

SUMMER 2024



## The Precious Gift Event

Our annual event will be held on Sunday 22nd September at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR. All donor families and friends, recipients and families and anyone who is interested in our work is welcome to attend. There is no charge apart from car parking which can be pre-booked.

The Arboretum opens at 10 am, allowing for plenty of time to wander around the 400 memorials, including the Gift of Life memorial. Our event will start at 1pm in the Aspects Centre and end around 4pm. We will play music, listen to poems and hear the experiences of a donor family and a recipient. There is an opportunity for everyone to light a candle in memory of their loved one or donor. Following the event there will be tea and cake and time to meet other donor families and recipients. During the afternoon we show a rolling scroll of photographs to honour the donors. If you would like your loved one to be included please send a photograph with their full name. We also offer Certificates of Appreciation which include the donor's name. If you would like to receive one, please let us know when you book.

For catering purposes we need to have an idea of numbers, so please let us know if you are joining us and the number in your party, by the end of August.

This is an emotional event where we remember and honour those who have given the gift of life to others.

DONOR FAMILY NETWORK

CONNEXIONS

Registered charity  
1098781



The  
Gift of Life  
Memorial



We thank everyone who has kindly raised funds or made a donation to the Donor Family Network recently:

**Thank you to our regular donors:**

Patrick Gallagher

Darren Cox

Roger Quick

J Fletcher

Paul White

Keith Astbury

Pauline McDonnell

SJ Hall

A Heron

Esther Watt-Jones

**Donations have been gratefully received from:**

Trinity Methodist Church - coffee morning

Lancaster Priory Church Tuesday Group - following a talk given by recipient Nikki Detko  
Bird & Co Solicitors

Stephen Hancock - Organ Donation Ambassador who donated his speaker fees

M Fellows

Anthony Ogilvie

Rebecca Watts

Further donations have been received in memory of *Grahame Green*, who donated in October 2023.

Funeral donations in memory of David Richard Sheppard

Funeral donations in memory of Richard Charles Walbrin

City Centre Investments

James Burrough

UK Garrison Donate—Giger Media's chosen charity.

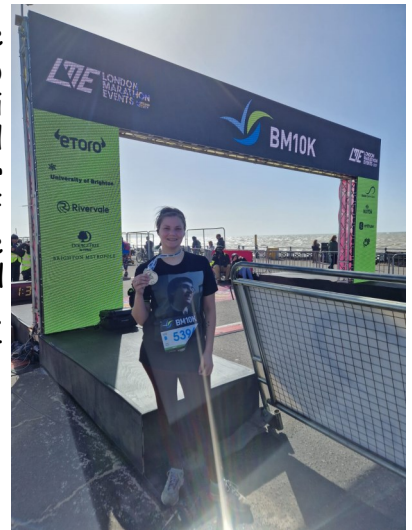


Recipient Nikki Detko continues to fund raise for us, following talks given on organ donation.

Abigail Whitehouse continues to raise funds in memory of Oliver who became an organ donor in January 2022.

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**Emma Greagsby** ran the Brighton Marathon in April to raise funds for the DFN, in loving memory of her brother who donated in March 2021, and says on her Just Giving page, "Hi all, my name is Emma and in March 2021 my big brother passed away but we found out that he was an organ donor. Donor Family Network is a wonderful charity who takes care of families who have lost a loved one but also remember the people who gave to others. It's a beautiful charity and without their support I don't know what my family would do. They remember the anniversary each year and send a card just to say they're thinking of us".



much  loved



Josephine Langmead is raising funds in memory of her mum **Jean Langmead**. Jean donated on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and her daughter says, "In line with her wishes Jean became an organ donor. We came away feeling uplifted and positive knowing that Jean had made an important difference and contributed to the lives of other people".



**Richard Walbrin**

A page has been created by Sarah, wife of Richard Walbrin, who passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024, aged 60 years. Richard was Sarah's much loved Husband, Father to John and Keith, Brother, Stepdad, Grandad and amongst all, great friend. Many treasured memories have been shared and the family say, "he will be forever missed by those who knew and loved him".



