Be inspired.
a look INSIDE

letter from the president  2
campuses    4
student leader summit   6
on campus    8
our family     10
alumni spotlight   14
financials    16
our campus missionaries  22
our leadership    24
I would like to clear up a little misunderstanding that some people might have about our work on college campuses. University life can be crazy, with binge drinking, a hook-up culture, and a growing anti-Christian bias in many classrooms. Many people believe that FOCUS exists to keep college students safe from these hazards. Let me be very clear. This is NOT our goal. Rather, we want to make college students dangerous—dangerous to a culture that would turn its back on God; dangerous to a culture that would set aside the life and the values that have made our nation one of the greatest in history.

Universities are the hinge of the culture. If we can reach our future leaders with the truth and life-changing power of the Gospel, they will develop the vision and calling to be people who will spend their lives building a civilization of love and of truth. In the 1960s there was a cultural revolution on college campuses. Fifty years later, the revolutionaries are running the campuses and the government. We stand at a pivot point in our history. Either the best days of our nation are ahead of us or behind us. We believe that the key to building a better future lies with the young leaders on campus.

Our goal is to raise up thousands upon thousands of men and women who, ten years from now, twenty years from now, thirty years from now, will be in positions of influence—such that they will transform the world into a culture of life. That cannot happen just by keeping college students safe. It can only happen if they are given a relationship with Jesus Christ and the vision and skills to take the world by storm.

This has been an amazing year for us at FOCUS. We have added more than 160 new full-time staff, 16 new campuses and increased our mission field by 150,000 students. During the past year we saw innumerable students...
make adult decisions to live for Jesus Christ and to step out of a culture which appears to be growing ever more hostile to Catholicism.

It is a beautiful thing to look back on the blessings and successes God has granted us in the past year, and over our 15-year history. It is awe-inspiring to look forward and anticipate what could be, if we continue on our path. In the short-term we hope to expand to our 100th campus by the Fall of 2014. We believe that we (our staff, our students, and our benefactors) are playing a vitally important role in the New Evangelization. I am honored that last year, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI selected me to serve as a Consulter to the newly established Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization. This is a great blessing and would never have occurred if it were not for the amazing collaboration among everyone who has invested themselves into the work of FOCUS.

By the grace of God, we are off to a great start. Last year was another great step, but we have much farther still to go. As you review this annual report, please know of my personal gratitude and of the daily prayers of all of our staff for each of our benefactors.

Together, with God’s grace, we can set the world on fire!

Curtis Martin
Founder and President
Alabama
Auburn University, Auburn

Arizona
Arizona State University, Tempe
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

Colorado
University of Colorado, Boulder
Colorado State University, Ft. Collins
Colorado School of Mines, Golden
University of Northern Colorado, Greeley

Connecticut
University of Connecticut, Storrs
*U.S. Coast Guard Academy, New London

Florida
Ave Maria University, Ave Maria
Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers
University of Florida, Gainesville

Georgia
Georgia Southern University, Statesboro

Illinois
Bradley University, Peoria
University of Illinois, Chicago
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
*Northwestern University, Chicago

Indiana
Ball State University, Muncie
Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis

Iowa
Drake University, Des Moines
Loras College, Dubuque

Kansas
Benedictine College, Atchison
University of Kansas, Lawrence

Kentucky
University of Kentucky, Lexington

Louisiana
University of Louisiana, Lafayette
*Tulane University, New Orleans

Maryland
Mount St. Mary’s University, Emmitsburg
United States Naval Academy, Annapolis
University of Maryland, College Park

Massachusetts
Boston University, Boston
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge
*Harvard University, Cambridge
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| *Denotes new campus
This past January, 2,000 of our best and brightest student leaders from across the nation gathered in Baltimore for our Student Leader Summit.

The theme for the weekend was Illuminate, and it provided a transformative three days to re-focus our campus missionaries, student leaders and chaplains around our Main Thing: Inviting college students into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church, inspiring and equipping them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization, discipleship and friendship, in which they lead others to do the same.

The Student Leadership Summit provided students, chaplains, FOCUS staff and other participants with dynamic teaching which addressed topics of prayer, evangelization, discipleship and lifelong mission.

