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**Celebrating 35 Years of Impact**

The evening of May 1st was one charged with emotion -- there was laughter, tears, and gratitude.

All told, we raised a total of \$7.6 million at our 35th anniversary gala at the Marriott Downtown Philadelphia. Attendees and committed citizens donated \$4.4 million in the lead up to the evening and \$3.2 million during

the event itself. For the event, more than 1,400 civic, business, and philanthropic leaders gathered to celebrate our anniversary and our dynamic co-founders, Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon.

*[Continued on page 3]*



# Project HOME Names Donna Bullock As CEO



We recently announced that our Board of Trustees had selected Donna Bullock to lead us forward as our new CEO, and we couldn't be more excited. Donna has served as a Pennsylvania State Representative since 2015 and joined us in July to build upon the incredible work of our co-founders Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon who, over the past 35 years, have grown Project HOME from a single emergency winter shelter into a nationally recognized model in addressing homelessness.

Donna has a rich background in city and state government, coalition building, policymaking, advocacy, nonprofit leadership, project management and law. She has represented the 195th Legislative District in the Pennsylvania House

of Representatives for the past nine years. The 195th District spans diverse neighborhoods in North Philadelphia and the Art Museum area, including the 19121 ZIP code where we focus many of our resources.

Throughout her time in office, Donna's legislative and policy priorities have closely aligned with the mission and work of Project HOME, including supporting children and youth experiencing homelessness, increasing opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses, expanding access to school meals, and more. She served as Majority Chair for

the Children and Youth Committee and Ethics Committee and is an experienced fundraiser who is adept at cultivating and maintaining relationships with key donors.

"It's an incredible honor to step in to this role and work alongside the entire Project HOME community to provide housing, healthcare, education, job opportunities, and more to the most vulnerable among us as we strive to alleviate and eliminate homelessness in Philadelphia," said Bullock. "I'm living proof that these services make a difference. They helped break the cycle of poverty in my own family. This mission is personal to me, and I promise to dedicate myself to fulfilling it in the weeks, months and years ahead."

Prior to her time in office, Donna served as a special assistant to Philadelphia City Council President Darrell Clarke and as the City Council research fellowship director. Early in her career, she spent time in private law and worked for Philadelphia Community

Legal Services, where she formed and advised nonprofit organizations, small businesses,

and community groups. Donna earned a bachelor's degree from Rutgers University and a juris doctor from Temple University's James E. Beasley School of Law.

"Donna is compassionate, servant-minded and mission-driven," said Sister Mary Scullion. "She's spent her career advocating for the underserved, fighting to ensure everyone has a voice. I'm certain she'll bring that same fighting spirit to her work at Project HOME and I look forward to supporting her as we strive to make our vision a reality: None of us are home until all of us are home."



Scan to read the longer version online



Watch the announcement video



Gala co-chairs Jon Bon Jovi and his wife, Dorothea, embrace Joan and Sister Mary while Leigh and John Middleton (left) look on.

[Continued from page 1]

"What an incredible evening of community, love, and generosity," said Project HOME Co-Founder and Executive Director Sister Mary Scullion. "When Joan and I first imagined Project HOME 35 years ago, we could hardly have imagined the growth and impact we've been able to achieve as part of this tremendous organization. It's taken a lot of hard work and determination, and we're grateful to the entire Project HOME community for their support and shared belief that none of us are home until all of us are home."

The event celebrated the enduring legacy and friendship of McConnon and Scullion, who are transitioning out of their day-to-day leadership roles with Project HOME but will remain connected to the organization. It honored Project HOME's 35 years of impact with a dedicated focus on the organization's next chapter and its continuing work to end and prevent chronic street homelessness in Philadelphia. Highlights of the event included:

A special video message from

President Joe Biden honoring the organization and its impact; a special video message from actress Lily Tomlin, a long-time friend and advocate of Project HOME; opening remarks from Governor Josh Shapiro; a special in-room fundraising effort that raised \$3.2 million; a surprise on-the-spot donation of \$1 million by Phillies Charities presented by the Phillie Phanatic; and a heartfelt tribute from event co-chairs Leigh and John Middleton before presenting Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon with the "Golden Heart" award.