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*In*  
*Loving*  
*Memory*

**Donations received:**

Lesley O'Donaghue - daughter Debbie  
Hazel Howley - husband John  
Martin Smith - wife Christine  
Nigel & Sheila Chew- son David  
Rosemary & Vivienne Livingstone - Peter Livingstone  
Carol Thompson -sister Catherine Burns  
Miriam Evans- sister Rachel Few  
Margo Mitchell -husband Alan  
Norma & Errol Blanche- son Alan  
Kathryn Livingstone- David Sheppard  
Christine Hargreaves - granddaughter Zara Patel  
Judy Coutinho- son Alex  
Jim & Linda Fallow- son Iain  
Pauline Holmes- son Russell  
William Campbell -wife Wendy  
Liz Foster - husband Michael  
Diana & Charlii Leadbetter- Ian Leadbetter  
Renzo Giovannini- son Luca  
Maddy and Paddy Forking - son Brendon

**Our grateful thanks go to all those who have kindly donated to the charity and supported others in their fund-raising activities. Your generosity allows us to continue with our work supporting donor families.**

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## Sing out loud choir

DFN member Louise Blackburn remembers her brother David:

"David was only 42 when he died. He was told in December 2023 that he had a brain tumour. Up until then he had been working at Hotel Du Vin as a porter and before that was well known around Birmingham working as a cellar man in various pubs and being the keg man at the Moseley Folk Festival. He was a friendly, well known man much loved across the rock music scene.

In March he underwent a 16 hour operation for a brain tumour. Ten days post recovery he very shockingly suffered a cardiac arrest and stroke and went into a coma. After 19 days we were told that he was not going to recover.

Whilst we prepared to say goodbye we were informed that, unbeknownst to us, David had registered as an organ donor on the 5/1/24, our dads birthday. This was just after he had been told he would need a large operation.

It seemed entirely unthinkable to go against his brave choice and so like David we bravely carried on for another day as preparations were made. Davids kidneys and liver saved three people and his heart has been used as a tissue donation".

"I work as a choir and workshop leader and had booked an event to take place over 12 months ago. I decided to carry on with the event and use it as a fundraiser and also to raise awareness about organ donation and the Donor Family Network. Over 50 people took part in the event and we were joined by DFN Trustee Audrey Wheeler who even enjoyed a sing herself.

David chose to gift people with life, a selfless act with no reward for himself. Truly a testament to the lovely, kind, beautiful man that he was. We will miss him everyday. We are proud of the donation that was raised in his name at his funeral and this event. The Donor Family Network have been a huge support to us in the darkest time of our lives".



## Wigan Warriors

Three organ Donor Ambassadors and two DFN family members attended Wigan Warriors wheelchair rugby matches on Saturday 29th June. The Wigan team wore the organ donor awareness tee-shirts while they warmed up, prior to starting their matches. Photographs were taken to raise awareness of the importance of talking to your family about being on the Organ Donor register. The photographs will be displayed in Robin Park Arena Leisure centre, Wigan.



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## Trustee activity

Over the last few months, the Trustees have been very busy attending meetings, seminars, committees, exhibitions and Order of St John Award ceremonies.

Several of the Trustees, and indeed some of our members, sit on Organ Donation Committees at their local hospital trust which meet regularly. They have also attended regional collaborative meetings for these committees. There have been the usual periodical meetings of the Donor Family Advisory Group and the Donor Family Care Service. The charity is regularly asked to be part of other research and advisory groups where the voice and experience of Donor Families is very much sought.

Ambassadors for NHS Blood and Transplant have attended events across the country promoting organ and tissue donation, in some cases to groups of several thousand attendees. Presentations about the DFN have been given to the national meeting of the Community Grant Programme and at an award ceremony celebrating blood donors. One recent NHSBT event was at Wigan Warriors for a wheelchair rugby event which was quite eye opening!

## Order of St John Award for Organ Donation



In 2013 the Order of St John and NHSBT instituted an award for organ donors. The final design of the pin badge and certificate was approved by our late Queen in her role as Sovereign Head of the order. The award is made to the donor and accepted on their behalf by a member, or members, of the family. Events are held around the country every year and the DFN has been invited to attend as many as possible to support the donor families.

