



# FOCUS



The Valerie Fund's mission is to provide support for the comprehensive health care of children with cancer and blood disorders

DECEMBER 2022

## Eighth Valerie Fund Center Brings Comprehensive Medical and Psychosocial Services to Children and Families on Long Island

**T**he Valerie Fund is excited to announce that it has opened its eighth center, allowing it to help more children and families than ever before. The new center, located at Stony Brook Children's Hospital on Long Island, opened on August 3rd.

The new TVF Center will serve an urgent need on Long Island. Currently, Stony Brook Children's Hospital has the only Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Program providing services to the half million children in Suffolk County, as well as those in neighboring Nassau County. The division currently handles over 5,000 outpatient visits annually, split between oncology and hematology visits. Over the last four years, it has consistently seen 60 new oncology patients per year, a 50% increase in numbers of newly diagnosed oncology patients.

Opening a Valerie Fund Center at Suffolk County's only children's hospital means patients and their families will benefit from the mission of treating the whole child and caring for the whole family, close to home.

Laura Hogan, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Stony Brook, serves as the Director of The Valerie Fund Center at Stony Brook Children's Hospital. She says, "It is an honor to have the opportunity to work directly with The Valerie Fund. My team and I are beyond grateful for the generous and strategic commitment to enhance the psychosocial support for our pediatric hematology/oncology patients and their families. We are excited about what we can accomplish together."

Neil Yaris, Chairman of The Valerie Fund's Board of Trustees, echoed Dr. Hogan. "We are thrilled to welcome Stony Brook Children's Hospital as our newest Valerie Fund Center. In doing so, an additional 500 children each year will have access to the full range of psychosocial care that our other seven Valerie Fund Centers currently provide. We look forward to a long relationship with Dr. Laura Hogan and her entire team."



Left to right, Barry Kirschner, Lauren Sharaby, Carrie Dewan, Michelle M McCarthy and Dr. Laura Hogan.

The new Center will significantly expand the services available to Stony Brook's pediatric patients and their families by funding a:

- Social Worker
- Educational Liaison
- Child Life Specialist
- Survivorship Coordinator
- Psychologist

These additional resources will greatly enhance the services that will be provided by Stony Brook Children's. The psychosocial toll cancer can have on a young patient can be devastating. It is essential to have continuous, ongoing care providers to address these issues after the acute phase, ultimately providing improved psychosocial health over the long term. With the additional services now funded by The Valerie Fund families will be better able to focus on the medical needs of their children, as well as the needs of other family members.

Carolyn Milana, MD, Physician-in-Chief and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics will oversee the new Valerie Fund Center along with Dr. Hogan. Dr. Milana says, "We are delighted about our new relationship with The Valerie Fund. We are grateful to be partnering with an organization that is so closely aligned with our mission of providing individualized care close to home."



## AROUND THE CENTERS

### Children's Hospital of Philadelphia/Voorhees



#### Trip to Jersey Shore Blue Claws Game

– In lieu of a holiday party this year, our CHOP center decided to treat the families to a Jersey Shore Blue Claws fall family event on Friday, September 9th. Approximately 100 families attended this minor league baseball event, and all had a wonderful evening. Two of CHOP's patients even had the opportunity to throw out the game's first pitch.



*Lulu Chen & Katie DiCola, MS*

**Research** – Yanglu “Lulu” Chen is a fourth-year medical student at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons who is doing a research rotation with the Valerie Fund team at Columbia University Medical Center this year. Lulu is conducting qualitative interviews to better understand the experiences of children who have gone through stem cell transplantation. She brings great energy and medical knowledge to the team.

### Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital at Columbia University Medical Center

**New Staff** – The Valerie Fund and Columbia University Medical Center are excited to welcome their new clinical psychology fellow for the 2022-2023 year, Corrine Ahrabi-Nejad, Ph.D. Dr. Ahrabi-Nejad earned her Ph.D. in Psychology (Clinical Child Psychology Training Area) from West Virginia University. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital.



