



The Reminder

Mission of the Victoria Brain Injury Society:

To provide education, support and advocacy to people with acquired brain injury, their family and friends, to empower them to move toward emotional, economic and social self-reliance

VBIS STAFF

Nicole Nelson, Executive Director

Anna McLaughlan, Manager of Administration & Volunteer Resources

Sharon Stewart, Accounting Clerk

Kathy Smith, Client Services Manager

Alex Gilchrist, Case Manager

Leidi Fortner, Case Manager

Katusha Dmitrieva, Program Facilitator

Carmen Eisenhauer, Music Therapist

The Victoria Brain Injury Society Presents the 6th Annual Gala *Evening of Black & White...Because Grey Matters*

Saturday, November 9, 2013

**in the Pacific Ballroom of the award-winning
Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour Hotel**

An enchanting evening, to include an intimate concert featuring Ken Lavigne, Philip Grant and Paul Ouellette of *Romanza*, a champagne reception, tapas, silent and live auctions and much, much more.



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The Black & White Gala is the Victoria Brain Injury Society's major fundraiser of the year. The funds raised from this event help us continue offering the essential programs we have for survivors of acquired brain injury and their families.

We invite you to get involved as a valued sponsor, or a donor for one of the auctions, as well as to purchase tickets for this special evening.

To purchase tickets please visit:

<http://victoriabraininjurysociety.eventbrite.ca/>



Victoria Brain Injury Society — Units D & E, 830 Pembroke Street, Victoria, BC, V8T 1H9

Office Hours: Monday to Thursday—10:00am to 3:00pm

Tel: 250.598.9339 | Fax: 250.598.9363 | Email: admin@vbis.ca | Website: www.vbis.ca | Charity #122452121RR 0001

ANNUAL PICNIC

The VBIS Annual BBQ Picnic just keeps getting bigger every year and 2013 was no different!

We had one hundred and forty VBIS clients, their family members, friends and supporters, as well as community supporters come together on August 7th under gorgeous sunny and warm skies at the park beside the Crystal Pool. There were folks young and old, VBIS members new and not-so-new, and even dogs!

Our very own band, "Forget-Me-Notes", have been practicing many weeks to add to festivities in leading a sing-a-long—they even had a bit of a standing ovation to sing a bit longer!

Because we had such a fabulous collection of community-minded businesses donating their foods and items to this picnic, our costs were almost negligible. We want to thank the very generous support of:

**Art's Bakery, B&C Foods, Bubby Rose's Bakery,
Cobbs Bakery (Shelbourne), Country Grocer, Fol Epi Bakery,
Market on Yates, Origins Bakery,
Real Canadian Superstore (Langford),
Red Barn (Vanalman), Safeway (Fort/Foul Bay & Tillicum),
Wellburn's Market, Wildfire Bakery**

We hope you will take the opportunity to frequent these businesses as a way of saying your own personal 'thank you' to them.

What better way is there to meet up with 'old' friends and new, have a fabulous feast, enjoy music and conversation under a warm August sun!

We also want to thank the fabulous army of volunteers who helped set up, cook and serve, and then take everything down to return the park to it's original state: **Andy L, Craig M, Dennis L, George C, Greg H, Hisashi N, Jing L, Joseph N, Linda-Mary B, Nahid A, Ryefield F, Shelley S, Terry C and Wande A.** And a special thanks to the Herculean efforts of **Sandi B and Sharon T**, without whom this very successful picnic could not have happened.



So, how about putting a note in your diary for next year's picnic.... It will be on a Wednesday, early to mid August. Watch this space and follow us on Facebook for all the latest information (and more photos)!



IMPORTANT DATES to REMEMBER

September 5

VBIS closed for Staff Team Building

September 30

Volunteer Fair, UVic

October 14

VBIS closed, Thanksgiving Day

November 9

6th Annual Gala Fundraiser

November 11

VBIS closed, Remembrance Day

December 11

VBIS Holiday Celebration



WELCOME!

If you have been in the VBIS office during the past month you will have noticed a new, cheery face gracing the halls!

Meet **Kathy Smith**, the new Client Services Manager!



