work, reducing economic inactivity and the welfare burden on the state.

The Manifesto document outlines AMH’s ideas on how to develop mental health provision in Northern Ireland, including how voluntary and community organisations, such as AMH can help to develop service provision. The document outlines serious concerns regarding how proposed cuts to services will impede work being done whilst cases of mental illness are rising considerably.

The document calls for three sensible, achievable outcomes:

**1. Help us sustain our future**  
Uncertainty about funding makes it impossible to plan for the future and to determine what level of services AMH can provide to some of the most vulnerable people in society. We need secure and certain funding streams to continue to deliver vital services. Give us that certainty and help us sustain our future.

**2. Let us do what we do best**  
Action Mental Health can provide life-changing services to people with mental health difficulties in a professional and cost-effective way. Let AMH do what it does best in supporting the recovery of people with mental health and learning disability needs.

**3. Lead by example**  
The public sector, including Government Departments, needs to lead by example in promoting positive mental health at every opportunity. They need to lead the charge in combating stigma, putting in place Mental Health awareness programmes and policies in the workplace and offering work placements to people with mental health needs.

At the event, the audience heard moving stories from people who are recovering from mental health problems, and being supported back to work by Action Mental Health.

The event, co-hosted by Jim Wells MLA and Dolores Kelly MLA, was also attended by Ministers Arlene Foster, Michelle Gildernew, Danny Kennedy, Caitríona Ruane and Gerry Kelly and more than 30 MLAs. Alastair Campbell, former Director of Communications for Tony Blair, also stopped by to lend his support.

A copy of the Manifesto can be downloaded from our website, where you can also view photos of the event and a video of the speeches.



Pat Ramsay MLA, Martina Anderson MLA, Mickie Harkin AMH Foyle, David Babington, CEO AMH, Raymond McCartney MLA





## VOTE'S YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS WIN BEST PRODUCT

**Ten trainees from AMH Vote have been developing their entrepreneurial skills by taking part in the Young Enterprise Northern Ireland Team programme.**

The group came up with the company name "Gifted", choosing the name because not only were they making and selling giftware, but also because each member brought their own unique and individual gifts to the team.

This programme aims to help students understand the world of work and business and has given the Vote team an opportunity to learn various skills including working as a team,

dealing with money, communications, interview techniques and confidence building.

They have attended two trade fairs. In December at The Outlet in Banbridge they sold a selection of hand-made products including Christmas Logs, Christmas Cards and holly bunches. The team were presented with an award for "Best Product". On the run-up to Valentines Day, Gifted created and sold a new selection of handmade products including "flower love pots", love pebbles and Valentine's cards at Rushmere Shopping centre.

Gifted then put together their business plan report for the next stage of the Young Enterprise NI programme and attended the 2011 Team Programme Regional Competition Interview Day in Moy Park, Craigavon.

## ACTION MENTAL HEALTH LOBBY MINISTER ON DRASTIC FUNDING CUTS

**In January Action Mental Health met with Minister for Employment and Learning, Danny Kennedy to lobby him on the impact of cuts to European Social Funding which is managed by his department. In December, AMH was informed that its European Social Fund support would be cut by 25%, coming into force almost immediately.**

Speaking after the meeting, which took place in Newry, in the Minister's Constituency, Action Mental Health Chief Executive David Babington said he had met the Minister at an Action Mental Health site in Newry to explain to him the impact the cuts would have on his own doorstep,

**"The recent 25% reduction in European Social Fund funding is devastating for Action Mental Health, and for the people who depend on the services we provide. These people are among the most vulnerable in our society. The manner of the cuts, with little lead in time, and no opportunity to prepare will leave the organisation with no option but to cut front line services and staff. This is particularly baffling when Action Mental Health was highly commended in its recent application for providing excellent for money in a service which actually delivers an acknowledged, high quality service."**

Mr Babington said that the Minister had listened to the points raised at the meeting and praised the work which takes place in the constituency and across Northern Ireland. He undertook to examine the funding issue and to come back in the near future with clarification of the situation.