*Corrine Ahrabi-Nejad, Ph.D. & Allie Antosy, Ph.D.*

### St. Joseph's Children's Hospital

**New Staff** – Diana Gil, MSW, joins us as a Social Worker at the Center. Diana has over a decade of experience working in the field of social services; for the past five years she has worked exclusively in the field of medical social work. She is bilingual, in Spanish and English, and is excited to work with our patient population.

### Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

**Cancer Survivorship Day** – The MAGIC Clinic held their first Pediatric Cancer Survivorship Day on June 5th at Branch Brook Park in Newark. MAGIC stands for “Marvel And Grit Inspire Cancer Survivorship.” The picnic was a huge success, featuring activities that included face painting, T-shirt painting, creating stuffed bears and music provided by a DJ. Mariella Silva, the integrative medicine specialist, provided chair massage and aromatherapy to our pediatric families.



## LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year I'm especially proud to share the news that The Valerie Fund has expanded its impact and footprint by partnering with Stony Brook Children's Hospital to establish our 8th Valerie Fund Children's Center. This new children's center in Suffolk County, Long Island will ensure full time psychosocial support for thousands of Long Island families with children fighting cancer and blood

disorders. This initial five-year \$3 million commitment to fund five psychosocial programs at Stony Brook will surely support these kids well beyond this initial term. It brings The Valerie Fund model to eastern LI so their kids can survive and thrive and have the full complement of psychosocial care they deserve.

This year also saw our Valerie Fund kids get their chance to go back to a live, in person Camp Happy Times for the first time since 2019. And we even brought kids from Stony Brook too! Our scholarship program expanded for the 12th straight year as we awarded 124 scholarships totaling almost \$500,000 to our college bound students. And our emergency funds supported dozens of families that needed some extra support as they struggle to move forward while caring for a child with cancer, sickle cell or thalassemia.

2022 has been magical for our kids with our center and program expansions. I am thrilled to say that all this now happens "for 6,000" of the bravest kids we will ever know because of YOUR support and belief in making a difference. Help us do even more for our children and families from LI to NYC and throughout New Jersey by supporting our mission before 2022 turns the corner.

You know we are and will always be, "All about the kids."

Barry Kirschner, Executive Director

## MEET DR LAWLOR, MEDICAL DIRECTOR MORRISTOWN VALERIE FUND



We are pleased to announce that Christopher James Lawlor, MD has joined The Valerie Fund Center at Morristown Medical Center as Director. Dr. Lawlor grew up in Union County and he wants everyone to know that "Coming here is like coming back home!"

After attending the College of William and Mary, Dr. Lawlor graduated from New York Medical College. In 1996, he started his Pediatric Residency at Children's National Hospital in Washington DC. He completed his Fellowship training in Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at Children's National and became an attending staff member in 2002.

At Children's National, Dr. Lawlor worked in the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders, caring for patients with a variety of conditions. His work focused on pediatric solid tumors, as well as histiocytosis and rare diseases.

Dr. Lawlor's next position was as the Associate Medical Director for Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders in Northern Virginia. In 2016, he became the Medical Director for Pediatric Specialists of Virginia's (PSV) Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders. PSV's mission, like that of The Valerie Fund, is to provide world-class care for children with cancer and blood disorders while keeping them close to their homes, their families, their friends, and their support systems.

Dr. Lawlor is very excited to be joining us at The Valerie Fund Center at Morristown Medical Center, caring for such wonderfully deserving patients and their families.

## THE VALERIE FUND 2023 SPECIAL EVENTS SCHEDULE

Thursday,  
March 2

**Taste of Giving**  
Mandarin Oriental  
New York, NY

Saturday,  
June 10

**The Valerie Fund Walk and  
JAG-ONE Physical Therapy 5K**  
Verona Park  
Verona, NJ

Monday,  
August 7

**The American Express  
Charity Golf Outing at Baltusrol**  
Baltusrol Golf Club  
Springfield, NJ

Tuesday,  
September 27

**26th Annual Burger King Golf Outing**  
Brooklake Country Club  
Florham Park, NJ

Thursday,  
October 5

**CAREoke for the Kids**  
Irving Plaza  
New York, NY

Friday,  
November 17

**32nd Annual Thanksgiving Ball**  
The Grove  
Cedar Grove, NJ

## SPECIAL EVENTS RECAP

### A Taste of Giving

This year's Taste of Giving event was held virtually on February 24, 2022. Although we couldn't gather in person to support the brave Valerie Fund kids, there was a silver lining. Using a virtual platform afforded us the opportunity to invite guests from around the country who could not normally attend. Being able to expand our reach in this way helped us raise an incredible **\$1.2 million dollars**. Guests got a deeper understanding of The Valerie Fund and what we provide to the families, while enjoying our celebrity auctioneer, Michael Kosta.

### Kids Ice Cancer

The 3rd annual Kids Ice Cancer hockey game took place at Codey Arena on June 5, led by founder **Andrew Low**. While he was a high school student, Andrew created the non-profit **Kids Ice Cancer** with the idea of "kids helping kids." Since Kids Ice Cancer was created, he has recruited a total of 45 kids to play ice hockey who have raised over \$260,000! We are so grateful for Andrew's support and his determination to continue the annual event, even as he pursues his own hockey dream. We wish him much luck!

### The American Express Charity Golf Tournament



One of The Valerie Fund's signature events is our annual American Express Charity Golf tournament held at the legendary Baltusrol Golf Club. This year's tournament took place on August 1, and raised an amazing \$425,000 to support our Valerie Fund patients and their families!

During the dinner our guests had the opportunity to hear from **Abigaël**, a Valerie Fund patient. Abby learned

that three words can change your life forever. For Abby these words were, "You have cancer." In 2021, when she was 17 years old and a junior in high school, she was diagnosed with stage one osteosarcoma in her left knee, which ultimately ended her plans for a dance career. The Valerie Fund staff helped Abby realize her beauty did not lie within her hair, but in her inner self. Today, Abby can proudly say that the three words that define her are no longer, "You have cancer," but rather, "I'm a survivor."

### The Valerie Fund Walk/5K

The 17th Annual Valerie Fund Walk/5K, another of our signature events, took place on September 17 during Childhood Cancer and Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month. Anyone in attendance couldn't help but be inspired by the sea of green t-shirts worn by our proud Valerie Fund kids. Thanks to the hard work of the 1,400 participants and our generous sponsors, **we raised over \$830,000!**

This year the the 2nd Annual Lawyers Run was a big part of the day. A large group of lawyers throughout New Jersey came together to both run and raise money for our kids as part of the Jag-One Physical Therapy 5K. The lawyers run has now raised over \$50,000 for our kids in just two years.

We were so excited for our new partnership with **The Learning Experience** to create a Kids' Sprint. Kids aged two to twelve



participated in a 100-yard dash, where The Learning Experience's mascot, Bubbles, waited to congratulate them.

We are happy to announce that next year's Walk will be held on June 19, 2023 and it's never too early to form a team and start fundraising!

### 26th Annual Burger King Golf Tournament

On September 27, Burger King franchisees and their guests enjoyed a beautiful day of golf at Brooklake Country Club. For 25 years, The Valerie Fund has partnered with Burger King to support our brave kids. This year we honored **Sanjay Patel of Dev Foods** for his continued support of our Valerie Fund kids. Since 1998, Burger King Golf Tournament has raised almost \$1.5 million for the children and families of The Valerie Fund.



### CAREoke for the Kids

For 17 years, CAREoke for the Kids has been a successful fundraising event. This year's CAREoke event was our biggest yet, **raising over \$390,000!** On September 28, we were joined by media industry executives at Irving Plaza for an evening that combined entertainment and fun while supporting our kids. We had great performances by groups from Denstu, Discovery/Warner Brothers, Washington Post and others. This year's winner, for the second year in a row, was VideoAmp who performed Rain on Me by Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande.



## LIVE FROM TYLER HILL—IT'S CAMP HAPPY TIMES LIVE!



Campers and counselors were elated to return to Camp Happy Times this past August after a two-year COVID hiatus. They loved being physically back together on the spectacular Tyler Hill campus.

We welcomed our first campers from Stony Brook

Children's and saw the return of new and veteran counselors from Idaho to England, and everywhere in between. The camp theme, "Every Day is a Holiday," allowed for festive daily costume changes and activities. But most important for campers was the opportunity to connect with one another. Inside the protective bubble created to ensure camp was 100% COVID free, new and continuing campers enjoyed the classic activities that make camp what it is: tubing, arts and crafts, archery, late night chats, swimming, the climbing wall and ropes course, the talent show, canteen, Chanel beauty day, the annual camp dance, and fishing. (The Girl Fishes took the trophy this year!)

A round of applause goes out to Camp Director Matt Ruttler; Lynn Jones, our staff director; Nurse Marty Viegas, who served as Medical Coordinator; and Ellen Ruban, Program Director.



## THE 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL THANKSGIVING BALL GALA



The Valerie Fund 31st Annual Thanksgiving Ball Gala was held November 18th at The Grove in Cedar Grove, NJ. The evening showcased the talent of our Valerie Fund kids, with a beautiful musical performance given by River. Abigaël did an amazing job as MC, and gave a moving speech sharing her Valerie Fund journey.

The Valerie Fund was proud to honor The New Jersey Coalition of

Automotive Retailers and New Jersey's Franchised New Car and Truck Retailers and Team Stoma, Midlige & Brown. for their extensive efforts on behalf of the families of The Valerie Fund. We are grateful for their support and proud to call them Valerie Fund partners.

We raised over \$1,100,000 at the event. This money will be used to fund all Valerie Fund programs across the eight Valerie Fund Children's Centers throughout New Jersey, New York City, Long Island, and metro Philadelphia.

Thank you to all our supporters for helping us meet The Valerie Fund mission of delivering integrated psychosocial and medical care.



## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

### Providing safe transport to Valerie Fund families, Will Tubig

Meet **Will Tubig**, who for 15 years has provided safe passage between home and The Valerie Fund Children's Centers to patients and their family members. The Schiller Family started this program 17 years ago. They were on their own cancer journey and learned that some children had no alternative to using public transportation to get to and from treatment. Thanks to their compassion and generosity, Will has made thousands of trips, welcoming patients, siblings, parents, and grandparents into **The Valerie Fund-Schiller Family van**. Will is humble and encouraging, telling the kids, "Your job is to get better, so you don't need me anymore!"



### Celebrating Our Donors

Our donor reception at Mountain Ridge Country Club this past May was a true celebration of coming together with friends who have made so much possible for The Valerie Fund kids over the years. We were joined by **Founders Ed and Sue Goldstein** and their friends who have been involved since The Valerie Fund's inception, as well as supporters from the past 46 years. Dr. Laura Hogan, the medical director at the newest Valerie Fund Children's Center at Stony Brook was also able to join us. Everyone enjoyed being together with like-minded individuals, focused on creating a compassionate community for The Valerie Fund children and families.



### The Markovitz Family Makes Child Life Services Permanent in Newark

The Valerie Fund Children's Center at Children's Hospital of New Jersey, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center honored the Markovitz Family this past June for making certain that Valerie Fund patients will always have the comfort and counsel of a child life specialist. In May of this year, a plaque was installed in The Valerie Fund Center playroom, commemorating the creation of the **Marilyn & Monroe Markovitz Child Life Specialist** position. Jillian Hinko, CCLS, who has been working with Valerie Fund children for over a decade, is the first Child Life Specialist to hold this named position. Pictured here are Barry Kirschner, Children's Hospital of New Jersey President Darrell Terry, Jillian Hinko, Marilyn Markovitz, and Monroe Markovitz.





This year, The Valerie Fund Scholarship Program awarded 124 scholarships to patients at seven Valerie Fund Centers for the 2022-23 academic year. **The total scholarship funding for this academic year was more than \$490,000.** These scholarships have been made possible through the generosity of individuals and families to whom The Valerie Fund and our scholarship recipients are extremely grateful.