Kathy hails from Montreal and arrived on Vancouver Island in 1991 — good move, Kathy! Armed with a BSW and a wealth of experience assisting people with mental health and other multiple barriers, Kathy comes to us from Pacifica Housing.

Kathy says her interests are simple: Indian food, gardening and cats.... and learning to make French bread for 24 people while on an outing at Strathcona Park! we smell a story to be shared here!

So come on down to VBIS for a coffee and meet Kathy — and better ask her about that bread!

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AWARENESS~CHOICES~EDUCATION (ACE) PROGRAM

Dealing with an acquired brain injury (ABI) is life-challenging; dealing with addictions of any sort is life-changing; dealing with a ABI and substance abuse is harsh to say the least. Can you imagine trying to survive, function and thrive with BOTH at the same time? Never mind prosper psychologically.

The ACE program is a weekly walk-in support for people with ABI who want to prosper and thrive by keeping their lives free from substance abuse. With the guidance of Leidi, who has a background working with clients with

substance abuse, mental health, brain injury and a multitude of other barriers, they learn about their unique challenges and support each other when the going gets tough. We can say a lot about this program, because we are passionate about it, but it is really better coming from a regular participant in the program, Derrick—in his own words:

“I went from being what they call a ‘super offender’ with over 80 criminal convictions to being two and a half years sober- and crime-free. I would say a good seventy percent of this success is due to the Victoria Brain Injury Society (VBIS). I had been diagnosed in the prison system with a brain injury and found there was very little support in the prison system. I had a hard time learning how to survive in prison without getting hurt or hurting someone else.... (then) I met Leidi. For six months I had (counselling) sessions with her.”

Eventually Derrick was granted parole with his own request that his conditions include continuing to receive support from VBIS with the counselling and ACE program attendance.

Derrick continues, “I’ve been to so many support groups and programs that I think I could teach them! But ACE is different. (It) is less formal – you don’t have to worry about admitting your stumbles and people pushing you away or shunning you from the group. In this program you can say what you did, recognize it was wrong, get over it and move on. **They take a personalized approach to everyone’s challenges.** The group gets to know one another really well and we all make recommendations to each other. Also, the group runs every week on an ongoing basis, which allows us to practice what we learn every week. Even though I have all the knowledge in my head, if I don’t put it to use, I lose it – that is part of my brain injury. This group was not only a starting point for my journey in recovery, I also use it as maintenance.”

Being on parole, Derrick could not afford any stumbles, and he did have a couple. “Those stumbles put me right back in the prison system. But because of the group and my own determination, I picked myself up very quickly. I came right back to the ACE program and jumped right back on the sobriety band wagon – using ACE as my ace card; I had an ace up my sleeve!

“So now, my story gets even better, as long as I stay sober – **VBIS is in full swing to support me.** I graduated from a men’s hostel to my own supportive housing. Once again, VBIS and my case manager, Leidi, stepped up to the plate and supported me in finding a nice apartment to live in. Leidi continued to help me, with my Person With Disability forms and any other information concerning resources – whatever I need help with, the support is continually provided by Leidi and VBIS.

“So now after being sober for two and a half years, and doing it on my own accord, without parole, I feel good about myself. When I look back on it I just say, ‘Wow!’ You never could have told me I would be living in an apartment with a fireplace, my own food, and my own household items (that aren’t stolen!) – I would have said, ‘No way’.

“Oh, if you could only see into my mind when I first came to the VBIS office with the prison guard. The prison psychologist suggested I record my thoughts in a notebook, and I have been doing so ever since. As I look back to notes from those first days at VBIS to now, it is almost unrecognizable. Almost to the point where I am no longer the person that sat in that chair and came from that institution. **It’s like I’m a new guy with a fresh start.** And if I continue to come every Tuesday and accept referrals and support from this organization, I will continue to prosper. Prosper in happiness.”

GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

CREATIVE ARTS PROGRAM (CAP)

This program focuses on art as therapy and welcomes everyone interested. No experience in any of the arts is necessary. Together we will explore the world of Visual Arts and learn how to expand your creativity and unleash your imagination. With an open studio structure you are free to work on your own project or theme offered by the facilitator. At our studio you are encouraged to enjoy the process of art making and work at your own pace. Bring images, books, post cards, magazines, etc. that you find fun and inspiring. Exercises will be offered for those interested, and supplies are provided.