There was also special participation from Dorothea and Jon Bon Jovi who both served as co-chairs of the event. Jon Bon Jovi led the "Impact in an Instant" in-room fundraising initiative, and shared special remarks during the evening

"We were thrilled to co-chair this wonderful event that honored the incomparable leadership of Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon," said Dorothea and Jon Bon Jovi, JBJ Soul Foundation. "We consider them mentors, friends, and inspirations. May their work continue until homelessness is

a thing of the past."

During the "Impact in an Instant" initiative, attendees raised \$2.2 million before a surprise \$1 million donation was presented by the Phillie Phanatic on behalf of Phillies Charities, Inc.

"For 35 years Project HOME, led by the heroic efforts of Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon, has tackled the root causes of homelessness," said Phillies Managing Partner and Chief Executive Officer John Middleton. "We are incredibly proud to provide this significant donation to Project HOME in support of their mission to end homelessness for good."

John Middleton and his wife, Leigh, a Project HOME board member, presented Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon with the "Golden Heart" award. The two co-founders shared their perspectives and vision for the future of Project HOME to conclude the ceremony.

"Ending chronic street homelessness will improve the quality of life of every person who calls Philadelphia home," Dawson McConnon said. "Let's get this done, together!"



*The first step in healing is often the mysterious human connection we make.*

As I reflect on the past 35 years, my mind immediately returns to Easter morning, 1989, at our first winter shelter. The city had donated space in the locker rooms of the Marian Anderson Recreation Center in South Philadelphia. With a phenomenal group of volunteers, we created a welcoming space for fifty men who had spent years living on the streets.

Seeking to make the holiday special, two of our volunteers, Bernadette and Pol Duffy, arrived with a delicious Easter breakfast, complete with linen tablecloths and fresh flowers. Another volunteer had brought in her guitar and Alvin Bing, fondly known as Chico, filled the place with music. It may have been one of the most elegant Easter breakfasts in the city that day – and all of us knew that we were experiencing something truly miraculous.

The miracle of that Easter Day birthed the spirit of what Project HOME would be for the next three and a half decades. The men who spent the winter living in those locker rooms were generous and compassionate people with gifts and talents to share. With them, we created a community that tapped into the deep truth that everyone has dignity and

that everyone has much to contribute. Together we were building what Dr. King so beautifully called the Beloved Community. A community where everyone is welcome, where our talents and gifts are celebrated and where we can count on each other in difficult times.

I've learned over these past three decades that it's in those daily human interactions filled with love, grace, heartache and joy that our hearts expand, our souls are fed and our lives are transformed.

There have been countless times over the past 35 years when I've experienced those moments. The day Joe Payne came off the corner at 15th and Moravian to move to Hope Haven. The day my dear friend, Marion Hall, earned his driver's license. Seeing the confidence grow in the children in our after-school program as Ms Evelyn Forbes taught them to swim in the lake at Jim Thorpe, celebrating when Karen Benedetti got a standing ovation at the Kimmel Center. Watching Paul Helwig play his guitar and Richard Bogue share his poetry at our Potlaches. Seeing families write prayers on strips of cloth, tying them to the grotto during the Pope's visit. Shopping with my dear

friend, Florence, for the perfect outfit for Project HOME's 35th anniversary celebration. Crying as the members of the North Philly Foot Stompers marched up 23rd Street to honor the life of Ms Helen Brown. And of course, being there when a resident received the key to their first apartment.

It is in these moments that we experience the true essence of our shared humanity. We realize that by being in kinship with one another, we become our best selves. It is these moments that transformed me, and it is these memories that I will treasure forever.

As we look to the future, I ask that we go fearlessly forward with resolute determination to make treatment for substance use disorder easier to access than the drugs that are poisoning our communities; to make permanent supportive housing easier to access than our criminal justice system, and to nurture an environment where everyone feels they belong and are valued. Ending chronic street homelessness will improve the quality of life of every person who calls Philadelphia home. Let's get this done, together!

## From the Archives: The Doors To Project HOME



Ed Speedling.

*During our 35th anniversary year, we are digging into our deep archives to share stories from our past that highlight some of the many milestones we have celebrated over our nearly four decades of service to Philadelphia.*

*The following reflection from a 2006 issue of our former newsletter, Dwelling Place, is from Ed Speedling, a long-time Project HOME outreach worker. Ed, who has since passed away, still sets an example of compassion and empathy for the Project HOME community.*

*Outreach is where many journeys home begin, and Ed's piece below beautifully captures that.*

People often ask me how they can get connected with Project HOME. There are, of course, a number of ways to get in touch with us: telephone, email, stopping by one of our houses.

When I recall my own experience, the beautiful entranceway into 1515 Fairmount Avenue stands out for me. So impressive are those fabulous brass doors that open to a foyer whose walls literally speak – no, they shout out – a message of hope and a promise of friendship to all who would come forth. Surely, these doors have been a passageway to reconciliation and recovery for thousands of people. And

this is their real value – what they lead people to – not what they are made of or how great they might look.

In fact, I have discovered other doors to Project HOME, and some of them are in dark and lonely places. These doors have a special quality – they don't exist in the same way that the doors of 1515 Fairmount Avenue exist. They only come into being through energy created by people caring for one another.

### The Door on an Empty Street

Taking a census of homeless people on the streets of Philadelphia during the winter is tough. The late night wind chill makes looking for folks hard; coming upon someone choosing the cold concrete over a shelter bed is even harder. Jim, a Project HOME Trustee, and I were on a street in Old City at about 2 a.m. when we saw him. He was walking slowly along the street, belongings in hand, shivering against the cold wind.

We called to him. He picked up his pace.

We called again, "Hey, we're from Outreach, Project HOME. How are you doing?" He suddenly stopped and turned, stared at us for a few seconds, crossed the street and came toward us like a man on a mission.

Looking me straight in the eye, he said his name was Tattoo Eddie and he was able to take care of himself, that he was a survivor on the streets, and wanted nothing at all from outreach. All he needed right then was a pair of gloves.

He would spend the night in a subway station. We gave him the gloves we were wearing. He thanked us and turned to leave, "Here take this." I said and handed him a Project HOME card. "Come in when you have the time. We can talk."

He took the card, waved to us and left. Both Jim and I thought, "Good luck, Tattoo Eddie." Little did we know that a door had opened for him on that cold sidewalk in Old City. The very next day that survivor called the Outreach office and asked for help. Outreach worker Tim Jones responded to the call, and that night Tattoo Eddie did not sleep in the subway. He had a bed and a place to rest.

### The Door in Suburban Station

One morning I received a message that Terry, a young woman who commutes to work each morning from New Jersey, needed some assistance.

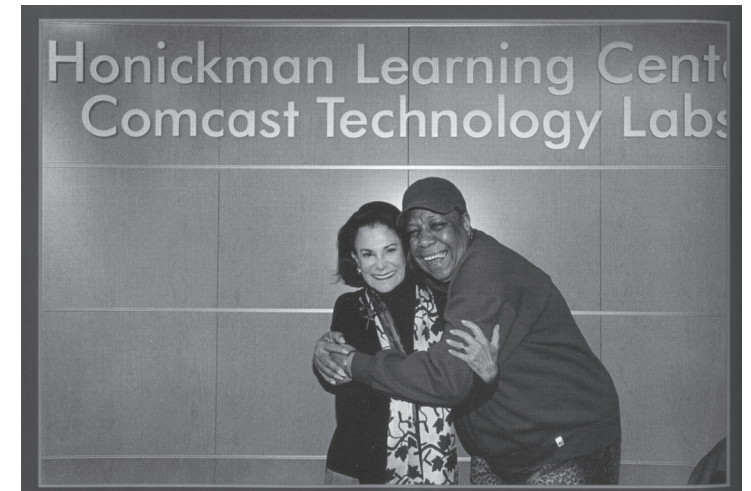
I called her and learned that for months she had been developing a relationship with an elderly homeless man in Suburban Station. Each morning she would stop for a few minutes to talk to him and before long, casual conversation blossomed into mutual affection and friendship. She learned that this gentleman was a seafaring man, a veteran, and a wanderer. The Outreach Coordination Center (OCC) was very familiar with him, but our outreach workers were unable to establish a relationship.

When approached by one of us, he would tell us, in very salty language, to hoist anchor and take off. Terry said she thought he was ready now, and that with encouragement from her, and a little assistance from us, this wandering

[Continued on page 5]

# IMAGES FROM 35 YEARS OF IMPACT AND SERVICE: THROUGH THE LENS OF HARVEY FINKLE

Philadelphia photographer Harvey Finkle has been capturing our work for over 35 years, documenting some of the most important moments in Project HOME's history. Harvey spent his career documenting people and their cultures, politics, and emotions. You can view his portfolio online at [harveyfinkle.com](http://harveyfinkle.com).

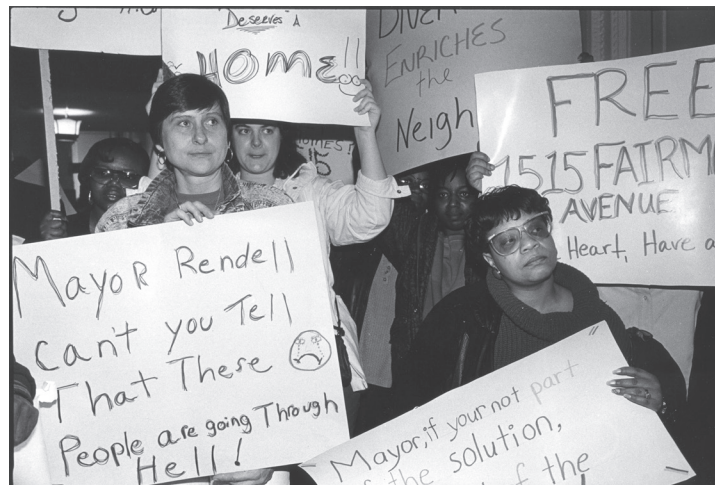


(Counterclockwise from top): Joan Dawson McConnon spends time with residents; Sister Mary and Joan are joined by Chris Whaley at an event; Sister Mary speaks to a group of advocates in the Broad Street subway concourse; advocates celebrate a win in the legal battle to open our 1515 Fairmount Avenue residence; advocates gather at City Hall to protest the City of Philadelphia's attempts to prevent the opening of our 1515 Fairmount Avenue residence.

To see more of Harvey Finkle's Project HOME photography, scan the code below.



(Clockwise from top): Helen Brown, Chris Whaley, and Priscilla Bennett at the Honickman Learning Center Comcast Technology Labs (HLCCTL); Lynne Honickman and Helen Brown at the HLCCTL; Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon are joined by former President Bill Clinton and Jon Bon Jovi at an event in North Philadelphia; outreach worker Sam Santiago speaks with someone experiencing homelessness in Rittenhouse Square; MPOWER partners Leigh and John Middleton at JBJ Soul Homes.



# Quite A Night: Images from the 35th Gala

The celebration was unlike any in Project HOME history



(From top on left): Sister Mary Scullion applauds Joan Dawson McConnon; Jon Bon Jovi delivers remarks; gala co-chairs and presenting sponsors Pam Estadt and Ira Lubert deliver remarks.

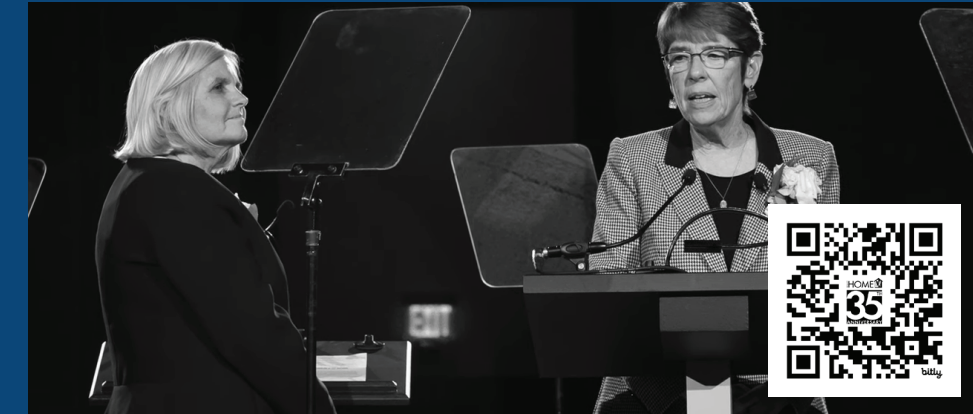
(From top on right): The Phillie Phanatic helps our board chair, Estelle Richman, announce the surprise \$1 million donation from Phillies Charities, Inc.; the HOME for Harmony choir opens the celebration; John Jarboe of the Bearded Ladies and Project HOME's Markese Williams introduce a video from Lily Tomlin.



Scan to view more images from the gala

# Project HOME in Video: Past, Present, and Future

We knew our 35th anniversary celebration would be a landmark event and we wanted our guests to come away feeling the full import of Project HOME's impact on Philadelphia. Share in the feeling by scanning the links to the videos we created for the event, all of which live on our YouTube channel.



## Grace, Grit, and Gratitude: A Tribute to Joan Dawson McConnon and Sister Mary Scullion

A celebration of Joan and Sister Mary--their dedication, their impact, and their decades-long friendship.



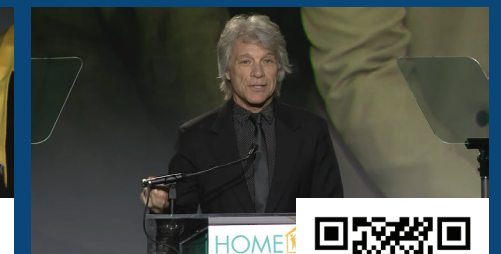
## Love Opens Doors: A History of Project HOME



## Look to the Future: The Work to Come



## 35th Gala Recording, Part 1



## 35th Gala Recording, Part 2

[Continued from page 5]

man might agree to leave the streets and come inside. The next morning at 5:00 am, two of our outreach staff met Terry and her friend, and a door opened.

That morning, St. Columba received a new resident, and the Project HOME community was all the richer for it.

## The Door Under the Bridge

"I lost everything to drugs." This young man looked like someone who lost more than his job and his possessions. Sitting in the outreach office he told a sad tale of addiction, and of the costs to him and his family. But he became most despondent when he admitted that yesterday, having nothing more to sell, no one else to give him money for the fix he craved, he decided to rob someone. The thought horrified him, but the craving was overwhelming. In a panic, the young man wandered the streets and came to a bridge.

Underneath, he happened upon a stranger sitting there and told him his dilemma. Sharing his need with a stranger allowed a door to open. He heard the man say, "Go to 1515 Fairmount Avenue and see if they can help you." After the intake assessment was completed, the young man was introduced to Laurence Dixon, OCC worker. Laurence made a few calls, and a plan was hatched to link the young man to a drug treatment program.

Doors are entrances that mark a beginning. Each of these individuals walked through a door to Project HOME and into the possibility that a journey would begin. Journeys can be long and winding.

Some are easier than others. But all have to start somewhere.



Scan to visit our blog for more stories from the archive



## Something Special At Kairos House

Our Kairos House residence on North Broad Street is one of our oldest and is still being called home today by folks who have experienced homelessness and are battling substance use disorder.

Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning the "right or opportune



moment." The ancient Greeks had two words for time, chronos and kairos. While the former refers to chronological or sequential time, the latter signifies "a time in between," an undetermined period of time in which "something

special happens.



## Generosity of Spirit

The story of James Widener Ray, for whom our James Widener Ray Homes residence is named, is one of resilience and generosity.

Like thousands of others, Jim Ray had fallen through the cracks at one point in his life. We are grateful for the inspiring story of James Widener Ray, whose name the residence proudly bears, and to all those who bear witness to the power of transformation and the resilience to turn suffering into hope and possibility for others.



Join us for the Fourth Annual Race HOME, Project HOME's 5K race and 1-mile fun walk, at Boathouse Row on Saturday, September 28, 2024, at 8:00AM.

SCAN  
HERE TO  
REGISTER



## Stories from the Archives: Grand Opening of JBJ Soul Homes



This piece from 2014 announces the grand opening of JBJ Soul Homes, an early MPOWER project and a continuation of Jon Bon Jovi's investment in our work.



"The opening of the JBJ Soul Homes is another example of what I like to call, The Power of WE" Jon Bon Jovi, Chairman of the Jon Bon Jovi Soul Foundation, said at the time. "It is a natural continuation of the work that we do, which started with the youth at Covenant House several years ago."



# CODE RED

WHEN IT IS DANGEROUSLY HOT, YOU CAN LEND A HAND.  
YOU CAN DONATE ANY OF THESE IN-DEMAND, IN-KIND ITEMS TO MAKE AN IMPACT THIS SUMMER.

---

**CASES OF WATER**

**HYDRATION PACKS**  
(EX. GATORADE, POWERADE FLAVOR PACKS)

**SUNSCREEN**

SCAN HERE FOR  
THE CODE RED  
AMAZON WISHLIST



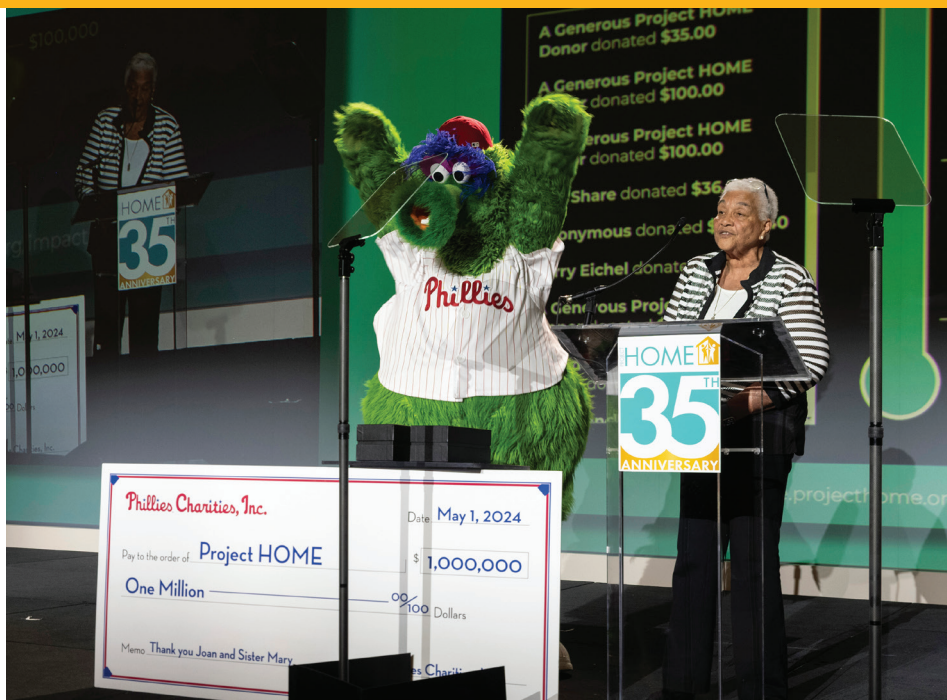
SCAN HERE TO  
MAKE A GIFT



**BODY WIPES**

# SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY

A Gala To Remember



The evening of May 1, 2024 will long be one to remember -- and not simply because we honored Joan Dawson McConnon and Sister Mary Scullion for their decades of service to Philadelphia.

In addition to that well-earned praise, attendees were prepared to give something else: \$7.6 million to be

exact, \$3.2 million of which came from in-room donations during our "Impact in an Instant" fundraiser.

The Phillies Charities, Inc. surprised everyone with a \$1 million gift, delivered personally by the Phillie Phanatic during the event.

We are so thankful -- and fortunate --

to have such steadfast financial support for our work, something that has been true for 35 years.

Pam Estadt and Ira Lubert, long-time supporters and gala co-chairs and presenting sponsors, concurred.

"As they have always demonstrated over the past 35 years, Project HOME is on the leading edge of solutions for those who are struggling with homelessness and its root causes," Ira said in remarks during the event highlighting our Estadt-Lubert Collaborative for Housing and Recovery. (You can find more information at the blog.)

Pam added: "We are so grateful to be here with all of you tonight to honor our wonderful friends and inspiring leaders, Joan Dawson McConnon and Sister Mary Scullion. Sister Mary and Joan, we are so grateful for the beautiful community that you have built, and we are committed to continuing this mission for many years to come, until we have reached our goal of ending homelessness in Philadelphia."

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