

JOURNAL of the
INTERNATIONAL
TELEMENTOR
PROGRAM

Telementor

MAXIMIZING YOUTH POTENTIAL™

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CARING MENTORS such as HP's Morgan Sumners make a big difference in the lives of the students with which they work.

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10 Questions for ...

Trish Parker-Palmer

Trish is a mentor from Hewlett-Packard's Americas Technical Services, Solution Design & Implementation team.



■ How'd you first get involved with Telementoring?

When ITP Founder David Neils was starting the program and still an HP employee, messages came through our email and it sounded like fun.

■ What prompted you to want to be involved?

Since I work full time and have a family, my volunteer time is limited. This program gives me a big

“bang for my buck” since I can integrate writing messages into my work day fairly easily.

■ **What are some recent highlights you've had being a mentor?** I really do enjoy the students messages. I recently had a student that wrote a paragraph and sent it to me. I proofread it, suggested some major changes and she agreed with all of them. The finished product was 100% better than the rough draft.

■ **What's the real value of the ITP?** I truly believe it takes a village to raise a child. In the 21st century, the village now becomes virtual. We're not teachers or parents who are constantly in front of a student. We're helping with projects in a very non-threatening way. If the student doesn't agree with a mentor's message, they can simply delete it and move on. However, with college becoming increasingly competitive, it helps tremendously to have another set of eyes to look over projects and another brain to bring up new and fresh ideas on succeeding in school.

■ **What are some benefits you've experienced as a mentor?** A recent student said, “thanks, that really helped a lot!” What more can I ask for?

■ **What advice would you give to someone considering being a mentor?** There's a perception out there that this program takes a lot of time or would be too hard. Professionals believe they don't have time to participate with their busy lives. But I work full time, have two children and a husband who is in school, and I'm studying as well. Everyone has 20 minutes a day to help with this program. Who knows, maybe a relative of theirs will someday benefit from the program!

■ “Taking It to the Next Level” ... what do you have to say about telementoring and how it might do this?

Truth be told, I wish I had a telementor in high school to guide me through some tough educational spots. What if we could expand the program to give incoming freshman a telementor that could help them through their high school years with advise on education and college? What if that

I truly believe it takes a village to raise a child. In the 21st century, the village now becomes virtual.

mentor corresponded with them for more than six months; what if the mentor helped them through the *entire* high school experience? Maybe we could pool alumni from the same high school to further give advice on specific classes and teachers. Using the secure parameters set forth in this program, this may be a possibility someday.

■ **Your thoughts on education these days?** There is so much information out there with the virtual world we live in. I truly believe that if we are to work together in a global society, then we must educate all children in all countries, especially girls. This will help with poverty and disease as well. If children grow up in a learning environment, they will be much better prepared to make good decisions as adults.

■ **What skills should youth have and be able to demonstrate as an 18 year old in this country?** It should be mandatory for all 18 year-olds to go straight to college for at least two more years. This is a critical time in their life where they're perceived as an “adult” but may not have the skills they need to move forward in a positive way. Even though turning 18 means you're a legal adult, it doesn't mean that you're prepared to act like one.

■ **What perspective do you have on this program from a parent point of view?** I enjoy sharing my children's successes and pitfalls with other parents in order to get better ideas on how to handle specific situations. I share because I know other parents are experiencing the same things as I am, and I believe together we can come up with creative ideas on how to raise children. I know I don't have all the answers. If it were a secure and monitored program like this one to protect my child from predators, then I would welcome a mentor for my child to come up with even more creative ideas.

Cathey's Joy

BY VICTOR RIVERO



◀ CATHEY CAREY is a proud and dedicated high school teacher at Airline High in Bossier City, La. who allows her students to flourish. Emma and mom Lisa stand near one of Emma's masterpieces. Emma is also a writer and fashion designer.

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU KNOW who have worked in the same field for 26 years and are as excited about what they do today as the day they started? After 26 years as a special education teacher, Cathey Carey remains remarkably exuberant in her attitude toward her job. "I love working with high school students!" she says.

Cathey teaches study skills in a resource setting at Airline High School in Bossier City, La. She's taught high school students for 24 of the 26 years. She also taught one year in elementary school and one year in middle school. "Yes, I chose to major in special education while I was in college because I have a passion for teaching students with disabilities," she says.