To participate, you must register in advance by calling the VBIS office.

Facilitator: Katusha Dmitrieva

Day and Time: every Monday (with the exception of statutory holidays), 12:30pm to 2:30pm

VBIS WALK & RUN PROGRAM

Research studies show that exercise can play an important role in the rehabilitation process for people with ABI. Benefits such as improving balance and coordination, fewer symptoms of depression, fatigue, and cognitive problems, as well as reducing reliance on assistive devices and enhancing a person's ability to do everyday activities independently have all been proven. And let's not forget the purely social aspect of exercising with others!



Walk & Run Program volunteers walk/run with the participants to ensure that everyone returns to VBIS without getting disorientated or lost.

Whether your goal is to run in a marathon or be able to walk around the block ... whether you have to use a walker or are a power-walker ... this is a great activity to get involved in!

To participate, you must contact Anna at the office to organize a couple of quick steps before starting.

Day and Time: Wednesdays, 11:00 to 12:00pm; gathering at VBIS 10:45am




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GROUPS & PROGRAMS for PEOPLE WITH ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Please contact the office at 250.598.9339 if you are interested in signing up for any of these programs

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY (ABI) 101

An informative introduction to brain anatomy and brain injury. In this 4 week, knowledge-building course, there will be discussion around brain function and brain injury with focus on causes, effects, recovery and more. This is a prerequisite to the "Coping Strategies" program.

Must be pre-registered with staff.

Facilitator: Leidi

Upcoming Sessions: Wednesdays, 10:00am to 12:00pm

COPING STRATEGIES

This 24 week program is an informative, in-depth course for people with brain injury, looking at strategies of daily living and dealing with the effects of brain injury.

Pre-requisite: ABI 101; must be pre-registered with staff.

Facilitator: Leidi

Upcoming Sessions: Fridays, 10:00am to 12:00pm, and Fridays, 1:00pm to 3:00pm (two separate groups)



AWARENESS ~ CHOICES ~ EDUCATION (ACE)

This program is an educational support group for people who have a brain injury and are also experiencing difficulties related to substance abuse. This group aims to motivate, support, increase self-awareness and examine issues and strategies of brain injury and addiction. It also aims to increase social stabilization and social interactions with others.

Must be pre-registered with staff.

Facilitator: Leidi

Upcoming Sessions: Tuesdays, 11:00am to 1:00pm, ongoing every week

MUSIC PROGRAM

Are you musically inclined? Would you like to join a light-hearted group that loves to sing, play guitar and make music? This group may be for you! Music therapy is the skillful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain and restore mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health. Researchers are discovering that music functions use many of the same brain pathways as motor functions, speech and language processing functions and cognitive functions. Because of this, music therapists are able to be an important part of rehabilitation in individuals with brain injuries.

Facilitator: Carmen

Upcoming Sessions: Tuesdays, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

YOUTH SUPPORTING YOUTH GROUP

For young adults between the **ages of 18 - 25** coping with a brain injury, to address the unique concerns and challenges faced by young people with brain injury.

Brain injury is the leading cause of death and disability for people of this age group. This is a time of life when the foundations are laid for future successes. The skills one learns at this age will serve a person the rest of their life.

When: Thursdays, 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Facilitator: Alex



PEER SUPPORT

“Drop-In” Support Group

An opportunity for people with acquired brain injury to connect with trained Peer Supporters, who have experienced brain injury themselves, and have participated in our Peer Support training program.

No appointment necessary—just drop in.

Mondays, 10:00am to 12:00pm—Women Only

Mondays, 1:00pm to 3:00pm—General Group

Tuesdays, 10:00am to 3:00pm—General Group

Wednesdays, 10:00am to 3:00pm—General Group

Thursdays, 10:00am to 2:00pm—General Group



INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGEMENT

Brain injuries are like fingerprints - each one is unique. We understand brain injury and our case managers can work with individuals to navigate their new reality in a way that best suits their personal needs.

Case management provides an advocate who facilitates access to housing, employment and financial services, and works on any anxieties and cognitive challenges one may have in relation to accessing those services.