So far this year Trustees have attended nearly twenty of these events.

They are highly regarded with the local Lord Lieutenant, or a Deputy, Lord Mayor or other senior local dignitary and several of the senior officers of the Order attending whenever possible. The Lord Lieutenant and Deputies are the Sovereign's personal representatives in the county. The venues are often very prestigious with the Priory church of the Order in London, Belfast Castle, Windsor Guildhall, Glasgow City Hall and many others being used.

Donor families should be invited by NHSBT, normally in the year following donation. If this hasn't happened or the donation pre-dates the introduction of the award families can contact NHSBT in the first instance or the DFN and request one.

In 2019 the award for tissue donation was instigated for families whose loved one had donated tissues. This award is posted to the family rather than being presented and again it is available to those who donated prior to its introduction.

If you have one, please wear it with pride, if you don't, please consider requesting one.





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## British Transplant Games 2024 – Nottingham

The British Transplant Games are coming to Nottingham in August. They are an opportunity for Donor Family members to meet and spend time together whilst watching amazing people compete in their sport. Teams are made up of children and adults from hospitals all over the British Isles. The weekend is one of sweat, tears and laughter and powerful emotions as you watch people taking part in sporting activities which were once out of their reach.

This year's games look set to be the biggest, and hopefully, the best yet with nearly 1100 athletes having registered along with over 1700 supporters. The opening ceremony will take place at Nottingham Castle on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August with the closing party being held on the evening of Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>. As in previous years, the Flame will be lit by one of our families, on this occasion Jane Stubbs, a former Trustee, whose father Keith Buckley was a donor locally. The Donor Families team is the largest ever with over 70 registered, many of whom will be attending for the first time. Based on previous years, many of the 'newbies' will become regular attendees in the coming years.

**If you are attending the games don't forget to bring your butterfly wings with you!**





## TOY HOSPITAL STORY, Channel 5

In the summer 2020 edition of this newsletter there was an article about Norma and Errol Blanche's son Alan. Many of you will have had the pleasure of meeting DFN members Norma and Errol at one of our events.

Alan died when he was just 16 years old and some of his organs were donated so that others might live. Alan was Norma and Errol's only child, born in 1979. He had a stroke whilst at school and died a week later. His parents agreed to donate his organs.

As a small child Alan had a toy panda, called Teddy. Teddy was with Alan for many years and he used to look like a proper panda, black and white. Norma said he had been cuddly but now was old and well travelled.

After Alan died Norma, his mother, kept the panda but it became very scruffy and unkempt. Norma entrusted Teddy to the Toy Hospital and a TV programme followed.



She wanted to know if the doctors at the Toy Hospital could patch up all his injuries. Teddy's neck was broken and the blue ribbon around it was in a poor condition. Alan would go to sleep with his finger around the ribbon and twist it. As the years went on the constant twisting tightened the ribbon until it became a knot. Alan would go to sleep holding the knot and rubbing his wrist against it. Alan would never part with Teddy when he was alive and after he died Norma took care of him.

Norma recently starred on the TV Show, Toy Hospital alongside Teddy. Norma was delighted when Teddy was handed back as good as new. They had made the original little blue ribbon knot into a brooch with an embroidered "A" on a white heart. Norma could leave it on Teddy or wear it as a brooch. The knot was the last thing Alan touched before he died. The panda is a treasured link to her son and Norma feels she has her son back.

This story, which aired in November 2023 can be watched online on Channel 5, tissues may be needed!





We are sure that you will agree that the before and after photographs are amazing!

Norma explains,

"Alan's Panda (named Teddy after Andy Pandy's Companion) was, without any doubt, his Companion from his second birthday in 1981 to the moment he passed away in 1995 at the tender age of 16.

Teddy was a well-travelled member of the family and over the years since Alan's death, he had aged and lost the glow of his youth.