# Recognising AMH Volunteers



**A special volunteer recognition event was held in AMH New Horizons North Down & Ards, in this the European Year of Volunteering. Special guests included; Cllr David Smyth, Mayor of North Down; Peter Weir MLA; Wendy Osbourne, CEO Volunteer Now; Sonya Duffy, Volunteer Manager with the South Eastern Trust and David Babington CEO AMH.**

The event was held to raise awareness of the benefits of volunteering to individuals and the host organisations. Three clients talked about their placements and encouraged other clients to volunteer. A total of 25 clients

received certificates from Peter Weir MLA, to acknowledge the commitment they have shown to volunteering and the immense benefits they have received by participating in the scheme. Representatives from 20 of the host

organisations also received certificates in recognition of their valued contribution to volunteering and a small gesture of thanks from AMH.

**“Before volunteering at The Link I had no self worth - but being there and helping other people has given so much to me and has built up my confidence and self esteem.”**  
Mandy Green, Catering Assistant, The MARC Project

**“Being with other people is very important to me and to my mental health and I have got great satisfaction from helping others. The experience that I have gained at Bayview will help me move forward in my chosen career.”**  
Frances Davies, Craft Tutor, Bayview Resource Centre


**“Volunteering in the library has given structure and purpose to the my day which I didn’t have before. It also gives me a chance to interact with a wide range of people of all ages which I enjoy immensely. I am much more confident around people now.”**  
Gwyneth Lines, Library Assistant, SERC library.

**“The staff at ASDA don’t treat me any differently because I’m a client from New Horizons. I was really touched recently when I was ill and the staff sent me a get well card - it really made me feel part of the team. Doing the placement has been so good and I am looking forward to returning to the workplace permanently.”**  
Catherine Rankin, Shop Worker, ASDA & Photography Tutor U3A

AMH would like to thank the following organisations who have supported client placements:  
Action Cancer, Age Concern, Ards Citizens Advice Bureau, ASDA, Assisi Animal Sanctuary, Ballymacconnell Nursing Home, Bayview Resource Centre, Beacon House, Boots the Chemist, Café Manor, Cancer Connect, Daisies Café, Growing Connections, Jigsaw NI, Kiltonga Christian Centre, Lazy Daisies, North Down Motor Factors, Volunteer Now, Oxfam, Praxis Care, Rathgill Community Association, Re:Store, Redburn/Loughview Forum, Simon Community, South Eastern Regional College, The British Heart Foundation, The Link, The MARC Project, The National Trust, U3A, Ulster Cancer Foundation, Volunteer Now, Volunteer Services SE Trust and Youth for Christ.

## No Smoking

The 9th March was National No Smoking Day which aims to help people quit the habit.



With the right NHS support, people are four times more likely to succeed. AMH New Horizons in Newtownards held an event to give advice and encouragement to those who were considering giving up!

The event was attended by Kenny Graham from Boots the Chemist who had lots of advice and tips and Mr Stubbs! A number of clients are determined to give up smoking and we wish them luck!

## Arlene Foster MLA Visits AMH New Horizons Fermanagh



**At the end of March, AMH New Horizons in Fermanagh welcomed Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment to their unit in Drumcoo.**

The Minister had a chance to meet with people in her constituency who are living with mental illness and find out more about the services available at AMH which are helping clients on the road to recovery and a better future.

Arlene enjoyed seeing around the unit, hearing about the courses on offer, and the difference AMH is making to peoples’ lives. The visit ended with lunch, which was prepared by clients who are training for catering qualifications.

## Social Media

You can now follow us on:



For more information and contact details visit

[www.amh.org.uk](http://www.amh.org.uk)



European Union  
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people skills jobs



Department for  
Employment and Learning  
[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)



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