GROUPS & PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES & SUPPORTERS

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

A group for those who support and care for brain injured survivors. We share the gifts and challenges of the changed lives that brain injury brings. Open discussion and presentation. Call to receive emails on upcoming program information. Drop-in Group, no registration required.

Facilitator: Kathy

Upcoming Sessions: Mondays, 6:30pm to 8:30pm, ongoing every week (except statutory holidays)

FAMILY CASE MANAGEMENT

We provide support for families, couples and significant loved ones of brain injured survivors. Call the office for an appointment.

VBIS SUPPORT GROUP AT VICTORIA GENERAL HOSPITAL

A group to help family and friends of someone with an acquired brain injury who is currently a patient in the ICU or the Neuro Unit learn more about brain injury. It is an opportunity to support each other, share information and know that you are not alone.

Please check in with the Unit Social Worker.

Location: VGH Family ICU/Acute Neuro Unit, 6th floor

When: Thursdays, 2:00pm to 3:30pm

FAREWELLS

We are extremely fortunate to have a Board of Directors who is deeply committed to the work we do at the Victoria Brain Injury Society and whose members have continuously shown immense dedication in guiding the organization. With their terms of office concluded, three of our Directors retired at our Annual General Meeting in June. We would like to thank them for their tireless energy as they helped guide VBIS through new and exciting times of growth:



With 16 years background in the area of fund development and the non-profit industry that she brought with her, **BARBARA TOLLER** has helped the Board and staff develop and elevate the profile of the Victoria Brain Injury Society in the community in the two packed years she has been with us. She has been a steadying influence—as well as a wealth of information—in setting standards in our fundraising efforts and data management. With her recent promotion to Director, Principal Gifts & Campaigns at the University of Victoria, Barbara has found that she is unable to commit to another term on our Board.

Barbara, your wealth of knowledge, your genuine and kind spirit will be missed, not only by the Board of Directors, but by the Executive Director to whom you have given your unwavering and generous support and guidance.

CONNIE McKENZIE acquired a brain injury in 2000 and discovered that VBIS became a place where she found acceptance and support as she strived to adjust to a different life. As a member-at-large on the Board of Directors, Connie has been a very effective advocate for her peers and VBIS by raising awareness of life with a brain injury.

Thank you Connie—your unique perspective has been both enlightening and grounding to the Board, and your energy and commitment for projects and events has been inspiring for us all.



A certified General Accountant since 1971, and principal of his own accounting firm, with insight to the challenges non-profit organizations face, **FRANK LEE** brought not only his specialized accounting know-how with him, but his unique light-hearted spirit to Board meetings. Frank's own description of his role on the Board was that of "bean-counter" with the ever-ready sharpened pencil at hand! Frank has seen the organization build its funding base significantly during his time of service on the Board, and his guidance in ensuring accountability to external stakeholders has

been fundamental in ensuring we have a solid base on which to continue. Being retired now, Frank is often found in another part of the world and he has made the decision to retire from the Board so that he can carry on his globetrotting exploits.

Frank, apart from guiding us so on our fiscal responsibilities and helping us lay a sound financial foundation on which we may grow, you have been a breath of fresh air—thank you!

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KUDOS TO OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM!

I know we have said this before, but it cannot be said enough: we have an amazing volunteer team at VBIS!

Summer months mean changing schedules—for students as well as for parents of students—and vacations. I am continually amazed and truly thankful for the way everyone pulls together to fill holes here, and cobble together a solution there. Our **reception** and **administration** folks are a prime example of this, so thank you Bobbie-Rae, Brandon, Chelsea, Fiona, Gerry, Gina, Kyla, Leah G, Megan R, Ruth, Sasha, Sharon R, Sherri, Terry, Valda, Veronica and Wande—**THANK YOU** for being there for the clients and for helping staff on an everyday basis the way you do. A special thank you also to **Linda** who has the unique role of helping to orientate all our newest clients when they first come to VBIS and is unfailing in her commitment in this role, and to **Sandy B** without whom I, personally, would sink!

