Bastions of Light
Annual Report 2021–2022

The Camphill School
If last year was a year of perseverance and reevaluation of priorities, this past school year was one of flexibility and resilience. Both our resident and commuting staff have been bastions of light and guidance for our students and their families as we continued the journey through the pandemic and its ever-changing realities!

As restrictions eased, so too did our collective anxiety. This does not mean that our school community was not immune to having quarantined houses and classrooms to mitigate the spread of the virus that is now a perpetual part of all of our lives. It meant that as the year progressed we saw more gatherings among cohorts and, eventually, throughout the entire school! We were able to spend time together celebrating accomplishments like plays and graduations. Students and staff members enjoyed one another’s smiles as the year went on with lifted masking requirements. In January, it enabled short-term volunteer coworkers to arrive from all corners of the world to enrich and support the lives of everyone at the school!

You, our donors, were pillars of support this year! We were able to provide tuition assistance for students, purchase gardening tools and a germination chamber, replace a swing set in our upper campus, and buy innumerable pieces of crafting equipment for our students. Most importantly, you provided general operating support, which in today’s economic climate is essential to the school’s fiscal health.

With endless thanks,

Jennifer Nilsen
President, Board of Directors

“The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light if only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we are brave enough to be it.”

—Amanda Gorman
One of the many highlights of the eighth grade in a Waldorf® school is the class play: where each student gets the chance to be on stage and perform or contribute in other special ways.

Choosing a play for my class was not an easy thing, and it took most of last summer until I found the story . . . the perfect story.

I always knew what I was looking for in a play, and I always knew that I did not want to go the traditional route of Shakespeare. Although I did not want to do a musical, I wanted it to have the artistic elements of music, movement, and verse.

Our eighth grade is a unique bunch of eight young women and one young man—beautiful inside and out. I wanted to find a play that represented their individuality and their joy and curiosity in life. I wanted to do something exciting, something that was coherent as a story, something colorful, and something that told a captivating tale.

While I had watched the movies a long time ago, I was not otherwise familiar with Alice’s journey in Wonderland. The more I read the tale, though, the more I could imagine my class bringing it to life on stage.

More Than Meets the Eye

*By Narkie Pelletier, Eighth Grade Teacher*
“Who Are You?”
— Caterpillar

Alice in Wonderland is a story about a curious girl who finds herself in a place called Wonderland after following a white rabbit and falling down a deep well. Alice takes us on her journey through Wonderland, where she experiences peculiar things, meets interesting characters, and finds herself in strange places.

While this summary gives only a very broad overview, Alice is not a very straightforward story. By reading it and editing the script, more and more details and interesting facets, humor, and wit came up that I had missed when reading it the first time.

The reason I fell in love with this story for my class was not only for the potential of a beautiful visual scenery I imagined, but for the tale itself. Alice is about so much more than what meets the eye, and the more we practiced the play, the more similarities and parallels I (accidentally) found.

For me, the story of Alice is about an individual who finds herself in a world that is very strange, new, and even frightening. Her courage and curiosity keep her exploring and thus opening her to new possibilities. It is a story of identity, a journey of experiences and figuring out who we really are and who we will become.

Eighth grade marks the culmination of the lower school journey. It is a year of new challenges and completion as the students prepare for the transition to new adventures (high school, new house parents, etc.). With new experiences, we change and evolve and, just like Alice, we are never the same person we were yesterday. Curiosity is the driving force that enables us to become explorers.

“I’m late, I’m late, for a very important date.”
— White Rabbit

We started practicing after winter break and were promptly put on hold due to COVID making its rounds in the lower school. First, it was one residential house that needed to quarantine, taking three of my students out. Then another house—two more of my cast gone. Then the first house needed to continue quarantining. Lastly, I myself had COVID and was out for ten days. There was a week when we only had one student and two parapros left in the class!

For obvious reasons, I became worried and anxious. Not only were most of my students out, but the weeks kept rolling by so fast. By the time everyone had recovered and was back in class, we had five weeks to go. Those five weeks were hard work.

“Did someone pull you by the hand?”
— Alice

The one thing I could not have done without was the support. I was, and still am, most grateful for all the help I received from the community, my fellow teachers, house parents, and especially my team of paraprofessionals and coworkers. I was blown away by everyone’s generosity, flexibility, understanding, and willingness to help out and make things happen. The joy and genuine selflessness of simply wanting to help never ceases to amaze me!