Featured speakers included our president and founder, Curtis Martin; Dr. Edward Sri of the Augustine Institute; Peter Herbeck, Director of Missions for Renewal Ministries and Dr. Jonathan Reyes, President/CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Denver. Fr. Michael Keating of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis spoke to
students about how to incorporate prayer into a busy life.

Break-out sessions that built on the themes addressed by the speakers provided practical training and small-group discussion and allowed students, chaplains and missionaries from different campuses to engage one another on an intentional level by sharing best practices and stories of evangelization on campus. These sessions equipped student leaders with the tools to more effectively impact their campuses and encourage their peers to embark on lifelong Catholic mission.

The weekend was centered around opportunities for spiritual growth, including daily Mass, morning prayer, 24-hour Adoration, intercessory prayer and an evening of worship and Adoration during which hundreds of students received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

To encourage fellowship among student leaders from different campuses, the summit also offered social activities, which included evening social receptions with musicians Marie Miller and Kenny Kohlhaas.

At the close of the Summit on Monday morning, several groups attending the Summit headed to Washington, D.C. for the 39th Annual March for Life. Braving the rain and the mud, these young men and women from all areas of the country joined hundreds of thousands of participants in the largest-attended March for Life to date.

One of the most important benefits of these student leadership summits is the opportunity for students and missionaries to connect, collaborate and inspire one another in the mission of evangelization that can be particularly discouraging in campus culture. Students and missionaries alike returned to their respective campuses for the Spring semester motivated and equipped to bring the Gospel to their friends and classmates.

The following are some of the responses from students who attended the Summit this year:

“Any time FOCUS gets together at a national level, good things happen and the Lord is present. This weekend has given me the spark that I once had, but lost sight of – a spark to go back to campus with renewed vision!”

“These students are on fire and ready to share the Truth and build their relationship with Christ even more. It was wonderful to collaborate with them for ideas.”

“This summit has opened my eyes and shown me that my generation can end up changing the world if we all stand up and start evangelizing.”

Videos of our main speakers at the Summit are available at FOCUSequip.org.
A Change of Heart

BY TORI VISSAT

I grew up Catholic and attended a small parochial grammar school in my hometown of Marlborough, Mass. My family and I consistently attended Sunday Mass and the importance of God in my life was instilled at a young age.

Even though I received significant faith formation in my Catholic grade school, I later found it difficult to see God during my years at the public high school in my town. As my early teenage years began, I quickly fell into a life of binge drinking and drug use at only 15 years old.

I defined my worth by the number of friends I had and the “coolest” party I could find on the weekends.

Despite my party-girl persona, I was in Honors courses, played sports and was involved in several extra-curricular activities. I felt I had it all since I was successful and well-liked by my peers. Being Catholic to me meant that I followed the rules and went to Mass on Sundays, but that was the extent of my faith life.

My lifestyle in high school carried into my college experience at the University of Connecticut. Even though I was attending Mass on the weekends, my actions did not display those of a Christian woman.

At that time in my life, the years of heavy drinking and promiscuity caught up with me and I was battling depression and anxiety.

During my junior year of college, I decided I wanted to do “something good” and became a lector at the Catholic church on campus. It was then that I met a student leader who was involved with FOCUS. She invited me to attend the national FOCUS Conference that winter. I decided to sign up because it seemed like a way to learn more about the faith I had put on hold. I also didn’t know what it meant to be Catholic for a twenty-something.

The thought of God helping me through my struggles didn’t really register until I arrived at the conference. I immediately felt His presence at Adoration that Saturday night. It was my first time at Adoration, and I cried for what seemed like hours.

Even if it was just a small glimpse of hope for my life, I knew it was from God, and from that moment on, He was going to change everything. I later attended confession for the first time in five years. The experience I had at that first conference was the catalyst for my reversion to the faith. That initial encounter with our Lord made me want to know more about Him, and after returning to campus, I joined a Bible study and went to El Salvador on a Spring Break mission trip with FOCUS.