The essays students submit as part of the application reveal a special combination of determination, wisdom and humility. A number of scholarship recipients tell us they are planning careers influenced by their experiences as patients, crediting their illnesses for career choices that include pediatric oncology, social work, nursing and art therapy.

**ARNOLD A. LESHNER SCHOLARSHIP**

**Kayla Johnson**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Master of Public Health



Kayla



Sylas



Carter



Leonard



Alexandra



Sabrina



Francisca



Isabella

**BRODY PEAK SCHOLARSHIP**

**Sylas Yarad**  
University of Pittsburgh  
English Writing/Poetry



Joyce



Judi-Dexi



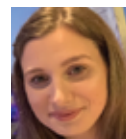
Sloane



Emily



Dominica



Brianna



Rhea



Joseph

**CHOQUETTE-BERTOLANI FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Carter Taylor**  
Widener University  
Biology – Physical Therapy



Maria



Alexandria



Aidan



Joshua



Sharon



Jessenia



Joshua



Willow

**Leonard Jasper**

Virginia Tech  
Biomedical Engineering

**DOSHI FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Alexandra Figueroa**  
Binghamton University  
Undecided



River



Fatima



Abigaël



Ajay



George



Giancarlo



Dane

**EICHEL FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Sabrina Santos**  
Rutgers University  
Nursing

**FRIENDS OF THE VALERIE FUND SCHOLARSHIP**

**Francisca Kwakye**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Health & Societies

**GNO SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Isabella Rocco**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philosophy, Politics & Economics

**Joyce Tumfour**  
Rutgers New Jersey Medical School  
Doctor of Medicine

**HANNAH XUE ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

**Judi-Dexi Lokko**  
Rutgers New Brunswick  
Biological Sciences

**JOANN SPERA SCHOLARSHIP**

**Sloane Silverman**  
Loyola University Maryland  
Elementary Education & Special Education

**JULIA L. WEINTRAUB SCHOLARSHIP**

**Emily Woznick**  
Montclair State University  
School of Nursing  
MSN Program

**KATHY RICHTER SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Dominica Colavito**  
Syracuse University  
Human Development & Family Science

**Brianna Gansert**  
Saint Joseph's University  
English

**Rhea Kochhar**  
Pennsylvania State University  
Business Marketing & Management

**Joseph Kurzeja**  
Monmouth University  
Biology; Concentration in Molecular Cell Physiology

**Maria Fernanda Toledo Ledezma**  
Montclair State University  
Psychology

**LINDA DEVITO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

**Alexandria Carson**  
American University  
Biology

**MACROMINDS FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP**

**Aidan Lohne**  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Chemistry

**MAYER FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**  
**Joshua Lukawski**  
Cedarville University  
Mechanical Engineering

**MEHTA FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Sharon Ogundeji**  
Rutgers University  
Biological Sciences

