2023

ANNUAL REPORT
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BRIGHT BEGINNINGS, INC.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the 2022-2023 programming year, Bright Beginnings’ (BBI) primary goal was to harness the awesome power of creativity to bring new opportunities to our children and families.

With our two-generation approach, we were proud to deliver our hallmark programs, including health and developmental screenings and family services, as well as new ones, such as our farmers markets, diabetes education, and a leadership pipeline for educators.

New strategic partnerships were built with a dynamic set of community organizations and companies, while existing partnerships with valuable collaborators were strengthened. And, importantly, our teachers and support staff worked tirelessly to ensure that students’ developmental needs were met so that our Pre-K 4 students were kindergarten ready.

All children advanced in each of the eight content areas defined by the industry-standard Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science and Technology and Social Studies.

MISSION AND VISION

Bright Beginnings’ vision is that all children and families in the District receive the support and resources necessary to thrive and realize their full potential. In support of that vision, Bright Beginnings will implement a two-generation approach to:

- Ensure every child experiencing housing instability is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged;
- Develop school-ready and kindergarten-prepared children;
- Support families in breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty; and
- Partner intentionally to eradicate disparities and remove obstacles to economic mobility.
LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters of Bright Beginnings,

When I reflect on how uncertain the world has felt for the past few years, I find overwhelming comfort in being able to welcome you to this annual report from—finally—a position of great stability.

It’s true that in program year 2022-2023, we were still experiencing the lingering effects of the pandemic—inflation in the market; impacts on mental health for children, families, and staff; and difficulty filling vacancies in a timely manner. These challenges certainly impacted our day-to-day operations, and much of our work and planning was in direct response to those challenges.

At the same time, we had a clear view of the post-pandemic horizon. And so much was accomplished! We began overhauling our unused outdoor space to create a garden oasis. We implemented a new developmental screening midway through our program year. We enhanced our indoor play and sensory rooms with new, therapeutic innovations. We offered bi-monthly farmers markets that nourished the body and soul. And we developed a high-impact teacher assistant internship program in partnership with Ballou STAY. I’m thrilled to say that these are only a few of the new initiatives introduced this year to benefit the whole child and the whole family. You’ll find so much more in the report that follows.

As BBI’s chief executive, I am extremely proud of the creativity and responsiveness with which the members of the BBI team approach their work. Let me offer just one example. During the school year, BBI’s Multi-Disciplinary Team wisely discerned that a significant number of children needed additional communication support. Many of our children had already benefited from, and showed growth by, working with the in-house Speech Therapist—and, as such, there was not a need to refer them to an outside agency. But based on the observations of the therapist, it was decided that more interaction between parents and children could strengthen communication skills even more. So, in August 2023, our team distributed an activity bag to every child to use during our summer. The activity bags provided instructions, materials, and opportunity for parents to engage in play, conversation, and relationship building with their child. The pilot was so successful that we plan to repeat it annually. This is the sort of vital intervention that only becomes possible through the dedication and diligence of a brilliant team.

And our team’s drive is matched by the energy of our community leaders. As we continue to center parent voices as a core tenet of our work, BBI’s Parent Policy Council (PPC) provided essential feedback throughout the year on their needs and guided us in the best way to address them. With the hiring of an advocacy manager to lead our Alumni Support program and coordinate and amplify the voice of our PPC, we have begun laying the groundwork for BBI parents to be the best advocates for their children, themselves, and their community.

I am so thankful to everyone who believes and invests in the work we do and the families we serve. We are thrilled to be entering our 35th year of service to the DC community. As we move into this milestone year, we will continue to innovate and improve upon the work we are doing to support children and families.

We can’t wait to share the incredible results that come from our newest projects!

Sincerely,
Erin Fisher
Dear Friends and Supporters of Bright Beginnings,

As Bright Beginnings’ Board President, I am so pleased to present our annual report for program year 2022-2023.

In acknowledgement of her creative and effective management of a thriving and exciting organization, we proudly began our year by naming Erin Fisher as our permanent CEO.

Under her continuing leadership, with a commitment to a two-generation approach and the support of an intrepid team of changemakers, our newest initiatives and programs clearly demonstrated both growth and transformative impact for BBI’s children and their families. Among these, our best successes are the infant and maternal wellness and evening care programs, as well as a deep investment in professional development for the BBI team.

These two successes are not coincidental. Our ability to provide the very best service to our community depends on the strength, expertise, and wellbeing of our staff. Erin has built a culture of development and support, thoughtfully enriching the workplace environment with access to a wide range of health and wellness supports. As you’ll read in this report, the effects of this culture are clearly demonstrated by the measurable impact of our programs.

In my role as Board President, I am responsible for ensuring the viability of our critical work. I am happy to report that BBI again remains in sound financial condition with no deficiencies in internal control or material weaknesses found in our FY23 audit. Importantly, we plan to extinguish the New Market Tax Credit Loan in our next fiscal year.

Last year, the Board of Directors welcomed eight new members, each of whom has added immeasurably valuable expertise and experience to our ranks. Through their leadership, we are well-positioned to provide meaningful support and guidance as BBI continues to expand its ability to meet community early childhood education needs.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I want to personally thank each person who has contributed to BBI’s story this year. We find ourselves in a position of tremendous strength to march forward, and we would not be here without the support of amazing individuals, organizations, funders, corporations, federal and local government agencies, and community partners.

We have more work to do together. But in this moment of celebration, I offer you my thanks.

Regards,
Nancy P. Register
2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

In FY23, Bright Beginnings provided education and wrap-around services at no cost to 216 children and their families living at or below the federal poverty line. Bright Beginnings employs a two-generation approach for long-term success. We provide high-quality, accredited, and free early childhood education for children. At the same time, we empower parents with the knowledge and skills to be their children’s first and best teachers, to have economic stability and mobility, and to be mentally and physically healthy. With gaps in learning becoming harder to remedy as children age, access to quality early childhood education has proven to have a positive impact on a wide range of academic and life outcomes for children.

COR ADVANTAGE KINDERGARTEN READY COUNT

BBI’s education program promotes curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking by using the High/Scope curriculum. The “Plan/Do/Review method,” a cornerstone of High/Scope, allows children to plan their activity, act on decisions, and discuss what they accomplished with a teacher. This method allows each child to develop at his or her own level with the support of trusted adults.

We ensure ongoing evaluation of each child’s growth and development using High/Scope’s Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage assessment tool. Child assessment data is used to support curriculum development and to develop individualized instruction and wrap-around services to meet the unique needs of each child.

In FY23, all children advanced in each of the eight content areas defined by the industry-standard Child Observation Record (COR) Advantage: Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Health, Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science and Technology, and Social Studies.

83% OF BRIGHT BEGINNINGS’ EARLY HEAD START STUDENTS AND 85% OF HEAD START STUDENTS MET OR EXCEEDED THE NATIONAL AVERAGE AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

9 OF THE 14 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE PRE-K 4 CLASSROOM WERE KINDERGARTEN-READY BY THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.
HEALTH AND WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Last year, in addition to 45-day screenings, there was a screening period in January for the ASQ, ASQ-SE and Brigance, allowing us to track progress and identify students who need additional services throughout the school year. We took significant steps to support children with social emotional needs, which have increased since COVID-19.

Our team identified a creative range of meaningful interventions. We constructed “cozy corners” in seven classrooms that contain social emotional visual tools such as feelings charts and conflict resolution cards. We enhanced our multipurpose indoor play room with several large items, such as a rock-climbing wall and foldable gym box, that add to the fine and gross motor play opportunities for students. The space has been transformed to be more engaging, meet the needs of over- or under-stimulated students, and challenge students’ physical development in enriching ways. We also constructed a sensory room—a quiet space for speech, occupational, and mental health consultants to meet with students and work on-site.

125 Parent Consultations provided support during a family crisis, illness, or domestic violence, in addition to consulting on parenting challenges or addressing the needs of children who are displaying challenging behaviors.

281 Staff Consults were held to create social-emotional strategies to support challenging behaviors in the classrooms. 145 in-house support sessions were offered to students to provide help with transitions, to build frustration tolerance and increase self-help skills, or to utilize coping skills.

263 Health Screenings were conducted in FY23. 62 children received vision screenings from the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington DC; 13 children had their hearing screened by a Speech-Language Pathologist from Mind Your Language LLC; and Gordon Dental of Gaithersburg, MD provided on-site dental screening and cleaning to 188 children.

"MY FAVORITE PART OF TEACHING IS WATCHING CHILDREN MASTER ACTIVITIES AND KNOWING THEY UNDERSTAND A CONCEPT. I LET THEM GUIDE CONVERSATIONS TO HELP THEM LEARN CONCEPTS."

— MS. LINDA, A BBI TEACHER
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

With Head Start carryover funding from FY22, when staff vacancy rates were high, BBI began a complete renovation of the outdoor space behind our building. Our goal is to make the space an outdoor area of respite, mental regeneration, and active learning for the teachers, students, and staff alike.

In spring 2023, our landscape architects, Moody Graham, presented three design concepts and collaborated with staff about the best approach. The final design includes a serpentine walk, teaching gardens that feature edible and native plant species, and peaceful spaces for staff to meditate, relax, and reflect. Construction began in fall of 2023 and the space will be fully functional by summer 2024.

LAUNCH OF ALUMNI SUPPORT NETWORK

We know that time spent at BBI is just one meaningful period on a path of dynamic growth—and we’re committed to great outcomes for our community, even after they’ve left us. That’s why we launched an Alumni Support program to provide ongoing resources to our graduating Pre-K students and families as they transition into kindergarten and continue through K–12 schooling. With seed funding from the National Center for Families Learning, the program creates a network of support as children and parents continue their journey to academic excellence and social and emotional development throughout the K–12 years. In support of our two-generation approach, programming for parents is designed, with leadership from our Parent Policy Council, to train our parents to serve as leaders in their next school, advocate for their children’s needs and the needs of all children in the school, and continue to support each other in their parenting journeys. The Alumni Support program demonstrates our mission to support families even after children transition to kindergarten, and it will enable us to track child and family progress beyond the BBI program years.
TEACHER’S ASSISTANT INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The Teacher’s Assistant Internship program was designed to address the early childcare staffing shortage that was deeply felt across the nation, particularly at BBI and similar early childcare centers. Through our newly established partnership with Ballou STAY, we provided high school students from Ward 8 the opportunity to achieve required internship hours in pursuit of their CDA license. This partnership builds an employment pipeline for young people in our own community and in the BBI center. The pilot year was a major success, with six interns completing their internship hours at BBI. Three of them were offered full-time jobs with BBI as assistant teachers. We are thrilled about the success of this first year pilot program and the prospect of building a pipeline of fully vetted and experienced teachers at BBI from the Ward 8 community.

FARMERS MARKET

Persistent inflation and the high cost of living in the DC area have continued to hurt our families. In response, BBI launched our fresh farmers market program, thanks in part to new funding from the Sun Life Foundation. Building on our spring 2023 programming for National Nutrition Month, we held our first farmers market on June 13. Parents received healthy and delicious smoothie recipes along with locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables for ingredients. The market offered ripe mangoes, apples, dragon fruit, Brussels sprouts, peppers, broccoli, and more! The market was so successful and well-attended—by 58 BBI families—that we continued it through our current program year.

A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

One of our keys to creating the greatest impact possible is building and leveraging meaningful partnerships. In our last program year, Bright Beginnings nurtured and grew the many diverse partnerships needed to meet the complex needs of families experiencing housing instability. Our long-term partnerships delivered valuable services, including hearing, vision, and dental screenings; diaper and hygiene supplies; clothing and shoes; and doula and lactation support for pregnant mothers.

Our partnership with the Wolf Trap Center for the Performing Arts was reinvigorated in FY23, and it complements our initiative to offer more experiential learning for our children and their parents. During the program year, we welcomed 13 artist residencies for five sessions each in our classrooms, and offered two family workshops. Creative movement, drama, music, and dance lessons were incorporated into our High/Scope Curriculum. Professional development helped teachers develop strategies to deepen the children’s understanding and appreciation of creative arts. The program was so well received that it is now being expanded and incorporated into the Evening Care program for the 2023/2024 program year.

“I WAKE UP WITH ENERGY EVERY DAY AND MY BOYS AND I HAVE A PLACE TO GO. I DROP MOSES AND AARON OFF AND THEN I GO TO WORK. IT’S A STANDARD THAT HAS HELPED ALL OF US.”

— BILAL, A BBI FATHER OF TWO
OUR STORIES

CARMEN

Carmen came to BBI as an 8-month-old in April 2023 and started in Room 13. Her developmental screening was conducted soon after she enrolled. The assessment indicated some delays in her physical development and her mother was quickly informed. Carmen and her mom were referred to Strong Start and were found eligible for their services with an Occupational Therapist. Strong Start provided support to Carmen in her areas of weakness. Once Carmen got stronger, it was determined that she had mastered the occupational goals and could benefit from additional support in the area of communication, so those services were quickly put in place. Within a year, Carmen’s development has improved to the point where BBI screenings show she is now developmentally advanced. Strong Start determined that Carmen is no longer eligible for services or in need of developmental or communication support. Because of an early intervention, Carmen is now developing right on track for her age.

LEAH & DEREK

Leah and Derek joined BBI’s home-based program in December 2022. Leah was pregnant with her first child and was searching for support. Regular check-ins with a home visitor—and access to a doula and lactation specialist—provided the young couple with confidence to face this new journey together. Derek got involved in the fatherhood and internship programs at BBI. As a canvassing intern, he was trained to speak with local families about the services available at BBI and build his soft skills. He excelled in this role, which caught the attention of BBI staff. Soon after, a position opened up in BBI’s facilities department. Derek was offered the role, where he excelled. He was punctual and meticulous about his work. This part-time role turned into a full-time position in late 2023. Leah is doing equally well. She’s an eager participant in Parent Cafés and literacy events, and is currently enrolled in a Childhood Development Associates program in DC with a goal to complete her internship hours at BBI this year. Leah and Derek’s first child is now enrolled in BBI’s daytime program and thriving, and a second child is on the way!

TABITHA & LILLY

Tabitha and her daughter Lilly found BBI through one of our community referral partners. Tabitha had struggled with other day care centers that frequently sent Lilly home because of a runny nose, which impacted her mother’s ability to work. Tabitha attended parent orientation in the fall of 2022 and met with our health services team. She shared that Lilly’s frequent runny noses were the result of sinus problems, and she wanted to know how BBI would react to the condition. Tabitha was told that BBI wouldn’t send Lilly home for a runny nose unless two other symptoms of illness are present. That assured Tabitha that BBI was a good fit for her family. Once the school year was underway, our health services team referred Tabitha and Lilly to Children’s National Medical Center for an evaluation. It was determined that Lilly needed her tonsils and adenoids out in order to remedy her sinus problem. Lilly had the surgery and no longer has sinus-related runny noses. She entered kindergarten in August 2023, and BBI was able to facilitate her transition to a school that will support her individual education plan.
HEAD START BY THE NUMBERS

Our Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide children with a learning environment that helps them develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively so that they will not only be school-ready, but kindergarten prepared. BBI received a total of $181,714.03 in emergency COVID-19 relief funding in FY22, which helped stabilize daily operations.

- **216 Children Served**
- **37,615 Meals Provided**
- **188 Dental Screenings**
- **100% of Students Made Progress Toward School Readiness**
- **36 Medical Examinations**
- **18 Children with Developmental Concerns Served (by Referral)**
- **100% of Eligible Children Served**

BBI children heard an average of **38.22** conversational turns per hour, which is above the advanced level set by LENA by having over 25 conversational turns per hour.

BBI children heard over **1,826** adult words per hour.
TEACHER LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

With seed funding from a private foundation, BBI is building a career ladder for early childhood educators. This project will establish a framework that will guide and support the early childhood staff to develop not only as educators, but also as leaders in literacy, STEM, or social emotional learning content (SEL). These emerging leaders will also develop strategic and targeted projects in their content areas. The projects will address the ever-changing needs of our children and enhance their experiences in the classroom.

5K RACE

We are incredibly excited that after a five-year hiatus, Bright Beginnings has revived its annual 5K Fun Run and Walk, in partnership with the Junior League of Washington. Our goal is to bring together the families and friends of BBI for an event that is healthy, fun, and community-oriented. The event will have food, fun, and games for participants of all ages and athletic ability.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical activity and the wellness of our children and families is a primary focus at BBI. This year, we’re introducing ten hours per week of physical education classes for 75 children ages 2.5 and up. The skills and habits developed through physical activities and sports participation at an early age can have lasting benefits into adulthood. We are excited to see the impact this new programming will have on our children—and we look forward to sharing it with you in our next annual report!

“WE ARE HAVING FRESH VEGGIES EVERY DAY AND FRUIT. [MY KIDS] SNACK ON FRUIT AND I USE EVERYTHING WE GET AT THE FARMERS MARKET.”

— TALAYA, A BBI PARENT
2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bright Beginnings has an engaged Board of Directors who donate their time and expertise to ensure our programs and services address the needs of the families we serve. Our board is divided into several committees that allow members to actively support the organization through their respective areas of personal passion and professional expertise.

OFFICERS

Nancy Register, President
Derek Ford, Treasurer
Karen Howard, Vice President
Cameron Norman, Secretary

BOARD

Paul Berry, BBI Holdings President
Valérie Belizaire, Junior League Representative
Steve Glaude
Cheryl Hankerson, Esq.
Jonathan Hunter
Crystal Jones
Charles R. Lowery Jr.
Catriona MacDonald
Erika Magana
Selerya Moore
Cynthia Prentiss
Kisha Ward
Connie Woodland

PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

Kenyattia Miller, PPC President
Jenna Smachetti, PPC Vice President
ZeQuana Jackson, Secretary
FINANCIAL REPORT - Year Ended Sept 30, 2023

**REVENUE AND SUPPORT**

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**OPERATING EXPENSES**

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Change in Net Assets from Operations: (198,648) (135,997) (334,645)

Interest Income: 201,881 - 201,881

Change in Net Assets: 3,233 (135,997) (132,764)

Net Assets, Beginning of Year: 11,249,733 572,460 11,822,193

Net Assets, End of Year: 11,252,966 436,463 11,689,429
THANK YOU DONORS

$100,000+
Alexander and Margaret Stewart Trust
Bainum Family Foundation
Diane and Norman Bernstein Foundation, Inc.
The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation
The Washington Children’s Foundation

$50,000 - $99,999
Amerigroup
Ina Kay Family Foundation
John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation
Lichtenberg Family Foundation
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

$20,000 - $49,999
Carrie Le & Phong Le
Clark-Winchcole Foundation
David and Leighton Rinker Foundation
Grayer Family Foundation
Howard Klutz & Jean Swink Klutz

$10,000 - $19,000
Alloy Family Foundation, Inc.
Arlington Chapter of the Links, Inc.
Carol and Eugene Ludwig Family Foundation
George Preston Marshall Foundation
Jack R. Anderson Foundation
Joseph F. Horning Jr. & Lynne Horning

$5,000 - $9,999
Anthony & Anna L. Carozza Foundation
Cole Birches Foundation
Corina Higginson Trust
Dimick Foundation
Duda Family Foundation
Elizabeth Ann Hylton
Faye Fager
Ginn Foundation
Grace Powell-Harvey
John T. Collins Foundation

Kate & Jonathan Malachowski
Keith Boniface & Karen Dietrich
Mars Foundation
Maximus Foundation
Mayor’s Office on African American Affairs
Morse and Betty Johnson Family Foundation
Sally Wells
Share Fund (Comm Fdn NCR)
Spring Creek Foundation Designated Fund
Venable Foundation
Donor List Continued

$2,000 - $2,999
- Alfred Street Baptist Church
- Andrew and Jessica McKechnie
- Billy Register
- Carol Canada
- Eric Lucking
- Frances and Lewis Rumford
- James Swigert & Nancy Neubert
- Joel Michaels
- Kevin McHale
- Louis and Helyn Fanaroff Charitable Foundation
- Lucky Heart Fund
- Maria W. Estefania
- Maureen Kelly
- Muriel A. Hays
- National Cathedral School
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- Sara and Bruce Roth
- Stacey McGraw and Jon Griffiths
- The Merley-Burke Family Fund
- The Miller & Chevalier Charitable Foundation
- United Way of the NCA
- Van Metre Family Foundation
- Anonymous

$1,000 - $1,999
- Alex Yuskavage
- Bertha Lawrence
- Cameron G. and Craig Normand
- Carol Tucker-Foreman
- Catherine Lee
- Clare Herington and Laurence Platt
- Courtney Trombly
- Cynthia Prentiss
- Dolores Subiza
- E & B Family Trust
- Elena Cohen
- Elizabeth and Jeffrey Keffer
- Erik and Leslie Heyer
- Greater New Orleans Foundation
- Ivan Harris
- Janet & David Beckmann
- Jennifer Congdon
- John Didier
- John Groch
- Justin Moore
- Karen Edwards
- Karen Fisher and Colleen Conroy
- Kathleen & Thomas Aiello

$3,000 - $4,999
- Asher Family Foundation
- Judith and Douglas Henry
- Judith Mazo & Michael Seidman
- Mary Fauntleroy
- Nancy & William Register
- Owen Family Foundation
- Renzo Massari
- Stephen & Georgia Bupp
- Teresa Wild
- Anonymous
Donor List Continued

$500 - $999

Amy Stolarski
Anthony Albrecht
Barbara A. Patocka
Barbara Power and Peter Larkin
Beth Feldman
Billie McSeveney
Bonnie Skafte
Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation
Carl E. Hager
Carol King
Carol Reid Collins
Catherine Wilkinson
Charles Lowrey, Jr.
Christopher V. Goldson
Christopher Wagner
Connie M. Woodland
Corey Boles
Craig Snydal
Dalena Wright
Daniel Nokolits
DC School Nurses Association (DCSNA)

Debra & Josh Levin
Diane Bellora
Donald and Cathy Fogel
Donation Xchange/Global Charitable
Eilene & James Robb
Elizabeth & Harry Hannah
Ellen Nissenbaum and Jeffrey Colman
Eric & Sarah ten Siethoff
Hannah Cook
Helaine and Ronald Mario
Helen Kenney
Impact Assets
James and Judith Nelson
Janine Goodman and Gil Strobel
Jay Crystal
Jean & George Johnson
Jessica Pollner
Joan Kelsch
Joel D. Bacon
Johnathan Hunter
Jora LaFontaine
Judith Letendre

Kathleen Sequeira
Kathleen Smith
Kisha Ward
Learn’S’cool
Lydia Herz
Margaret Plank
Marisel Balseiro Wilbur and Tom Wilbur
Mrs. Ava S. Gross & Mr. Neal R. Gross
Mrs. Glade de Pontet
National Institute for Health Care Management
Patricia M. Jayne & Christopher Barr
Patricia MacGowan and T. Whittier Warthin
Rochelle Stanfield
Sean Whittaker
Stephanie R. Wright
Sydney & Robert Goodwin
Telesis Corporation
The Giving Square
Unity of Washington DC
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<td>Karen and Andrew Auerbach</td>
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<td>Margaretta Veltri</td>
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