Last term was Cathey's first experience with both the

Telementoring program itself and Sean Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* book, accompanied by a student/mentor project. "It was a positive experience for those students, so I decided to do it with this class second term."

However, from Cathey's perspective, "I have worked with students who have a variety of *abilities* and exceptionalities, in various class settings: self-contained, resource, and full-inclusion classes, to name a few," she says.

"The degree of the disability and its affect on the individual varies by student. Most of my students receive services because we provide accommodations and support to assist them in their regular education classes." In listening to her it is evident that Cathey cares very deeply about every one of her students. ►

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“Helping them to realize their potential, to reach their goals, and to guide them in their steps toward a fulfilling life after high school has been my joy,” she says.

What Telementoring Does to a Classroom

Always incorporating what she finds to be workable techniques into her classroom, Cathey discovered the benefits of telementoring.

One of Cathey’s students, Aaron, a senior, decided to take a math class this term at the local community college through the dual-enrollment program.

“Before the telementor project, he wasn’t planning to attend college,” says Cathey. “He was able to come to this decision as a result of activities from the book that we completed in class and from the feedback provided by his mentor.”

Always incorporating what she finds to be workable techniques into her classroom, Cathey discovered the benefits of telementoring.

Another student, Emma, with dreams of becoming an author and illustrator of children’s books, entered a short work of fiction with an illustration in the Young Author’s Contest. Only one entry from each grade level and genre was chosen to represent their school at the parish level. “This student’s entry was chosen! I recently heard that her entry won at the Parish level for her grade level and genre,” says Cathey, adding that the entry is going on to represent their parish at the state competition.

“Through the activities completed from this project, this student was free to share thoughts with her mentor that she is not able to share verbally. The written communication between the two of them gave her insight and focus. Her mentor provided sound and positive advice. It was a very rewarding project for this young lady,” says Cathey.

Patrick, a senior who is planning on a career as a nano engineer, was able to make some early connections within the Cyberspace Innovation Center and the engineering department at Louisiana Tech. He will be attending school there next fall. “His mentor challenged this young man’s ideas and insisted that he not only support them, but that he be accurate in his correspondence,” Cathey explains. He enjoyed the challenge of working with a mentor who is an engineer and a mathematician. Patrick says, “I found it very enjoyable working with someone who could understand my philosophical thinking patterns. My mentor was someone I could talk to who was on my level of thinking.”

Philip had aspirations of being an elementary teacher. “He’s helpful, kind, and caring to everyone,” says Cathey. “He was able to come to the realization that his personal strengths and interests would be a perfect fit in a career as a personal care attendant. This is something that had not occurred to him before this project. He’s now focusing on a very achievable goal and couldn’t be more excited!” Cathey says that this discovery was made as his mentor and teacher guided him through ‘Habit 6’ (out of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* project) and he worked on his *synergy action plan*. “Writing, editing and then sharing this concrete plan with his mentor was the key,” says Cathey.

In fact, Cathey Carey’s class is full of talented and energetic young people who have so much to offer. “Stressing the word *abilities* when speaking of my students is no accident! What mentors are doing here can be so valuable to them. Thank you for giving your time and energy to my students through this project. You are a special group of people yourselves,” says Cathey.

A Mentor’s Perspective

She first heard about telementoring through a co-worker’s email. After talking with that co-worker and reading more about it on the ITP website, Dawn Baumbach began reading through profiles of students not yet matched with a mentor. It was then she decided to get involved and happened upon Cathey

Carey's class. "I picked a student that had similar interests to my own children," says Dawn. "She even had the same name as my youngest daughter. Since then, I've always picked a student with whom I share similar interests."

It wasn't long before Dawn selected Emma. In picking a student, a mentor never knows exactly how things might go. "Emma was fantastic! Of all of the students that I've mentored so far (probably six to eight students), she has been — by far — the most fun to talk to," Dawn says. "We had similar interests, and that's always a good ice breaker. We seemed to click right away. Even on the project, we always had similar answers to the weekly topics and questions." What's more, shares Dawn, "Emma is extremely bright, motivated, and articulate."

In fact, as Dawn recalls, "I don't think that we had any challenges, *per se*. The only one was, I would have *loved* to see some of Emma's drawings. I was able to get a copy of the story that she submitted to a contest from her teacher. That was very nice of her. At one point, I thought that Emma was having a hard time, but I spoke with the telementor staff, and her teacher -- and they assured me that there was nothing to worry about, just that Emma was a bit over-dramatic, or over-zealous in a few of her postings.

Overall, says Dawn, "Emma is bright, she is smart. She cares deeply about her career goals. She already knows what she wants to do, and I'm very sure that she will succeed at becoming an author and illustrator. She cares about her family — and about what they think of her. She may be a bit hard on herself — but I believe she is just pushing herself to achieve her goals."

In completing this exercise with Emma, Dawn hopes she is taking her life to the next level. "I hope that she's using some of the lessons that were taught in the book, and that she sticks with it -- things like the Baby Steps in each chapter."

Ultimately, working with Cathey Carey and her students was a great experience. "Ms. Carey is very caring. She was a pleasure to work with. And, as I had said above, Emma was fantastic. I wish all of the students I've mentored have been as enthusiastic as her. ►



A STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

What Emma Has to Say

Emma, an aspiring Writer/Illustrator/Fashion Designer, is a student in Cathey Carey's class. Here she shares a few of her thoughts on life, writing, and accomplishing her goals with help from her mentor.

- **What are your goals and dreams in life?** To be a children's author, illustrator, and a fashion designer.
- **How did you first hear about telementoring?** From a teacher in my second-block class.
- **How does telementoring help you with your goals and dreams?** It gave me confidence, and got me started in entering a writing contest.
- **What are some things you have learned from telementoring?** To get started on something and stick to it.
- **I hear you are quite a writer! Why do you like writing? What do you like to write about?** When I am writing, I can make up anything I want. I like to write about children, because then you can have them ask questions, and they can also think of things that are very surprising to others.
- **Anything else you care to share about your experience with your mentor?** My mentor and I, we really got to know each other, and it was fun talking about *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* book.
- **What would you tell other students about telementoring?** That you can be able to get advice from an experienced person about the grown-up world.
- **What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about getting a mentor?** To find someone who can be very good at giving advice.
- **Is there anything else you would like to say?** That the telementoring was fun!



CATHEY CAREY with two of her students at Airline High in Bossier City, La. where increasing one's abilities is key. Her students are discovering the true benefit that the International Telementor Program brings in helping them take real steps toward setting and achieving their goals now and after high school.

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I've been lucky so far -- I've only had one that didn't really want to get involved in the project. The program coordinators have been fantastic as well. They're quick to jump in when needed, to guide the mentor, and assist or offer advice."

"Seeing what she wrote gave me new insight into Emma. It was so rewarding to see Emma articulate her thoughts – it gave me a window into her soul. Of course, good writing tends to do that."

Does Dawn, in turn, have some advice for those considering entering the mentoring ranks? "I'd say, just do it. It's been very rewarding to me. I hope I'm making a connection with that student, and perhaps they'll remember me for years to come. I know that I'll remember many of my students."

A Mom's Perspective

Cathey Carey's class is not only filled with wonderful students and supportive mentors, but comes with many wonderful parents as well. Lisa Huber is Emma's mother, and offered to share her thoughts and insights regarding the ripple effects caused by the introduction of telementoring into her daughter's classroom.

How the ITP helped Emma toward her goals and dreams. "Emma has, as a direct result of the ITP, won a parish-wide writing contest. This has delighted her and been a boost to her self-esteem. The process that she undertook in the ITP of discovering her strengths, setting appropriate goals, refining them, identifying and implementing the steps necessary to reach these goals, and completing these steps has yielded direct and positive results. She now feels confident that writing is something she can do, and do well."

On the Value of Telementoring. "Telementoring gave Emma an opportunity to communicate with an adult

outside of her family in a positive and productive way. This communication strengthened her interpersonal skills, her writing skills and her analytical skills. I appreciate the kindness and encouragement that her mentor extended to Emma. Having a respected and trusted adult to consistently interact with, and who responds with such positive feedback is wonderful. I'm so grateful for Emma's telementor. Emma, like all teenagers, wants to be independent, and telementoring allowed her to develop and explore her independence in a supportive environment."

Benefits of the ITP for Parents. "I've very much been on the periphery of this project. Emma really took ownership of her participation in this and shared very little with me. She felt that it was a private and personal relationship, and regarded it as privileged communication. I respected that and did not press her for information. Because she did value that relationship so highly, she really formed a bond with her telementor. Fortunately, at the end of the project, she printed out the emails and shared them with me. That was a precious gift for me. These allowed me to see how Emma thinks and feels in ways that I can't assess otherwise.

What is Truly Powerful. "Emma struggles with spoken communication, and so even though she is willing, she has great difficulty communicating in a discussion setting. Reading the emails was enlightening and interesting. Emma has often written me notes when the idea of speaking overwhelms her, but seeing what she wrote in a sustained correspondence with another adult gave me new insight into Emma. It was so rewarding to see Emma articulate her thoughts — it gave me a window into her soul. Of course, good writing tends to do that.

Something to Treasure. "I cannot overstate the gratitude I feel for her telementor. I'm so appreciative of her time, effort, and compassion. We would all benefit from such a correspondent, and Emma has been privileged to have one. The ITP helped Emma with goal setting, writing, analysis, self-image, interpersonal skills, confidence, self-assessment, and clarity of purpose. Any parent would be thrilled to see these skills developing in their child. And any program that can promote these is worth its weight in gold." ■

Have you ever seen or heard of the
"10 Commandments of Attitudes"?

1. It is attitude, not aptitude, that governs success.
2. The purpose of existence is not to make a living, but to make a life.
3. A negative thought is the first step to failure.
4. You will seldom experience regret for anything you've done; it's what you don't do that will torment you.
5. Complaining is the self-refuge of those who will have no self-reliance.
6. The ultimate cost of something is that amount of life that you will exchange for it.
7. Anything the mind of man can conceive and believe, he can achieve.
8. A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.
9. The worst bankruptcy is the person who has lost enthusiasm.
10. Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent.

What do you think? Which ones do you find interesting and/or relevant to your life?

—recent message sent to an ITP student by
Sun Microsystems mentor Victor Cousins

Hi, My Name is Ryan Sanders

And I'm Not Kidding

BY RYAN SANDERS



She taught me that I could write in any way, shape or form. Even if I didn't want to.

◀ **RYAN SANDERS.** Alright, you probably get the point. Ryan's name is on this page five times. This picture of Ryan Sanders (six) shows him out in front of many of the world's countries as a writer of comedy.

MY NAME IS RYAN. I'm in ninth grade, and was just recently in the Telementor program. At first I really didn't think much about it. I wasn't even really sure what a *telementor* was. I imagined a Mexican spice commonly placed on tacos, or a fatal disease that plagues the southern reaches of Argentina. Of course, I soon realized that a telementor was neither edible nor lethal to the people of Argentina when I met Morgan, my telementor. Morgan was not only a talented teacher, but an entertaining one as well. For several years now I have wanted to be a writer, and Morgan and the Telementor program have helped me along the path. Not only did she thrill me with her own personal tales and knowledge, but she

allowed me more than enough time to tell her my own as well. Her sparkling personality and grand sense of humor kept me smiling throughout the whole program. She taught me that I could write in any way, shape, or form. Even if I didn't want to. Just kidding. Just kidding. Well, not really. But anyway, I greatly enjoyed being taught by her, and I am confident that this is only the first time you will see my writing in a magazine. I am writing an autobiography, thanks to Morgan's idea of chaining all my narratives together. I am also in the process of writing a fantasy novel with some of the fancy new words Morgan taught me through frequent use. Words like "Equestrian" and "Extraterrestrial" and "The" and "Toast" ☺

What Mentoring Means to Me

by Morgan Sumners, HP Mentor

When you take on the challenge of mentoring someone, you have a vague picture of what the experience may entail. After all, the very concept of being a mentor means passing on some of your skills, life experiences, a little bit of advice and, of course, offering encouragement and hope for their future. What nobody tells you, or perhaps never expects, is that you get all of these things and more in return.