**RANDY REIFF SCHOLARSHIP**

**Jessenia Barranzuela**  
Saint Peter's University  
Health Science

**SEBIRI FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Joshua Friedson**  
Brandeis University  
Biology

**VALERIE FUND FRIENDS SCHOLARSHIP**

**Willow DeFilippo**  
Montclair State University  
Psychology BA/MA Program

**WEINTRAUB FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS**

**River Muñoz**  
Berklee College of Music  
Songwriting

**Fatima Otarola**  
Rutgers University  
Biology Pre-Med

**Abigaël Saint-Pierre**  
Seton Hall University  
Nursing

**YARIS FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP**

**Ajay Lalani**  
University of Southern California  
Writing for Screen & Television

**YEDID FAMILY SCHOLARSHIPS**

**George Adu-Agyare**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Mathematics

**Giancarlo Cusimano**  
Emory University  
Neuroscience & Behavioral Biology

**ZHANG EXPLORER SCHOLARSHIP**

**Dane Hagstrom**  
Drexel University  
Civil Engineering

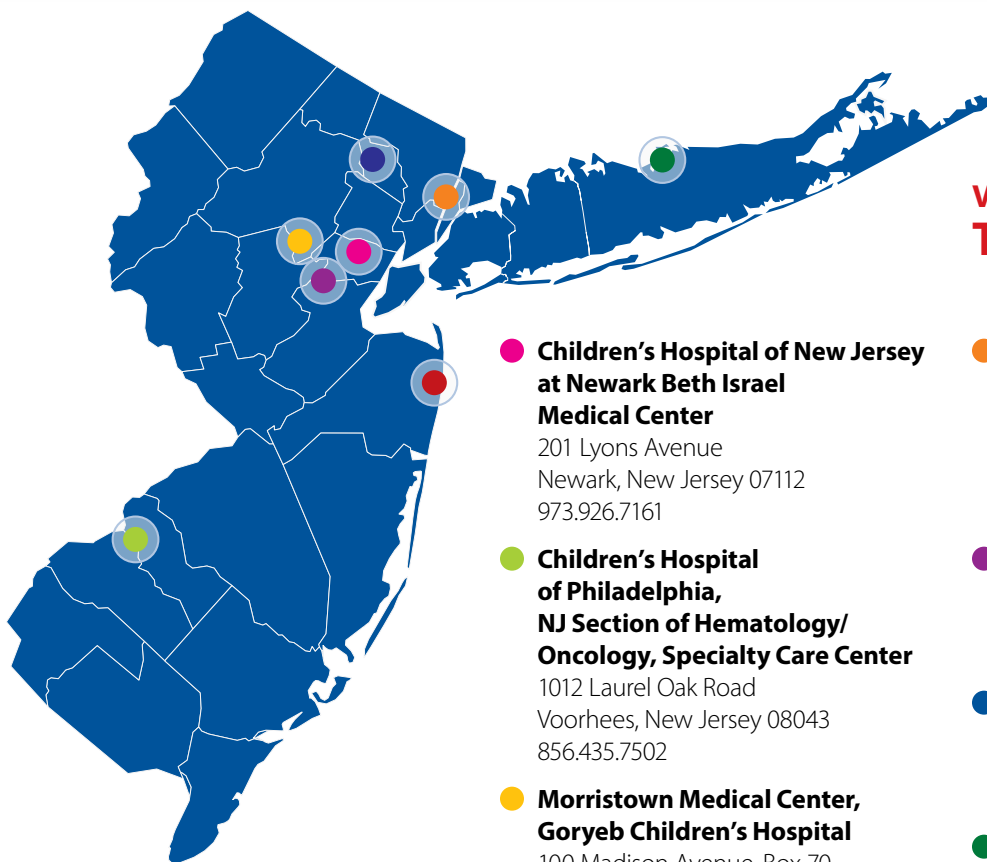


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## HOW TO CONTACT A VALERIE FUND CENTER NEAR YOU



VISIT US AT  
[TheValerieFund.org](http://TheValerieFund.org)

● **Children's Hospital of New Jersey  
at Newark Beth Israel  
Medical Center**

201 Lyons Avenue  
Newark, New Jersey 07112  
973.926.7161

● **Children's Hospital  
of Philadelphia,  
NJ Section of Hematology/  
Oncology, Specialty Care Center**

1012 Laurel Oak Road  
Voorhees, New Jersey 08043  
856.435.7502

● **Morristown Medical Center,  
Goryeb Children's Hospital**

100 Madison Avenue, Box 70  
Morristown, New Jersey 07960  
973.971.6720

● **NewYork-Presbyterian  
Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital**  
Columbia University Medical Center  
161 Fort Washington Avenue, IP 7th Floor  
New York, New York 10032  
212.305.5808

● **Overlook Medical Center**  
11 Overlook Road, Suite 230  
Summit, New Jersey 07901  
908.522.2353

● **St. Joseph's Children's Hospital**  
703 Main Street  
Paterson, NJ 07503  
973.754.3230

● **Stony Brook Children's Hospital  
on Long Island**  
Lauterber Drive  
Stony Brook, NY 11794  
631.444.7720

● **The Unterberg Children's Hospital  
at Monmouth Medical Center**  
300 Second Avenue  
Long Branch, New Jersey 07740  
732.923.7455

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