Even though I knew my heart yearned to be around people of virtue and experience more of Christ’s love, fear soon came over me and I struggled to dive fully into making my faith my own. That summer,
I found it extremely difficult to keep Christ at the center of my life and fell back into my “comfortable” life of sin. Even as I struggled to let God fully into my heart, at the beginning of my senior year of college at UConn I was immediately drawn back to the Catholic center, and it was there I met Shannon, a new FOCUS missionary.

It was through my friendship with Shannon that I allowed Christ to finally begin working in my heart. She invested in me in a radical way and took an odd liking to my stubbornness. Her joy was contagious and the hope she had in our Lord was like nothing I had seen before.

One day, Shannon looked at me and said, “Give up and let Jesus do it, Tori.” Those words rang deep in my heart and I knew God was speaking through her.

After months of running in circles and skimming the surface of a relationship with Christ, I soon developed a prayer life and learned it was His divine mercy and love that would cast out all the fear in my heart. Jesus desired to know me and love me through all that was weighing me down. He wanted to shatter the darkness in my life and reign as King of my heart.

After two months of growing in prayer and faith, joy began to radiate from my soul and I felt myself slowly wanting to share God’s love with others. I knew there were many other college students out there who were longing to experience Jesus Christ, like I had. The Lord placed it on my heart to apply to be a FOCUS missionary in November of my senior year and after applying, attending an interview weekend—and getting hired for staff—I knew it was the will of God. I wanted to make the same impact Shannon had made on me in college to other women struggling to find happiness and self-worth in all the wrong places.

Despite all the growth, I know the Lord has so much more to teach me. If it wasn’t for that initial invitation and the Lord’s courage working through my “YES,” who knows where I would be today? But I’m sure happy He found me!
Sean McPherson’s summer mission to India truly began in October 2011, when he met a seminarian in Rome.

I had been struggling with depression off and on for a few years. I shared this with a seminarian who recommended I read Mother Theresa’s writings, especially *Come, Be My Light*, a compilation of letters she wrote throughout her life. As I began to read it, I instantly fell in love with Mother Theresa. Everything from her personality to style of prayer was appealing to me.

Right around the time I began to have a devotion to Mother Theresa, Jeff Runyan, the director of FOCUS Missions, began to pester me with emails encouraging me to go with him to Kolkata, India to volunteer with the Missionaries of Charity.

At the time, Jeff and I did not know each other very well—other than a few brief conversations we had at the 2011 FOCUS Conference in Denver.

While the invitation sounded appealing, I didn’t respond to Jeff’s messages because it wasn’t a possibility for me to go to India. It’d be very difficult to get any kind of internship if I was out of the country half the summer, and I knew I needed one in order to get a job after graduating from Notre Dame.

Despite this, I still had a deep desire to go, so I asked for Mother Theresa’s intercession that if she wanted me to be in India this summer she would have to find a way to get me there.

When I returned to Denver after finishing my semester abroad in Ireland, I ran into Jeff at a Christmas party. I knew he would talk to me about India, so I initially gave him a brief greeting and tried to avoid him the rest of the night until it became more difficult to evade him. He casually asked me about India, and with pithy responses, I refused all of his bids to go.

But, after hearing all of Jeff’s stories and funny accents, my hardened heart began to soften.

“What is holding you back, Sean?” he asked.

I told him that I needed an internship, so there was no way I could go to India.

Jeff immediately asked me to be an intern for FOCUS Missions and even invited me to live in community with FOCUS missionaries at his home for the summer. At this point my heart was immutably moved to say “yes.”

This conversation could not have been more providential. Returning to South Bend, Ind. after my study abroad trip was very difficult. I began to lose interest in my major and felt like I had no concrete direction for my life. This,
compounded with other problems, led me into serious depression. Living each day and performing normal tasks became immensely difficult. While going through this dark time, having concrete plans for the summer and the prospect of going to India gave me hope to get through it all.

The Lord kept on providing for me, removing hurdles and enabling me to make the trip. Because my depression was so deep, I was almost unable to go. Thankfully, one of the missionaries leading the trip was a full-time mental health counselor, so I was given full permission to participate.

God provided everything.

As we gathered our group in Chicago and headed off to India, the depression still pervaded my life and personality. I was not joyful, and I could hardly utter a prayer. I carried this darkness to Kolkata, where we worked with the Missionaries of Charity sisters at Prem Dan (“Gift of Love” in Hindi).

Prem Dan serves around 100 adult patients—some permanent, others temporary—by providing them with basic human needs like food, water, clothes, medicine and a place to sleep.

Each day of work began with laundry; then, before distributing a snack and tea to the residents, we would perform a variety of tasks. Some days I would hand out water cups, other days I would walk around with Sister Therese and help distribute medicine. My favorite task, besides sitting and singing with the residents, was shaving them. One of the residents even instructed me to shave his eyebrows!

Some of the most memorable parts of the work came during lunch. A few patients had to be spoon fed, and Christ’s command to feed the hungry became a reality.

After the second day of serving the poorest of the poor at Prem Dan, my depression vanished. Through the work, prayer and fellowship, my heart was completely vulnerable to God, and he cured me of many festering wounds. I realized once again how valuable life is, and how God calls us in all of our miseries to live an abundant and joyful life.

The Gospel reading at Mass when I came home was the story of Jesus healing a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages (Mk 5: 25-34). She’d spent all of her money seeing physicians who had no success in stopping her perpetual bleeding. After touching Jesus, she was healed.

Similarly, I spent months in counseling and tried several medications, but what actually led to my healing was an encounter with Christ—in the form of the poor in Kolkata.

When I began to shave, feed and bathe the poor, I was touching Christ, and he miraculously removed my depression. My heart was open to prayer and the Truth of the Gospel as it had not been in years. Every day I grew closer to our Lord during a daily hour of prayer, Mass and group reflection.

We finished the trip with a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Francis Xavier in Goa. There, Jeff challenged me to pray about where I received the most peace on the trip, and how the Lord might be using it. This last moment was the ultimate climax to the journey God had led me on during the previous nine months, and I’m excited to continue praying about what God has in store for me!

-Sean McPherson
Using Technology to Build Up Students

How do you equip thousands of missionaries and students across the country in a dynamic, interactive and effective way? FOCUS Equip!

It’s become the new name for our curriculum department here at FOCUS. Last August, we launched a brand new website, www.focusequip.org, to electronically deliver our materials to those on the front lines. Resources and practical training for evangelization, Bible study and discipleship are at the heart of FOCUS Equip. We provide how-to guides for reaching out on campus and mentoring students as well as several electronic Bible studies. There is even a section where students can be trained on how to carry out the mission of FOCUS on campus. In addition, the site has a storehouse of audio talks, video clips and articles.

We developed a mobile app on iPhone, iPad and Android platforms so our staff and students can access these materials on the go. In the past six months, more than 5,000 people have downloaded the app.

One of the best parts about FOCUS Equip is that all of the resources are completely free.

FOCUS Greek: Living Roman in a Greek World

In November, we hosted a national conference called ‘Ignite’ for members of Greek organizations involved in FOCUS on our campuses. Ignite was held November 4-6 in Nashville. One-hundred and eighty students came to the conference, representing Greeks from 29 different colleges and universities across the nation.

“FOCUS Greek conference was the most amazing weekend ever!” mentioned one student. “Never have I felt so connected and welcomed by a community of other students, especially ones I’ve never met before! Being Greek and a Christian fit so perfectly together!”

There was a great deal of excitement, passion and zeal present. Dynamic speakers spoke to these students about alcohol, prayer, sexuality, the cost of discipleship, time management, evangelization and other relevant topics.

“I was challenged to stop living a double life and invest in my bros,” commented a male student. FOCUS Greek has evolved over the past two years as a grassroots movement. This year, FOCUS is excited to fully incorporate FOCUS Greek as an initiative within the overall movement.

Students in the Greek system across the nation are arguably some of the most influential leaders on college campuses. More than 85 percent of the students in campus leadership on 730 campuses are members of Greek-letter organizations.

Greeks on college campuses today have the potential to be some of the most influential leaders—not only on their campuses—but in the next generation of our world.

Greek students are often the hardest to win over to Christ due to the unique struggles and challenges they face daily from their own brothers and sisters.