No matter how much older, wiser, or more experienced you may be, there is always room to grow, improve, and be a better human being. I'm grateful and amazed at how this program has changed and challenged me to be a better person. It doesn't matter that the kids you interact with are young; they have wide open minds and hearts and unique perspectives on life. I believe that everyone we meet has something to teach us, whether we are conscious of it at the time or not.



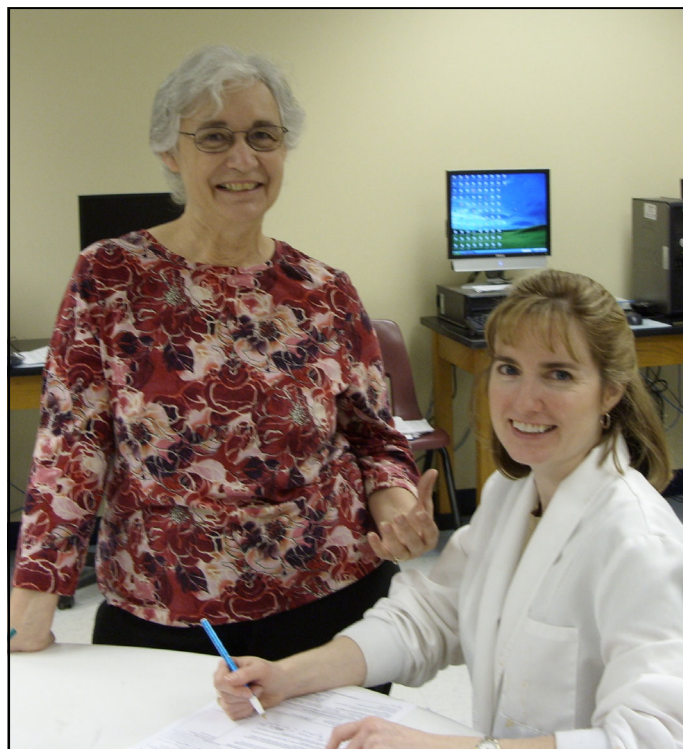
Working with Ryan has given me confidence in the future of our young people and has shown me that age does not necessarily equate to wisdom.

Working with Ryan has given me confidence in the future of our young people and has shown me that age does not necessarily equate to wisdom. His exceptional talents as a writer and his creative manner of thinking are far ahead of his 14 years. His sense of humor has kept me laughing for the last several months and I feel fortunate to have known him and have been a part of Telementoring.

Telementoring -- what a great concept! Kudos to David Neils and his staff, and all of the teachers, mentors and students willing to participate. Each match brings its own type of reward; the difficulty comes in having to say goodbye after being involved in these kids' lives, and their hopes and dreams for their futures. You will not ever regret offering your time and your own personal experiences to the students in this program. It's worth it in ways you could never predict. ■

◀ MORGAN SUMNERS, a mentor from Hewlett Packard, with friend Lexi.

■ MENTORING GEMS



▲ **RATIONAL CHOICES.** Ryan's teacher, Elaine Bradford (left) consults with chemistry teacher Susan Rogers to discuss the progress of a student who is pursuing her interest in medicine by taking a college course in medical terminology. Throughout her career, Elaine has helped hundreds of students make rational choices about the future.

The Value of a Few Important Directions

BY ZAC BURSON

Students who are informed, connected, and engaged create and implement education plans that effectively leverage their strengths and abilities. The teachers, parents, and students mentioned in this issue understand that people must develop sound plans and then act on them.

Cathey and Emma's mother have seen Emma beginning to recognize and develop her unique talents. They have encouraged Emma to pursue her interest in writing and the arts, and invested in those strengths by

connecting with authentic audiences who evaluated her stories and artwork.

Knowing that Ryan was comfortable with his unbridled writing style, Elaine Bradford, Ryan's teacher and Morgan teamed to help Ryan begin to develop the discipline to rein in his urge to gallop from story fragment to story fragment. He has collaborated with a professional writer, now he must further engage other respected writers and readers to review his work. He has stories to write, and people to contact.