However, thanks to his 10-day stay in the Toy Hospital, a subsidiary of The Repair Shop, he is back to his beautiful self again and Alan must be rejoicing

With love from Alan, Teddy and me. Xxx"



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## Miriam's story—by her mum Nicola Lee

On 1st November 1998, we became a family of 5 when Miriam Kate was born. She was an intelligent girl with a dry sense of humour who thought deeply about things. But, like all children, she was no angel - she was stubborn, a VERY fussy eater and a champion procrastinator! Above all else Miriam was a loyal, caring friend who would go out of her way, often to the detriment of herself, to help others. We didn't know even a fraction of the support that she gave others until we heard the numerous stories from her friends, much later, which makes us immensely proud. Two things were very important to Miriam, her Christian faith and Air Cadets (surprising, as she was no fan of exercise!).



The summer of 2016, Miriam, aged 17 was having a great time. The pressure of AS exams were over. Her wish of an overseas trip with cadets came true when she went to Gibraltar. Upon her return she then went to a Christian festival with her Church group. In fact, the last tweet Miriam posted, says it all :

"I am definitely feeling like this summer is the one to beat, it's been the best and I've never been happier". What a wonderful message for us to find!

She received her excellent AS results putting her well on course to study French and Linguistics at university and was excited for what the future might hold. The night of her results was spent at a friend's house. It was here, the following morning that she suffered an unexplained cardiac arrest. Once Miriam had been transferred to ICU we were told that she was lucky to have arrived at the hospital alive - only made possible by her friend's parents giving CPR. The doctors had no idea of the cause of her arrest. I recall the doctor telling us that she was very ill and may well not last the night.

Two days after admission, we were called in to see the consultant, who gently explained that Miriam's condition had deteriorated and what that meant in reality. David and I sensed that the consultant was leading up to asking about organ donation, however, we surprised her by initiating the conversation. Although brain stem testing could not be carried out until the following morning, the Miriam we knew had already gone. We wanted the best possible outcome for her organs so hoped that by letting them know, this would allow for the wheels to be put in motion. I was absolutely certain of Miriam's wishes. 6 months earlier as she signed up to become a blood donor, she'd ticked the organ donor box. She turned to me and said "It says I should tell my family of my wishes, so I'm telling you." On another occasion Miriam had said "If you would be prepared to receive an organ, you should be prepared to donate."

The following morning, we drove to the hospital, where scans were done and although some activity was detected we knew it would not be long. At this point we said our final goodbyes to Miriam. The hospital phoned a few hours later to say that tests had been done and brain death had been confirmed. We then received a second phone call for us to give our consent, which we gave for any organs or tissue that could be donated. In the end, Miriam donated her liver, kidneys, pancreas, skin, bones and eyes.





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Since Miriam's death one thing that has been a beacon of light for us is that her death was not in vain. Although no longer with us, she has given hope to other families. We know that her gifts have not just changed the life of the individuals, but those of their families and friends too.

The day before her funeral we received the letter telling us that 4 people had received organs, one being 11 months old, who had received part of her liver. For me, the fact that a baby had been given the chance of life, to make memories for their parents was very comforting. We had nearly 18 years of memories of Miriam, but without her donation, those parents may not have had the chance to make many more happy memories.

David and I always said we would like to hear how Miriam's recipients were getting on. In 2019 we received a message telling us a letter was on the way from a recipient. To our delight the envelope contained a letter and photos from the baby's parents, telling us why he needed the transplant and what it had meant in the two years since receiving his gift from Miriam.

In that letter they said, "We have gone from a world based around significant ill health, IV machines, feed pumps and numerous medications to a life full of fun and laughter".

We then wrote letters to the other three recipients. If they wanted to hear about their donor they could consent to receive the letter. As a result, we received letters from two other recipients giving us an insight into how life had been transformed since their transplants.

David and I were privileged to be invited to receive the Order of St John award on Miriam's behalf. It was cathartic to be able to speak to other donor families. We were certainly made to feel like honoured guests.

In 2020 David and I were privileged to meet Ollie and his parents Mike and Hannah. Walking towards the meeting point we both felt nervous, excited, happy and sad all at the same time! Last year in Coventry at the Transplant Games we had the honour of presenting Ollie with one of his medals - a very emotional moment for both families.

Soon after Miriam's death we were in contact with the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young, who gave us advice and support about Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome (SADS), Miriam's cause of death. We wanted to support the work they do funding research into these sudden deaths and to raise money to fund heart screening tests for young people. Our efforts have paid off and in March this year we held our first screening day which tested 121 young people, resulting in 6 being referred for further investigations - the possibility that lives may have been saved by detecting a previously unknown condition is one of Miriam's legacies. The fundraising continues for more testing days.

As well as fundraising for CRY I have joined the Organ and Tissue donation committee at our local hospital, adding a donor family perspective to the team. Opportunities to raise awareness of organ donation have helped me to cope with the loss of Miriam. I feel privileged to be asked to share Miriam's story, whether in talks, assemblies or in the media, as it seems like an affirmation that she lived and she matters. David and I don't shy away from speaking about Miriam in everyday conversations and are delighted when others speak about her too. To say and hear others speak Miriam's name is comforting and a way of making sure she's not forgotten.



## Angels of Hope—Nicola Lee

I'm always looking for opportunities to promote Organ Donation, especially in my role as Chair of our local hospital Organ & Tissue Donation Committee. When I heard a local Church wanted entries for their Angel Festival, last November, I thought it was an ideal opportunity to encourage people to share their wishes.

Our Organ & Tissue Donation Committee entry was called 'The Angel of Hope'. I wanted the design to include photos of a few donors, as donors are often referred to as angels by recipients. I realised that the DFN might be able to help. After an appeal on the Facebook page, I received 100 photos to incorporate - far exceeding my expectations. Many came with lovely comments expressing how pleased they were that their loved one would be included. At the festival there were angels of all shapes and sizes ranging from Lego angels of a few centimetres tall to displays that took up the whole width of a side chapel. Our angel was the height of a person and painted in 'organ donor pink' which certainly made it stand out! It carried a gift, representing a donor's ultimate gift, the gift of life. The face of the angel was a mirror and visitors were encouraged to look in the mirror to see the face of someone who has the potential to be an 'angel'd'.

The body of the angel was covered in photos of donors, including 3 living donors.

The 4,000 programmes for the festival also included a page encouraging people to talk about organ donation and make their wishes known. The festival organisers offered this extra opportunity for free, after watching a TV news item about Organ Donation and its life changing effects.

During the weekend of the festival, visitors were asked to vote for their favourite angel. Of the 66 entries, ours was placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. The organisers reported that visitors were very moved by the message our angel conveyed. The prize money, by agreement of the Organ Donation Committee, was given to DFN in recognition of their help and support.

After the weekend, the angel moved to the local shopping centre for 10 days, allowing more to people to see it. We are grateful to all the DFN members for sending photos, they certainly made the angel the success it was and a fitting way to honour our donors.





## Winter World Transplant Games, Bormio 2024

DFN member and donor mum Lisa Wilson, was honoured to be asked to be Team Captain for the Donor Families and Live Donors at the Winter Games .

21 teams took part with Great Britain & NI being the largest team with 48 registered. The GB Team included 17 transplantees, 8 live donors and 3 donor family members competing. They were accompanied by a further 20 supporters and volunteers. Events included Alpine Events: Giant Ski Slalom, Grand Slalom, Cross Country Skiing, Curling and Orienteering.



Lisa said, 'It was a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear such heart-warming stories of resilience and positivity. In my role as Team GB&NI captain I proudly led out the Donor Families/Live Donors at the opening ceremony. I also organised a social event to share International experiences and was honoured to speak and present medals at one of the medal ceremonies. In my Volunteer role I thoroughly enjoyed collecting race bibs at the finish line on the ski slopes and seeing such joy on the faces of recipients competing and enjoying a second chance at life".

Dr Paul Harden, Chair of Trustees for Transplant Sport, said: "The Games are an important reminder of the importance of physical health and wellbeing and how organ donation gives the gift of life and opportunities to so many".

Liz Schick, President of the WTGF says 'The World Transplant Winter Games



are special, a unique event amid the beauty of nature and breathtaking mountains. We are all very excited for Bormio 2024. A special thanks to all donors and donor families. Without them, we simply wouldn't be here."

Finally, many congratulations to all the GB&NI team competitors as Team GB&NI topped the medal tables with 25 gold medals beating hosts Italy into second place!



# An English Country Garden



**Work out the names of common types of flowers from these cryptic clues.....**

1. Fail to recall a name I call myself, sheep.....
  2. China drinking vessel for dairy fat.....
  3. Famous Pratt as well as the Mother.....
  4. Sugary Bill.....
  5. Sounds like diamonds are for the Scottish plant.....
  6. Rearrange mega ruin.....
  7. Sad ringer.....
  8. Breast fed bee's produce.....
  9. Got up.....
  10. Children's card game, mythical beast.....
  11. Mrs. Bucket raises 80's keyboard.....
  12. Sounds like noisy frogs.....
  13. Alternatively, baby goat.....
  14. Coloured optic diaphragm.....
  15. Camouflage Texas Lawman.....
  16. Gauntlet for Basil Brush.....
  17. Solar bloom.....
  18. Love it transforming.....
  19. Wintry precipitation to fall.....
  20. Romance amongst the haze.....
  21. Plenty of work for Elizabeth.....
  22. Name of the ship that accompanied the Mayflower.....
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## BABY ANIMALS QUIZ ANSWERS

<b>1</b>	What is a baby Fox called?	KIT
<b>2</b>	What is the name of a baby Owl?	OWLET
<b>3</b>	Baby Hedgehogs are called what?	HOGLET
<b>4</b>	Jellyfish offspring are known as ?	POLYP
<b>5</b>	A baby Penguin is called?	CHICK
<b>6</b>	What are baby Bats called?	PUP
<b>7</b>	Sloth babies are called?	KIT/INFANT
<b>8</b>	Butterfly young are ?	CATERPILLARS
<b>9</b>	Snail offspring are called ?	HATCHLING
<b>10</b>	Peacock babies when hatched are ?	PEA CHICK
<b>11</b>	What are baby Armadillo know as?	PUPS
<b>12</b>	Seahorse young are called?	FRY
<b>13</b>	The name for Alpaca babies is?	CRIA
<b>14</b>	Pangolin young are ?	PANGO PUPS
<b>15</b>	The common name for Cockroach young is?	NYMPH
<b>16</b>	What are the young of an Axolotl known as?	LARVA/AXOLITTLE
<b>17</b>	Young Guinea Pigs are called?	CAVY
<b>18</b>	Baby Dik Dik are called?	FAWN
<b>19</b>	Yak young are known as?	YAKLET
<b>20</b>	What is a baby Cuttlefish called?	CUTTLET
<b>21</b>	Young Slug babies are ?	SLUGLET
<b>22</b>	Tarantula young are ?	SPIDERLING
<b>23</b>	Baby Turkeys are known as?	POULT
<b>24</b>	What are baby Platypus known as?	PUGGLE
<b>25</b>	Koala young are ?	JOEY

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Donor Family Network

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Bexley

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Kent

DA5 9DT

## AS I SIT IN HEAVEN

As I sit in heaven  
And watch you every day  
I try to let you know with signs  
I never went away.  
I hear you when you're laughing  
And watch you while you sleep  
I even place my arms around you  
To calm you as you weep.  
I see you wish the days away  
Begging to have me home  
So I try to send you signs  
So you know you're not alone.  
Don't feel guilty that you have  
Life that was denied to me  
Heaven is truly beautiful  
Just you wait and see.  
So live your life, laugh again  
Enjoy yourself, be free  
Then I know with every breath you take  
You'll be taking one for me.

Author unknown

**IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS, NAME OR TELEPHONE NUMBER,  
PLEASE LET US KNOW BY TELEPHONE OR E MAIL IN ORDER THAT WE  
CAN KEEP OUR DATABASE UP TO DATE.**

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