Our **Peer Supporters** are there for clients who come in everyday in various states of emotions, stresses, confusions and clarities. They are an amazing group of people with ABI themselves who have stepped up to the challenge of the training they undergo to do what they do. With a new group of Peer Supporters on board, the rest of the team has rallied round to help them get acquainted with their roles. Thank you Andy, Bob, Caitlin, Chris, Christine, Des, Ernano, Greg, Ian, Richard, Ryefield and Trisha—you are each worth your weight in gold, and more.

Lastly, a special thank you to **Lia Graham** who helped to conceptualize and organize the **P.A.R.T.Y. Program** for VBIS when it first started in Victoria; we constantly hear of the enormous value and impact this program has on youth even today. Lia successfully coordinated the program through it's growing pains and stayed on as speaker and co-coordinator for many years. "Without Lia's skill and dedication, we would never have been able to participate in the P.A.R.T.Y. Program," says Alex, Case Manager at VBIS. So Lia, though it is long overdue, this is a very sincere expression of our gratitude for all your hard work and dedication so long ago; your legacy continues.

~ Anna, Volunteer Coordinator

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We pride ourselves on our long history of supporting clients through some of their darkest hours while actively campaigning for their benefit. We are here to work with you if you are struggling to meet your monthly commitments with our Advance Program. Most importantly, we get paid – when you get paid.



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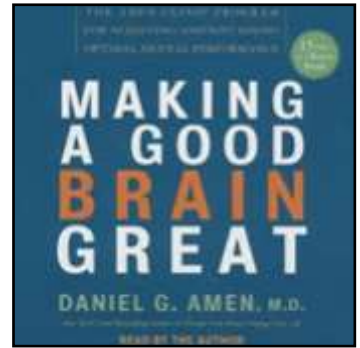
BOOK REVIEW—*Making a Good Brain Great*

by Daniel G. Amen, M.D.

In this book, Dr. Amen dispenses advice for every aspect of life that affects brain functioning. He takes the difficult language often seen in neuropsychological literature and makes it more relatable and easier to understand.

There are many things we do that we may not realize have a great effect on our mental efficiency. We put a lot of time and energy into improving our bodies, but often neglect the most important part, our brains. Dr. Amen utilizes his education and experience to provide practical information on how to increase the functioning of our brains. He ventures through subjects such as: how to eat right, how to protect your brain from toxins and injuries, how to cope with stress, the importance of physical activities, and many more.

This book is an interesting read, and if followed, is a comprehensive model to improving overall brain performance.



A NOTE OF GRATITUDE

Greetings! As the new Client Services Manager and newest team member at VBIS, I wanted to take up a little space here to extend some gratitude. Since July 22, I have met and worked with a number of fantastic volunteers who I am grateful to for their acceptance and guidance with the numerous programs that they help run. As well, a great big shout out goes to Anna, Leidi and Alex, for their openness, expertise and knowledge sharing on brain injury and how best to support our folks. Many thanks to Nicole for a welcoming, thorough and informative orientation to the agency. Lastly, I am especially grateful to all those with whom I've met to share their journey with brain injury, be it their own or a loved one. What a gift VBIS is to this community!

~Kathy Smith, VBIS Client Services Manager

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GRATITUDE

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them”
~John Fitzgerald Kennedy

We are very grateful to **Dr. Ron Skelton**, who has been very generous with his time and has given some fantastic presentations here at VBIS. He always makes the material easy to understand and relatable to families and their issues. Just last month, Dr. Skelton gave a highly informative, educational, and very well received 90-minute presentation to family members at the Family Support Group. Most interesting to the family members was the information on the top ten most annoying problems that individuals with a brain injury suffer.

A shout out also goes to **Dr. Ross Beauchamp**, who has been volunteering with VBIS for a little over a year, but in that short time has been an incredible educator and resource for us. Ross presents ‘tailor-made’ presentations to community groups, as well as being a presenter and resource for the Family Support Group and even to VBIS staff. When he came to volunteer with us and was asked what interested him in joining the VBIS volunteer team, Ross, a retired director of a brain injury rehab clinic back east, said: “To use my background and skills to benefit others.” Ross: you have been more effective with this goal than we could possibly have imagined – thank you so much for your ideas, energy and insight!

We would like to thank **Kristin Stein** of NEED2 Suicide Prevention Education and Support for her insightful presentation to our Peer Support trainees. