

# Metamorphosis

A newsletter published by Women's Advocates, Inc.

Volume XVI • Number 1

**WINTER 2007**



**Women's Advocates, Inc.**

Building Nonviolent Futures  
One Family At A Time

**Services Offered:**

Safe Housing • 24-Hour Crisis Line  
Advocacy and Counseling • Legal Information  
Community Education, Training & Development  
Information and Referral • Support Groups  
TDD for Hearing Impaired

## PROGRAM EVALUATION OFFERS EXCELLENT FEEDBACK

As noted in the November issue, Women's Advocates received a grant from the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation. The funds supported a resident follow-up study, the first of its kind for Women's Advocates. Though we have received stories affirming individual successes, resources to conduct a formal evaluation study were not available. Over the past eight months Jackie Craig, Evaluation Coordinator, has been conducting follow-up surveys, compiling data and writing reports for Women's Advocates using shelter exit information. We have been energized by the numerous thoughtful suggestions and comments of appreciation we have received. They have not only affirmed various program services, but have also given us an opportunity to gain additional insight into the challenges residents experience once they are back in the community. Also, some past residents have reconnected with Mary Brown, our Program Manager, updating her of their situations and providing feedback.

Using information collected through surveys and personal contacts, several provisional conclusions have been made, which affirm Women's Advocates understanding of effective services. The provisional conclusions are detailed below:

- Short-term emergency shelter is essential to meet the needs of women experiencing domestic violence.
- Support groups and education to enhance skills in communication, connecting to community resources and parenting are an integral part of programming.
- Access and provision to immediate mental health support is important.

- Access to healthcare, legal services, employment opportunities and housing is particularly crucial.
- Providing necessary resources to increase self-sufficiency is essential.

### Program Evaluation Details

Women were contacted within 90 days of exiting the program either by mail or phone. From April 2006 through the December 2006 report, there were 221 eligible women who exited the program. We designated 42 (19%) of these women as unreachable due to address and phone number changes. As a result, 179 women were eligible for contact.

One-hundred eleven residents were reached. 38 surveys were completed by mail. 41 surveys were completed over the telephone. Overall, 79 surveys have been completed, for a return rate of 44%. The high return rate may be partially attributed to providing a financial token, a \$40.00 grocery gift card, for completing the survey. It was explained to women that they would receive gift cards regardless of the feedback they provided.

Listed below are results as of the December 31, 2006 report:

- 80% reported living in a rental unit (apartment, house or transitional housing); 15% reported living with friends or relatives.
- 96% reported that the knowledge they learned about domestic violence changed the type of relationship they have chosen or will choose in the future.
- 63% reported that they are not involved in a current relationship; 32% reported that they are involved in a safe relationship. Four women (5%) reported they are currently not in a safe relationship.
- 85% reported that services received at Women's Advocates were helpful in building a positive relationship

*Program Evaluation cont. page 3*

## Inside...

Program Evaluation Feedback.....	1
Director's Message .....	2
Board Update .....	2
Program Evaluation (cont.) .....	3
Program Updates .....	4
Staff Updates.....	5
Holiday Happenings.....	6-7
Donation Ideas .....	8
Upcoming Orientation Tours.....	8

Check out [www.wadvocates.org](http://www.wadvocates.org)  
for upcoming events and photos of  
events, activities or facility improvements.

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**MISSION** of Women's Advocates is to eliminate violence in the lives of battered women and their children.

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# A THOUSAND AND ONE DAYS DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



*Raeone Loscalzo*

At the end of January, I will complete my first 1,000 days as Executive Director at Women's Advocates. It seems like yesterday when I was just trying to figure out how to make my way around the three houses. Once again, the past year was full of challenges but the rewards of working at a shelter that is mission driven far exceeded the challenges.

This issue of *Metamorphosis* focuses on the many strengths of the program and the full continuum of services offered to women and children escaping domestic abuse. The front page article highlights client outcomes from our first formal program evaluation study. We are extremely pleased with the results thus far. We received written and verbal comments from nearly 100 women who lived at the shelter in 2006. Although not published in this newsletter, the written and verbal comments received were the most enlightening, as well as helpful, in planning for future programming.

The programs offered at Women's Advocates are multi-faceted. Trained professional family advocates work daily with each family and provide a variety of services. The advocates work with each family to analyze the range of risks and needs, as well as options and resources, and offer the most responsive services. Advocacy is provided in the area of legal, medical, employment, social services and housing. A large element of our programming includes assisting with the transition from emergency housing to a new home that is free from violence.

Our staff is specialized in meeting a myriad of needs that women may have. They assist families in obtaining and reviewing available safe and stable housing options, ensuring that financial resources are sufficient in order to have a successful transition. In 2005/06, of the over 400 women exiting the program, 89% left Women's Advocates and began a violent free life with their children.

A final note to express our gratitude to the community in supporting our ongoing mental health initiative: the agency was approved for funding for 2007 by the St. Paul Children's Collaborative and was ranked by the Review Board as the #1 Agency in over 40 proposals submitted for funding. This funding allows for a continued community-based collaboration with Thad Wilderson & Associates. We are able to have two part-time mental health professionals on-site to provide immediate mental health services to women and children experiencing domestic violence. Last year we provided mental health counseling to 405 individual women and 249 children.

*Raeone Loscalzo*  
Executive Director

*"Nowhere is violence more isolated from view, more difficult to combat and more far reaching in its impact than violence in the home. To turn a blind eye to the suffering of the victims of domestic violence and their children is to be, however unwittingly, complicit in the crime because it is out of sight and behind closed doors that domestic violence thrives."*

*Paul and Sheila Wellstone*

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## NEW BOARD MEMBER BOARD UPDATE



*Ray Allen*

### **RAY ALLEN NEW BOARD MEMBER**

The Women's Advocates Board of Directors recently welcomed Ray Allen as its newest member. Mr. Allen has over thirty-five years of management experience, including sixteen in venture capital and early-stage businesses, twelve years in managing later-stage growth companies and seven in acquisitions and planning with *Fortune 500* firms. He has a

B.S. degree in chemical engineering and a MBA, both from the University of Kentucky.

As a resident of St. Paul, he initially came to us through an interest in becoming more active in the community. Ray has been interested in working with children in traumatic situations since losing a sister to a terminal disease during childhood. He recently approached Raeone to inquire about opportunities to volunteer. She mentioned the opportunity to read with children at the shelter, and, recognizing Ray's experience in investment business and other board settings, she also inquired as to whether or not he would be interested in serving on the WA Board of Directors.

Ray currently reads with children every other Wednesday and is open to serving the Board in any capacity that will support the goals of Women's Advocates. In addition to his volunteer efforts, Ray enjoys spending time with his wife Eileen, their five children and six grandchildren.

## Program Evaluation cont'd from page 1

with their children. 11% did not have children with them during their stay and 4% stated it was not helpful.

### Resource Referrals

When the women were asked if they needed resource referrals, 65% agreed that there are additional resources Women's Advocates could offer them. Resource requests were broken into 12 categories, including: childcare, clothing, employment, food, general financial, household, legal, mental health and healthcare, school, shelter, transportation, and utilities. The overwhelming needs expressed by the majority of respondents were housing and clothing (especially for children).

Categories	Number of Responses
Childcare	2
Clothing	11
Employment	3
Food	7
General Financial	7
Household	5
Legal	3
Mental Health & Health	9
School	3
Housing	16
Transportation	2
Utilities	2

### Suggestions

When the women were asked if they had any suggestions to bring back to Women's Advocates, 94% provided responses. Responses were divided into eight categories, including: children, groups/counseling, facilities and food, resources, rules, ideas, thanks, and personal updates.

Categories	Number of Responses
Children	5
Groups/Counseling	3
Facilities & Food	7
Resources	4
Rules	7
Ideas	22
Thanks	42
Personal Updates	3

Sample comments from each suggestion category are listed below:

- Children - "I encourage more activities for the kids, outside of the children's program."
- Groups/Counseling - "The therapy was very helpful and the people were great."
- Facilities and Food - "Have more diverse menus and different snack items."
- Resources - "Need to help people more with housing - affordable and stable."
- Rules - "Let people bring food in. It would have been nice to be able to buy pop or something and have a place to keep it."

- Ideas - "I do feel they need more advocates. They have a lot of responsibilities and a lot of families that need help. Things could move a lot faster with more help. Other than that, GREAT JOB!! I was very comfortable and happy there and got everything I needed to survive and move on to my new life. Thanks!!!"
- Thanks - "All of the advocates are very nice and really care for you. They make you feel that you are at home and very safe. You can talk to them about anything. It's not just a job for them, they really care. Thank you Women's Advocates. Because of you I feel 100% better and I know the signs of an abusive man. I can live again..."

### Next Steps

The comments we have received support Women's Advocates as we provide shelter, advocacy, information and education to women leaving violent situations. It is promising to hear that **96%** will change the type of relationship they choose because they were positively impacted by the knowledge learned through Women's Advocates services. Also encouraging is the result that of the women served with children, **85%** reported that services received were helpful in building a positive relationship with their children. The benefit of Women's Advocates services is significant, as seen in the responses of **95%** of women surveyed who reported they were either not in relationships or were in safe relationships.

Even though initial results affirm current programming, a large majority of women require additional support and/or referrals to community resources once they leave Women's Advocates. Shelter, mental health, healthcare, and clothing assistance were the four resources requested most. Many of the women were worried about providing the necessities to support their children. For example, most of the clothing needs were for children, not women making personal inquiries.

Overall, we have not received any surprises from the data collected. It is clear that it takes multiple services and people to address the myriad of issues faced by women and their children. It is also evident that Women's Advocates programming works. Our diverse and experienced staff, in conjunction with our collaborations, augments our important work.

In conclusion, once the current grant support is complete, we plan to continue the program evaluation follow up surveys. Any questions regarding the program evaluation data can be directed to [rloscalzo@wadvocates.org](mailto:rloscalzo@wadvocates.org)

### TO OUR READERS

An article was featured in the Pioneer Press in early January, describing a new State Legislative Auditor's Report regarding monitoring and accountability of non-profits that receive state dollars. *This article contained misleading information about the present financial administration of Women's Advocates.* A subsequent letter from our Board Chair was sent and published by the Pioneer Press which gave corrected information.



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# PROGRAM UPDATE

## SKYLINE TOWERS TRAINING

In December, Women's Advocates, in conjunction with the St. Paul Police Department and Partners for Violence Prevention (PVP), provided training on domestic violence for the women who reside at Skyline Towers in St. Paul. Officer Keith Draz, Nicole Albaugh of PVP, and Women's Advocates staff members Julie Beckman and Mary Brown coordinated the training to address needs specific to Somali women. Officer Draz explained that though the police receive numerous calls, women are frequently unwilling to admit that their partner has acted violently toward them. After careful consideration of how to best communicate the material, the training was titled: *Women about Women - Providing Safe and Healthy Families*. In order to ensure that there was not a language barrier, a Somali interpreter from PVP provided translation services. The training consisted of the following topics: the definition of domestic violence, definitions of healthy relationships and resources available to victims of domestic violence. Though timid at first, the group soon became very responsive to the information being presented. They shared their surprise at learning that domestic violence indeed had a name and that there was help available to them. The presenters were pleased to hear the women share their stories and acknowledge that being hit or beaten by a loved one is unacceptable. Some women raised questions regarding services at Women's Advocates and whether or not the shelter could keep them safe, offer culturally specific food, language translation, etc. A few women even expressed interest in becoming advocates! Overall, the training was very successful and women expressed the need to be supportive of one another and not hide violence when they see it occurring.

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## WOMEN'S ADVOCATES EARNS THE CHARITIES REVIEW COUNCIL SEAL FOR "MEETING ALL ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS"

Women's Advocates is pleased to announce that we were awarded the Charities Review Council "Meets All Standards" seal, indicating that we met all sixteen of the Council's Accountability Standards in the area of Governance, Financial Activity, Public Disclosure and Fundraising.

Women's Advocates is listed on the online Giving Guide of the Council's Smart Givers Network, [www.smartgivers.org](http://www.smartgivers.org) and will be listed in the Smart Givers newsletter that is distributed quarterly to nearly 20,000 subscribers in Minnesota. The award demonstrates Women's Advocates commitment to accountable ethical practices, integrity and transparency to our members, donors and constituents. Donors can be sure that their financial contributions fully support our women and children's program benefiting families escaping domestic violence.

## ARTS AND MUSIC GRANT

### RICHARD A. NEWMAN FOUNDATION

Women's Advocates is happy to announce receipt of a \$5,000 grant from the Richard A. Newman Foundation in December. The Foundation's continued support for 2007 will be used in our Children's Program for art, music, literacy and education. The \$5,000 grant received in 2006 to support art and music activities for the children added variety and spice to the overall program, while being educational at the same time.

Women's Advocates was able to have an art therapist on-site once a week for four hours to work with the children in groups and individually. This gave the children the opportunity to express their feelings about what had happened to them prior to coming to the shelter and their feelings about living in the shelter. Thus, through this program, the mothers and staff were provided with further insight into the children.

Thank you to the Richard A. Newman Foundation for your continued support, which allows the children to fully express themselves in a variety of ways.

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## NEW COLLABORATION WITH ICON SERVICES CORPORATION



*Aaron and Elijah of Icon Services*

It isn't often that a million dollar company approaches a nonprofit to inquire about a possible collaboration. But, this is indeed what occurred when Women's Advocates was contacted by Icon Services Corporation. Icon, founded and headed by Elijah Shaw, CEO, provides bodyguard protection to Fortune 500 executives, celebrities and politicians. Icon recently developed a new program called ISC Safety Net, which will allow the company to give back to the community by integrating their range of services directly into battered women's shelters. In addition to Women's Advocates, Asian Women United of Minnesota is teaming up with Icon through this new program.

Facility and program staff have paired up with Aaron Liepins, Director of Protection Operations for Icon, to complete a full security assessment of our facility. He reviewed all aspects of our security system and will be making recommendations to enhance the current system. In addition, Icon will be providing Women's Advocates staff members with violence prevention training. When asked about the new partnership, Mary Brown, Program Manager, replied that she "looks forward to continuing the work with Icon Services Corporation and having the opportunity to have their expertise implemented into the shelter."

# NEW STAFF MEMBERS UPDATE

## STACY REDDING FAMILY ADVOCATE



*Stacy Redding*

Women's Advocates welcomed Stacy Redding as the new Family Advocate in December. Stacy comes to Women's Advocates with a great deal of non-profit work and volunteer experience. Previously, she worked with Caroline Family Services as a case manager, working with single parent homeless families. Stacy assisted families in obtaining and retaining permanent affordable housing, employment, life skills

and becoming self-sufficient.

Stacy has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Metro State University and is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Education Guidance Counseling at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls. While continuing to build on her experience, Stacy hopes to one day work as a high school guidance counselor.

We are excited to add Stacy's wealth of experience to our staff. When asked what excites her about her new position, Stacy stated that she looks forward to "helping battered women strive to become all they can be to build their self-confidence." Her tight schedule of work and school doesn't leave Stacy with much free time, but she loves to spend time with her family and friends, watch hockey, go to the movies and play tennis whenever time permits. Welcome Stacy!

## ANY DESSERT WILL DO STAFF MEMBERS BOND OVER SWEETS



*The coveted trophy!*

On December 20th, Women's Advocates staff members took part in the 2nd Annual Any Dessert Will Do contest, with six entries. The contest began with the "official" swearing in of the judges and concluded with the first place winner being announced and awarded

the "official" bakers trophy. The judges had a taste for chocolate this year and awarded first prize to a delicious Chocolate Raspberry Cake. Staff enjoyed a plate full of delicious treats and a much needed break from the pre-Christmas hectic pace of the shelter. Plans are already underway for the 3rd Annual contest!

## ELIZABETH THOLE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR



*Elizabeth Thole*

Women's Advocates welcomed Elizabeth Thole as the new Development and Community Relations Coordinator in mid-November. Elizabeth comes to Women's Advocates with five years of experience in nonprofit development work. After graduating with her B.A. in Peace Studies from the College of

St. Benedict, Elizabeth took an Americorps VISTA position with the Immigrant Law Center in Saint Paul. It was here that she first gained a taste for grant-writing. Upon completing her Americorps year, Elizabeth continued her work in grant-writing for community-based programs with positions at Twin Cities RISE! and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, respectively. At the Boys & Girls Club, Elizabeth was responsible for pursuing and monitoring about 300 corporate and foundation grants annually!

We are thrilled to add Elizabeth's grant-writing expertise to our Development department. When asked for her impressions of Women's Advocates, Elizabeth said she was "surprised by the variety of issues that bring women to the shelter and the effects the violence has had on their children." She said that she has enjoyed her position at Women's Advocates because of the variety it offers. "I have enjoyed the diversity of tasks this position provides. It is great to be able to write grants, as well as interact with the donors and volunteers who support the shelter and the important work we are doing."

In addition to her position at the shelter, Elizabeth enjoys playing the piano, speaking Spanish and planning warm-weather vacations with her roommate. Welcome Elizabeth!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Raeone Loscalzo, *Executive Director*

Ron Strachan, *Chair*

Kelly Elkin, *Treasurer*

Wanda Harris, *Secretary*

Ray Allen

Patricia Banks

Elizabeth Boyd

Laurie Burns, Ph.d

Jane Kilian, M.D.

Claire Lewis

Cory Tell

Kelly Whalen

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# HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

## A SECOND SEASON OF EMPOWERMENT

The 2006 holiday season was a wonderful celebration for the families served at the shelter. For the second year in a row, Women's Advocates requested holiday gifts to be made in the form of Target, Rainbow or Cub gift cards. The response was incredible! The week before Christmas, Mary Brown, Program Manager, and the family advocates brought groups of women to Target-Midway to purchase gifts for their children using the donated gift cards. The women, and the staff members, had a ball. Mary Brown said she was personally touched by the shopping trips she took women on. "It was fun to see the women so empowered. They were very thoughtful as they shopped for one child at a time, making sure they chose gifts that each child would enjoy. And, they were extremely grateful to have the chance to provide gifts for their children."

The fun continued once the women returned from their shopping trip. Our conference room became wrapping headquarters, where women enjoyed holiday movies and snacks while they wrapped their gifts. Once the wrapping was done, gifts were held until Christmas morning when they were placed in the Gathering Room under the tree. At that time, families came to retrieve their gifts and then brought them up to their rooms to open with each other.

In addition to the gifts purchased with gift cards, each woman and child was given a hand-made stocking full of new items on Christmas Day. Also, each woman was given a beautiful donated towel bundle and throw-blanket on Christmas morning, as well as a brand new pair of pajamas, slippers and robe on New Year's Eve.

Overall, the holiday season at Women's Advocates was marked by feelings of happiness and gratitude. The residents reiterated numerous times their gratefulness for such a safe and joyous celebration. *Thank you to everyone* who donated gift cards, pajamas, stockings, clothing, towel bundles, blankets, toys, stocking stuffers and other items. Your generosity is what made this season so bright.

*On behalf of all of us at  
Women's Advocates,  
thank you!*

## HOLIDAY SHOPPING UPDATE

Thank you to those who shopped in the neighborhood on behalf of Women's Advocates during November and December! On Monday, November 20th, Women's Advocates was the beneficiary of sales made at Ten Thousand Villages on Grand Avenue. \$185 dollars was raised in support of the shelter. Also, a big thank you to those who purchased "Wishes for Women" pins at Chico's. \$918.36 was raised to support the women at Women's Advocates. Thank you to all who participated in these fund-raising ventures!

**CHICO'S**



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## 3M AND UNITED WAY SUPPORT WA



*Barb Leiknes, Development Associate Lauren Swanstrom and Lisa Clark*

In December, Women's Advocates was delighted to receive a \$1000 check from the 3M Foundation at the request of the Abrasive Systems Division/Abrasives Manufacturing Organization. This

division was given the 3M United Way Emerge Award for their participation in the 2006 United Way campaign. Led by campaign leaders Barbara Leiknes and Lisa Clark, this division was recognized for having the largest percentage increase in participation over the previous year, the largest average gift increase over the previous year and the largest percentage increase in number of volunteers over the previous year. As a result of winning this award, the group was able to designate a \$1000 donation to a United Way organization of their choice. The leaders chose to give this gift to Women's Advocates as a result of completing a number of successful volunteer projects at our site this past summer. Thank you to Barb, Lisa, the 3M Foundation and all other members of the 3M Abrasives Division for their wonderful support!



## PARTIES BROUGHT THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

Women's Advocates would like to extend a huge thank you to the volunteers who planned holiday-themed parties during the month of December. A group from 3M's Sourcing Operations kicked off the month with an incredible afternoon of crafts, cookies, dinner and other wonderful activities for the women and children. Each child painted a beautiful glass ornament for his or her mother. One woman, upon receiving her ornaments stated "now we have our first two ornaments for our new tree!" A few days later, members of the Alpha Chi Omega Sorority played games with the children. On December 11, the Junior League of St. Paul came to help decorate the Christmas tree as well as provide each mother with a photo ornament of her children. Each woman also received a gift bag containing a beautiful necklace donated by the Beauty Lounge on Grand Avenue. A group from 3M's Industrial Minerals came the week before Christmas and brought along a very special guest...Santa Claus himself! Each child received a photo with Santa as well as a brand new book. Finally, on Christmas Day, a small group of volunteers (including new board member Ray Allen and his wife, Eileen), came to help serve the meal and visit with the residents. In addition to the in-house events, the families were invited to the annual MN Masons Holiday Party which featured clowns, dancers, lunch and other fun activities. Thank you to everyone who organized and volunteered at one of these holiday gatherings. The residents had a blast!



*3Mer Ian Black helps decorate ornaments*



*3Mer Kelly Boelke shows how to do it!*



*JLSP members making ornaments*



*Look it's Santa!*



*Jon Schoenherr of 3M scoops up dessert!*



*Santa with a young friend*



*Pearce family and friends*

## A SPIRITED GATHERING

The 3rd Annual "Spread the Spirit" event at the home of Jon and Kate Pearce held on December 9th was a wonderful kick-off to the holiday season. The combination of great publicity, wonderful weather and enthusiastic organization led to the tremendous success of this event. Over \$3000 was raised on behalf of the programs at Women's Advocates! Thank you to the Pearces, their family and friends who participated, Starbucks (for donating hot chocolate and staff) and all who stopped by to contribute or simply to say hello!

*Come and get it!*

## DONATION IDEAS

Listed below are some current needs we have at the shelter. We ask that the following items be new (unless otherwise noted). Thank you!

- Women's and children's underwear (all sizes)
- Size 6 diapers
- Large bottles of body lotion, especially Eucerine cream
- Twin size pillowcases
- White bath towels and wash cloths
- Laundry detergent
- Baby lotion and baby nail clippers
- Twin baby strollers
- Toothpaste, toothbrushes and floss
- Ethnic hair care products, including: oil sheen, hair lotion, hair gel, hair binders
- Used cell phones-no chargers or accessories needed at this time
- White plastic hangers

Contact Lauren at **651-726-5203**  
or [lswanstrom@wadvocates.org](mailto:lswanstrom@wadvocates.org) with any questions.

## IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK...

You are invited to attend an upcoming "If These Walls Could Talk" shelter orientation and tour. The tour takes just under one hour and includes a light snack. This is a great way to learn more about Women's Advocates and the work we do. Please call Lauren at 651-726-5203 or email her at [lswanstrom@wadvocates.org](mailto:lswanstrom@wadvocates.org) if you would like to attend. Space is limited.

**Wednesday, February 7th**  
**Wednesday, March 14th**  
**Wednesday, April 11th**  
**Wednesday, May 16th**  
*Tours are from noon-1pm*

Or you may call and schedule a time for a group of 6-10 friends to come together for a private tour.

## Women's Advocates, Inc.

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