Often, the culture in fraternities and sororities is the opposite of a life centered on Jesus Christ, making it very difficult for students to continue living their faith during their college years. They are in need of specific investment that goes beyond the needs of often college students due to magnified negative pressures that lurk in their daily lives.
I grew up in a very nominal Catholic family. My parents went to Mass every Sunday. My brother and I were baptized and had our First Communions. But that was the extent of our formation.

At 13, I left home to play tennis professionally. I attended online school and lived in hotels all over the world with other teenagers doing the same. It was not easy to go to Mass on Sundays, and it was difficult to live around what I had to see.

In the world I knew, teenagers lived in hotels in countries where we only needed to be 16 to buy alcohol. The world most people do not see until college was the world I had to face when I was barely a teenager.

Being alone—without my parents—I always needed someone to talk to, and so I started praying occasionally.

My prayers, though, were basically these three sentences: “God, please help me win.” “God, why did I lose?” “God, thank you for helping me win.”

Tennis was everything to me. I valued myself by my success on the court. When I decided a professional tennis career wasn’t for me, I headed off to college at Seton Hall University. Freshman year was full of the excitement of finally being in one place for more than two months; the hope of building relationships that would last more than a week; and making friends that I would not be competing against.

A friend was going to a Bible study for athletes led by Melissa Sartori with Varsity Catholic. I often went with her (mostly to get out of the dorm). I didn’t talk much, but Melissa still made an effort to get to know me. I found myself trying to fill the void I had in my heart from my experience as a teenage professional athlete. I began a relationship with a boy that I thought would relieve my sadness after an injury-filled season.

Through all of this, Melissa started to build a relationship with me. She helped me realize a romantic relationship can only do so much to bring fulfillment, and eventually invited me to go to the FOCUS Conference.

Confessions were offered—with a line of hundreds of students in front of me. I got in line to keep my friend company (no one except my parents knew that I’d not been to confession since my First Communion—nine years ago). The burden of sin was too much, and I knew my heart was seeking something bigger. I gathered up my strength and confessed my sins.

I will never forget what the priest said as he looked me straight in the eyes: “Welcome home, daughter of God. Welcome home.”

My heart changed. I felt loved. It was overwhelming to think that after all I had done, God was still there waiting for me with open arms.

I went back to campus and I could see God everywhere. I saw Him in the sun, the trees, and I felt Him in my heart. With Melissa’s help, I began to work on my prayer life. My heart needed nothing more than God. Through prayer, I began to understand the void in my heart was finally being filled.

There is nothing my heart desires more than for God to shine through me to the people around me. It’s like having the most amazing boyfriend ever—I want to introduce Him to my parents and friends. I want to show everybody how loving and awesome He is.

God loves me, and that is where I find my value and worth now.

-Rocio Portela-Berrios
One’s first encounter with a religious Vocation can happen in the most unexpected ways. For Donald “Digger” Rank, it was when he met a Carmelite monk skateboarding around campus.

Rank, a Monument, Colo. native, was a student-athlete on the golf team at the University of Redlands in Redlands, Calif. when he was first introduced to FOCUS by the “skateboarding monk.”

Graduating in 2007, he’d planned to travel throughout Europe before starting his career. Instead, Rank was encouraged to apply for FOCUS staff, and accepted an invitation to serve as a missionary for our division that specifically serves student-athletes, known as Varsity Catholic.

Rank served two years with Varsity Catholic, first at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and later at Seton Hall in South Orange, N.J. It was during his time as a missionary, said Rank, that he really “caught the fire” for the faith. He certainly was put through fire, and described his missionary years as a time when he struggled and was stretched, but experienced incredible growth.

“I came to a point where I failed in FOCUS,” said Rank. “I was supposed to give a talk at a recruitment event about Vocations, and for some reason I couldn’t get it together. I was wrestling, and I didn’t feel settled in my Vocation, or like I was where God wanted me to be.” In that moment, Rank knew he had to seriously discern his Vocation.

He joined a discernment group at Seton Hall, and while home for Christmas break that year, he met a group of Capuchin Franciscans from the Mid-American Province, known as the “Mall Monks,” at the Citadel in Colorado Springs, Colo.