Looking back, I can say that this was my most intense school experience so far, but also the most joyful and rewarding. The idea of doing a play, at least in a Waldorf school, is not the outcome, but rather the process and what the students take with them and gain from that experience. They each developed confidence, joy, pride, flexibility, teamwork, and, added to that, the patience that comes with waiting your turn or for your part. There are all things and many more that the eighth graders have worked hard on.

For some it was speaking in front of an audience, speaking slowly, loudly, and clearly. For others, it was working together, following one another’s lead, and learning lines, movements, and cues by heart. Individually they learned and grew and shined like a star so that together they could rise to the occasion and create something wonderfully beautiful.

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The Class of 2022

Upon joining the school in second grade, Alana quickly established herself as strong-willed, having a deep desire to connect to people, including learning and practicing their names. She has matured so much over the years and shows love and respect to those in her life. With a light-hearted and humorous approach, Alana will do what is asked of her. She likes those who include her, explain things to her, and acknowledge the care and attention she displays. Alana loves music and dancing. She is very social and her peers mean a lot to her.

Charlie has been at the school since sixth grade. He has a wonderful sense of humor and loves to be social with everyone. He has matured throughout his years in high school and has shown himself to be capable and hard-working. He has a great memory for tasks and people and strives to do good work. He likes to be part of the fun and will create different phrases and jokes with those he connects to. Charlie shows great interest in trains, music, and likes to draw using a range of colors. He likes to be talked to and informed of what is going on.

Ella M. joined the school in eighth grade. She is a talented artist who also enjoys music and dancing. Through her time at school, she showed an openness to explore more in the realms of art and loved to learn about many subjects, especially animals. Once she has established her place, Ella then shows great affection and a warm, sunny disposition. While Ella needs space and time for herself, she has become more social. Ella likes to be informed of the tasks ahead and then will work hard, showing great strength and commitment.

At the school since kindergarten, Ella T. is loving and has a great sense of humor. Her passions include books, family, friends, and music. She is very open to people and will connect quickly, especially when music is involved. Ella can also be very determined and knows what she wants and how to accomplish it. As a member of the school community for more than a dozen years, Ella has made countless connections to fellow students, staff, and coworkers.

Farah joined our class in ninth grade. She has a strong desire to learn and allows her skills and talents to grow. Relationships are very important for her and she values trust and respect. Farah loves culture, animals, and the arts and has found many other interests, including working with the Garden Crew. Farah is a hard worker and always strives to do better. She loves to be part of a group and make social connections. Farah matured greatly during her time in school and continues to want to understand the world around her. She will continue to work hard and overcome challenges wherever her journey leads.

Gesana joined The Camphill School in eighth Grade. She brings a great passion for language, music, culture, people, and the arts. Throughout her years at the school she has been learning to understand relationships and what it means to be a friend. Gesana values these relationships and brings kindness and loyalty to those around her. Her maturity and strength are ever-growing and equip her to face new challenges.

Jack has been with the school since kindergarten. He is often quiet and reserved but enjoys being around others. Once he feels comfortable in situations, he will join in. Given the time and space he needs, he has the determination to do many things for himself. Jack loves to sing, has a great memory for meaningful tasks, and likes to explore his space to find what is comfortable for him. Jack takes his time connecting to others and has become close to those who take the time for him.

Jesse joined The Camphill School in eighth grade. He took time to find his place in the community but through his years in high school became a very loving, kind, and hard-working young man. He showed a vast variety of skills in reading, writing, and social connections. Jesse does not like to be rushed and will prefer to be on the periphery before venturing closer in. He works hard and shows commitment to tasks, and he has a strong appreciation for so many things that many take for granted or overlook. Jesse loves being read to, music, cars, and animals. Relationships matter to him, and he wants to share his delight with those in his life.

Luke joined The Camphill School in seventh grade. He likes to take his time accomplishing things. He works hard and has a great memory for tasks. Luke can be charming and affectionate but also very sensitive, sometimes needing time to himself. He has a good sense of humor and enjoys small social settings. Once Luke connects with people, he is loyal and loving.

Samantha, who started at the school in eighth grade, overcame many challenges physically, socially, and emotionally as she progressed through high school. Sam has an unwavering strength, commitment, and loyalty to those in her life. She makes connections on her terms and they are made to last. Sam is a hard worker and will do what is asked of her efficiently. Sam’s interests, including music, writing, drawing, and fashion, have blossomed. Sam is social on her terms; she likes to see what others are wearing and discuss it. She likes to be seen and heard. Sam is also very connected to her family and values the chance to make them proud. Sam is very determined and often will need to explore and understand new situations in her own way.
At its essence a community is people. People who have chosen to live near or with one another because of a similar aim. It can be varying sizes from a few to innumerable. At The Camphill School, our students and their families and friends, our employees and volunteers, and our donors and supporters are each important elements of the tapestry of our community. Each is a thread that hold together for the good of one another, creating a tapestry that is resilient and enduring. It does not fray. We add more and more threads each year, providing more vibrancy.

Being woven together in the spirit of unison makes each of us stronger and allows us to play our own special part in the tapestry of the community. That is the core of The Camphill School. This is what makes it possible for students to feel surrounded and supported as they explore who they really are and find all of what they truly can be.

As the world around the community changes, our school is steadfast and committed to ensuring that everyone remains knitted together for the benefit of us all. We all need to embrace any community that is part of our lives to ensure all who are part of it are healthy, strong, and recognized.

We need to turn towards one another again and spend time tightening (and in some cases mending) any loose connections. It is only through these connections that we can support not only each other, but ourselves. Alone, we are simply one small thread. Alone we may waver, fray, or even break. Just look around you as you spend more time with more of the communities that you are a part of. You will see the connections joining once again to face an always uncertain world. Together, we make up something more beautiful, more durable, and more worthwhile than we can imagine. Together we can face what comes towards us. Together we are stronger. Together we make each other stronger.

“Handcrafting a Community

“We need to join together again in communities, but such communities that are not governed by bonds of heritage, but by principles that incite us to strive together and work for each other. There a mood can be set where adults and children can live in unison; important and not so important people, able and not so able but nonetheless in reciprocal appreciation of the dignity of the individual. Only when a new style of community is formed in this way will it become possible for children and young people to reach an expression of their true being out of which their individual contribution can ensue.”

—Karl Koenig
Beaver Farm Graduates

Alex started at The Campbhill School at the wee age of five! This may make him our longest-tenured student to date. Alex is a hardworking member of our team. From Foxfield Flowers, pottery, and fiber to the day student crews, he engages in a variety of jobs from processing herbs to making gorgeous weaving on the loom. Alex is someone who likes to mix it up day to day and is always willing to help out when and where needed. He’s funny, gentle, and kind with his friends and incredibly talented on the dance floor. After graduation, Alex will continue to live at home and will attend the day program at Kimberton Hills. We certainly hope Alex comes to visit!

Buey has grown so much over the past several years at Beaver Farm. While Buey loves routine and familiar staff, he also loves variety and is good at so many things! From estate work outdoors to processing herbs indoors, Buey lends a hand everywhere. When he isn’t working hard, Buey loves sunny breezy days, art, hiking, and being with his friends. He’s also a huge fan of snack and lunch, even helping out to prepare meals and treats for his friends. This year, he has enjoyed making kale chips, using kale and garlic from our garden. Buey is a kind and sweet young man with a wonderful smile and great sense of humor. We wish Buey well in his new home.

Gabe is part of our estate crew in the morning, keeping our campus beautiful. He also helps out with picking up the weekly bulk order for the entire farm. Gabe also realized a goal this year when he joined the life skills crew and got to participate in more life projects, which he has been so enthusiastic about. Gabe is a friendly and helpful young man who loves life on a farm where he gets to try all sorts of different things. He enjoys being outdoors, caring for animals, and meeting new people, making everyone feel immediately welcome. We wish Gabe best of luck moving forward with his plans to live in a local group home or community-like placement.

Glenn is such a sweet and special guy who loves his work on the farm. He enjoys the wide-open space and nature of our program, finding comfort in the outdoors. Glenn is gentle and thoughtful, caring for all of the farm animals daily. He especially loves when it comes time to give them water! Speaking of water, Glenn is one of our resident “fishies,” thoroughly enjoying the pool over at Foxfield in the warmer weather. He also loves hiking, music, and eating great meals with his friends in his house. We will be sad to say goodbye to Glenn, but we wish him well in his next chapter of life.

Jack is a hardworking and strong young man with a love of the outdoors. Jack’s favorite crews have been farm, estate, and garden. He loves to swim, hike, and go on outings in the community. Jack has an independent spirit and loves to experience new things. We will miss the best of luck in his future. Joseph came to Beaver Farm four years ago from Vermont, never having attended Beaver Run. Jake has learned so much and grown a lot during his time at the farm. Jack is physically strong and athletic. He can out-wheelbarrow or out-luke-just about anyone! He is a real asset to the vocational crews, especially on the farm. Jack has grown into a real farmer with a deep appreciation for the outdoors, wide open spaces, and plenty of routine. Jake has touched the hearts of many students and staff and we will miss him when it is time for him to return to Vermont. Jacob’s family is working tirelessly to find an appropriate adult placement. We wish Jack and his family the very best.

Joseph had an unexpected early transition from Beaver Farm just before spring break this year. Joseph transitioned to Bancroft in his home state of New Jersey, which surely took everyone by surprise. Adjusting to life without Joseph so abruptly left a shocking void around the farm! Joseph can fill up a room with his engaging and curious demeanor and makes friends with absolutely anybody. Joseph was instrumental in making everyone feel welcome and that everyone was getting their work done properly. Although he is missed, we are very excited for him that he has found a place to call home!

Josh is our resident student handyman. His days are filled with a variety of crews like garden, pottery, fiber, outreach, academics, and drama. Josh really has a home on the stage and is a natural performer. He also finds special meaning in repairing broken objects. Josh has a great sense of humor and is a social guy. He has many friends here at the farm and benefits from being surrounded by his peers. He’s a really capable and smart young man who has such a bright and exciting future ahead of him. After graduation, he will be moving to Portland, where he will live in the community in the two other houses and will be supported by Community Options, Inc. We will have access to both a day program and work options.

Marcus is someone who loves an excuse to have a good time, so Beaver Farm—where so many celebrations take place—has been a perfect place for him to live. From music nights to festivals, Marcus has thrived on the social aspects of community living. Marcus is a part of the estate and garden crews this year, which allows him to work outdoors where he loves being outdoors and participating in a wide variety of tasks. He especially loves to supervise the garden crew splitting wood! Marcus is an energetic guy with a great sense of humor. He’s spirited, clever, and always makes time for a little mischief. We wish Marcus the best of luck in his future. He will be living locally, so we hope he stays in touch.

McKayla has been at The Campbhill School for many years and so we have had the privilege of getting to know her very well. McKayla loves dancing, laughing, and hanging with her friends more than anything; but that doesn’t mean she doesn’t take her work seriously. As a member of the Foxfield Flowers crew, she diligently processes flowers, pulls weeds, works on arrangements, and patiently awaits wreath-making season. When she isn’t caring for gorgeous bouquets, she is a huge help in the baking crew and also enjoys cleaning eggs and glazing pottery. McKayla is a small but mighty young lady who rises to the occasion when presented with new challenges. She has grown so much since coming to Beaver Farm, and we know she will continue to amaze us from afar. We wish McKayla the best of luck in her future.

Nina is a true creative who is interested in just about everything. She’s participated in so many different crews, including pottery and fiber, garden, Foxfield Flowers, drama, academics, farm, and kitchen. While she enjoys cooking, baking is truly her passion. Nina is welcoming and talented. She has worked hard, fine-tuning her weaving and sewing skills over the years to create bags and a quilt. She also enjoys reading and history, with many of her school breaks spent visiting historical locations all over the country. Nina has a great sense of humor, which will take her far. She also enjoys being a leader, at times helping her peers who are new to the farm feel welcomed. She can also be found looking after some of our younger community members as she loves children and is incredibly compassionate towards them. It is Nina’s plan to head back up north, hoping to settle at Tufam.

Sarah came to Beaver Farm not having attended Beaver Run and swiftly began her reign as everyone’s best friend. She had her hand in so many crews! Whether it’s creating gorgeous crafts in pottery and fiber or hauling packed buckets at Foxfield Flowers, she’s been charming peers and staff alike along the way. Sarah transitioned to her adult home in Darien, Connecticut, back in January, and every day since then we have missed her enthusiastic warmth, sparkling headbands, and fancy dresses even when working the farm. Because, for Sarah, fashion is everything. However, Sarah has settled in very well to her adult home through Abilis, Inc. and is absolutely thriving.

Derry is a source of light. He’s a gentle and sensitive guy who loves animals, music, his friends, and being outside. Derry is part of two different estate crews, one at Foxfield and one at Beaver Farm, so he really knows the lay of the land and helps to keep it all beautiful. He lives at Farm House this year, where he gets to be in the center of the action and surrounded by friends and his house father Reydan, who is a fantastic cook. He baked the most amazing chocolate cake at Derry’s request to celebrate his birthday this year. Derry will be moving on to an adult placement through Community Options, Inc. in Malvern. We wish him the very best of luck in his new home.

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Two years ago, it came time for our young special boy Jett to start school. We were living in Florida amongst our family and friends. We were nervous as parents. Our child with many special needs was being enrolled in the general education kindergarten. We anxiously waited to see how he would do. That year was faced with so many challenges for our son. We watched nervously as our sweet boy was confused. He became so frustrated and was, sadly, severely struggling to keep up.

We moved through some of the challenges and he was finally recommended for the Special Education services he so deserved. But Jett was still unsettled, defiant at times, and cautious as we navigated this new educational territory. We did not know what to trust or what his future held.

I researched schools online and was not able to find anything in our area that had what I knew Jett needed—time in nature and lots of freedom to be himself. Then I found Camphill. We drove up to tour the school in late 2019 and were in complete awe! The beautiful campus, the warm welcoming staff, and, most importantly, how happy the students were.

Jett was ready and set up to start his journey at The Camphill School. He started in first grade in September of 2020. We watched as our boy began to blossom. The happiness, warmth, patience, and devotional care the staff provides gently guides our boy to a beautiful acceptance of this wonderful place. He is able to move at the correct gradient academically and, most importantly, he is happy again. He is at peace now, knowing he is able to progress. He is trusting again. In the last two years, Camphill has brought him from the shadows of where he was before and back into the sunshine. We are thrilled for what his future holds at this beautiful school. To say we are grateful is an understatement. Thank you so much to the dedicated, most wonderful human beings at The Camphill School for giving our boy the gift of a real childhood. He is now at a school that can accommodate his delicate needs and create growth. The future is bright!
The 2022 Gala was a success! Approximately 200 guests joined us in Handcrafting Our Future both in person and virtually. The temperate evening was a nice complement to the beautiful venue, Loch Aerie Mansion in Malvern. Development Director Guy Alma and long-time supporter and friend, and owner of Tennis Addiction Sports Club, Anthony DeCecco teamed up again to co-host the event. Anthony also served as Gala Chair and performed live with his band, Almost Minnesota.

The Beaver Farm Drama Club earned a standing ovation with their performance of the comedic skit, *It Could Always Be Worse*. Univest Financial was inducted as Corporate Partner of the Year. Univest has been giving to the school for ten years through event sponsorships and the PA EITC program. Employees have volunteered at our campuses on several occasions and have provided advice countless other times. We are truly grateful for their partnership over these many years. Our 2022 recipient of the Lydia Schulze Volunteer of the Year award is Melanie Scott. Since 2005, Melanie has helped with a variety of projects, from stuffing envelopes to putting together Gala baskets, but when she retired in 2018 she knew she wanted to do more. Fortunately for the school, Melanie is a fantastic cook! Since September of 2018 she has cooked lunch for our students on a weekly basis, first in Antanor followed by Longhouse and then Saelde.

The theme of Handcrafting Our Future was born out of the need for our students to have the tools, equipment, and educational programs necessary to learn practical skills like woodworking, sewing, weaving, and gardening. Our hosts appealed to the audience for a variety of items, from a standing floor loom to greenhouse supplies. Our donors eagerly contributed so the students can continue to create with their heads, hearts, and hands, all while learning life skills, and preparing for adulthood.

After enjoying a delicious dinner and dessert from John Serock Catering and the evening program ended, guests danced and played tambourines while singing along with Almost Minnesota.

We are so grateful for the outpouring of support. The Gala raised over $255,000 for our students. Thank you to our committee, our sponsors, and everyone who made it happen!
**Year in Review 2021/2022**

**July 2021**  
Ember house enjoyed a day in Philadelphia. Our ESY program is a perfect opportunity for fun and to strengthen friendships.

**Aug. 2021**  
It’s not just the customers that love Foxfield Flowers—native pollinators are thriving in the gardens and play an important role in the health of the crop.

**Sept. 2021**  
After spending two years in Meadowseewet and one in Longhouse, the fourth grade class moved into the schoolhouse.

**Oct. 2021**  
Sixth graders study geography and have the opportunity to craft their own rock formations with stones they collected from our campus.

**Nov. 2021**  
Thanks to generous donors, the school installs a brand-new playground across from Meadowseewet. It is made from a long-lasting, sustainable, and organic Robinia wood.

**Dec. 2021**  
The Class of 2022 presented A Christmas Carol and help infuse holiday spirit into all those who watched.

**Jan. 2022**  
Riding a delivery bike up and down our hill is no small task. A break is welcome, as is finding the perfect place to put your bike helmet while you relax.

**Feb. 2022**  
Silver Maple got into the Olympic spirit. The best part about being an international community is that there are so many teams to root for!

**March 2022**  
What a circus Fasching was this year!

**April 2022**  
Spring means new life, and the lambs at Beaver Farm are welcomed and lovingly cared for by students.

**May 2022**  
Students participate in a fishing derby hosted by West Cask Sportmen's Club at Hibernia Park.

**June 2022**  
Meadowseewet Early Childhood students celebrate their classmates who will be headed off to elementary school in a nature-filled ceremony.

**The Strength of Our Community**

Claus Sproll, Director of Finance

There is a relationship between health, well-being, and community. We often speak a verse by Rudolf Steiner before and at the end of meetings that points to this interrelationship between health and community:

The healthy social life is found,  
when in the mirror of each human soul  
the whole community is forming itself  
and when in the community  
the strength of each single one is living

We successfully operated through another year of pandemic-related staffing issues. From a financial point of view, due to the significant increase in personnel costs to provide the required staff, we relied more than planned on our supporters and our reserve funds. We ended the year within budget thanks to the support we received from the ongoing generosity of our donors, Beaver Run Foundation, forgiveness of our Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, and strength of our community.

At the end of the coming fiscal year in June 2023, we will say goodbye to Pamela Benton who has served the school in the financial realm for over forty years and Janet Faust, our dedicated bookkeeper for the past twenty-four years. The transition of the department has begun with the addition of Katie Rippe as Finance Administrator. We also welcomed Audra Hoffman Kahr, a finance professional in educational settings, to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors.

Looking ahead, our focus will be renewing and upgrading our campuses and infrastructure along with maintaining the robust investment in our resident and commuting staff that make it all possible.

**Expenses**

- Administration/Marketing: $708,124
- Development: $244,110
- Insurance: $1,822,631
- Occupancy Costs: $1,155,647
- Educational Program: $3,452,218
- Boarding Program: $4,871,982
- Depreciation: $1,075,502

*Contributions are net of special event expenses.*

Our auditors’ report is available upon request.
You, our devoted donors, continue to remind us that your support is a brighter future for our students and our families, as well as our community, staff, and volunteers. Through these challenges we grew stronger, remained resilient, and were able to receive the education and support they and their friends, family members, and part of the community. We are thrilled to say that our students have continued to receive the education and support they and their families need in spite of the financial challenges many have faced. We continue to support the students to complete the year and are grateful for your ongoing dedication to our students. We are forever grateful to you!

**Our Donors**

While we make a concerted effort to list all those who give, we do occasionally make mistakes or inadvertent omissions. Please email Hope at dev@camphillschool.org if you are not alert to any errors.
Volunteers

“Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have.”
— Jim Rohn
The Camphill School’s mission is to create wholeness for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities through education, therapy, and extended family living so that they may be better understood, more fully unfold their potential, and more meaningfully participate in life.

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