Most adults would never accuse high school students of planning too carefully, and a recent set of experiments gives evidence of the all too human desire to strike out without being fully informed and acting without a plan. In his book, *Predictably Irrational*, MIT professor Dan Ariely sounds a note of caution for those of us working to help students make good choices about the future.

In one set of experiments involving a computer simulation, subjects chose among three animated doors. Behind each door were cash rewards of varying cash values, and each participant had 100 mouse clicks with which to accumulate cash rewards. The values behind each door were different and one could find the door that had the highest reward and accumulate a large sum by clicking efficiently in the right room.

However, by clicking among rooms and searching for higher rewards in other rooms, subjects wasted clicks. Ariely next presented subjects three doors which, when unchosen, began to shrink and disappear from the screen over time unless the subject clicked on them. Students still chose among doors with varying values. The urge to maintain the option to choose all three doors resulted in subjects abandoning the rooms they were in as they attempted to prevent a door from leaving the screen.

In keeping all of the doors open, participant cash rewards were 15 percent lower than they would have been had they chosen the investigated to find

the door hiding the best room and clicked their 100 clicks in that room.

His experiments examined the overwhelming desire that humans seem to have to “keep their options open,” and the consequent diminution in the number of “good choices” was significant.

The American education system is nothing if not choice filled, students choose majors and create plans and choose electives. However, my recent experiences have led me to believe that there is a tipping point at which this proliferation of choices can add to as much anxiety as the paucity of choices that face those who have few options. I sometimes hear from parents that their children don’t know what path they want to pursue after high school, but that they will “figure it out after a few years.”

The finding that is most intriguing for me is that students failed to invest in the choice they had made. No student wanted to have chosen the wrong door, so they chose to not invest in their decisions by jumping to new options. After all, these decisions weren’t based on a thorough investigation or any suggestions from coaches who had faced similar choices.

We want students to choose the right door, and then get the support and encouragement they need to spend time in that room. We want them to invest in their choices and not spend their time clicking while their rewards diminish. We hope that we are providing students with the chance to interact with successful adult professionals who have made tough choices and made a commitment to them.

The hundreds of active ITP volunteers possess many gifts. They work for world class companies. Almost all have had success at the college and university levels. Some overcame great obstacles to attain an education. Many have had exciting personal successes outside of their professional triumphs. Running in marathons, climbing mountains, helping the homeless, and tutoring students.

However, don’t think these volunteers are randomly choosing “doors,” in pursuit of some great and esoteric reward for extreme athleticism or altruism. Rather, in so many messages it becomes clear that

Because mentors know what their gifts are and because they use them well, they have incredible networks of support to share with our students.

these people understand the value of investing their time and talents and energy in a few important directions. No shrinking doors can distract them with diminishing options.

In fact, over the years, some of these mentors have written about why they are motivated to act in an altruistic manner. For some, it is a chance to repeat the behavior that a mentor of theirs did long ago, for others it is to do unto others as you would have had them do unto you. For still others, it is a sheer expression of gratitude for the presence of the opportunity to serve others.

In all cases, these mentors choose to serve, and they have the self knowledge and self-determination to participate fully in this particular mission. Because they know what their gifts are and because they use them well, they have incredible networks of support to share with our students. They are successfully engaged in their professional and personal lives, and when they click a mouse button and write to a student, they are acting on their plans! ■

Zac Burson’s Mentoring Gems appears regularly in Telementor. Zac welcomes feedback about this column or your own mentoring experiences. Drop him a line at: zac.burson@telementor.org

STUDENT SUCCESS



◀ RESERVOIR OF TALENT.

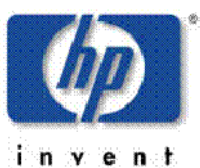
High school student Emma Huber is an aspiring children's book illustrator and author., and fashion designer. One of her many paintings is at left. "Emma is bright, she is smart," says her ITP mentor and HP employee Dawn Baumbach. "She cares deeply about her career goals. She already knows what she wants to do, and I'm very sure that she will succeed at becoming an author and illustrator." Emma is one of many talented and able students in Cathey Carey's class at Airline High School in Bossier City, La. benefitting from the help and encouragement of a mentor through the International Telementor Program. Read the full story, "Cathey's Joy," beginning on page 3 of this issue.

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