At the invitation of the monks, Rank attended a retreat at the Mother Cabrini Shrine in Golden, Colo. He said he was moved when he heard one of the brothers talking about the poverty of Christ. Reflecting on what Jesus did, Rank thought, “It can’t be just Him giving Himself to me...what is my response?” He finally took the step to join the Capuchins when he realized, “I couldn’t run from it, because I wanted total self-gift.”

Former missionary makes first vows with Franciscans

“I couldn’t run from it, because I wanted to meet Jesus in that total self-gift.”

Brother Donald Rank (middle) with Thomas Wurtz, director of Varsity Catholic and student Jeff Tezak.
to meet Jesus in that total self-gift.”

This past July, Rank (now Brother Donald) professed his first vows with the Capuchin Franciscans. Rank said much of his experience as a FOCUS missionary prepared him for his vocation, especially prayer, service to others and living in community. He learned what it meant to “have the same mission, and live and pray together.”

It was not just missionary life that prepared him for his vocation, but his experience as an athlete as well. “What I liked most about golf,” he said, “was walking around in nature…now I do that as a Franciscan.” And it is in nature, he says, that he sees God the most.

Brother Donald said he’s excited to be a part of a religious community during the movement of young people many call the “John Paul II Generation.” He sees new life in the Church, especially from the perspective of religious orders, as more and more young people are answering a call to religious life.

Mike Horvath took his experience as a FOCUS missionary to his current post as an assistant campaign manager for the Ad Council, based in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Becca (also a FOCUS missionary alumnus), are striving to set a great example of what it means to lead a life of mission as lay persons in the Church.

At the Ad Council, Horvath manages four public service advertising campaigns, including the “Fatherhood Involvement” campaign, which encourages fathers to be more present in their children’s lives. Although he is grateful that he has a job that combines his passion for advertising with his passion for doing good, he still finds it difficult to live out his faith in the corporate world.

In his struggles, Horvath recognizes the importance of his presence at work. “At the end of the day, there have to be orthodox Catholics in the corporate world. There’s a lot of work that needs to be done in the corporate world, as well as the college campus,” he said.

Horvath isn’t just living out the mission in the workplace. He’s joined a Bible study with some other young adult men in Northern Virginia, and his wife, Becca is involved in a women’s study. Last year, the couple started a Catholic book club to reach out to some of their friends, which Horvath described as a good starting point to begin deeper discussions with friends he has had his whole life.

As all FOCUS alumni are challenged to do, Horvath is answering a call to transform culture after college, and as he put it, it’s working. “FOCUS is great preparation so one can be a great Catholic engineer, doctor, or businessman. If I hadn’t become a FOCUS missionary out of college, I’d go to Mass on Sundays, but I wouldn’t be living the Catholic lifestyle, holistically. Now I have the courage to speak up and answer questions in an orthodox, as well as rational and dynamic way.”
FISCAL YEAR ENDING 5/31/12  5/31/11

Revenues  
$20,010,585  
$17,904,244

Operating Change in Net Assets  
($267,400)  
$1,015,120

Non-operating Change in Net Assets  
0  
0

Total Change in Net Assets  
($267,400)  
$1,015,120

Fundraising Expenses  
$2,050,312  
$2,034,649

General and Administrative Expenses  
$1,691,938  
$1,318,841

Program Expenses  
16,535,735  
$13,535,634

Fundraising as a % of Total Expenses  
10%  
12%

General & Administrative as a % of Total Expenses  
8%  
8%

Program as a % of Total Expenses  
82%  
80%

Average Size of Gift Received  
$106  
$103

Most Frequent Contribution  
$50  
$50

SOURCES OF CASH RECEIVED

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 5/31/12  5/31/11

Support Team Contributions  
29%  
35%

Campus Fees  
15%  
14%

Other General Support  
56%  
51%

OPERATING EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 5/31/12  5/31/11

Program Services  
10%  
12%

Fundraising Expenses  
8%  
8%

Administrative Expenses  
82%  
80%
SAMPLE ANNUAL BUDGET
for a four-person missionary team

TOTAL BUDGET: $250,000
These charts depict the average annual spending for a four-person campus missionary team.*

*Teams vary in size from four missionaries to eleven.
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Matthew 28:19
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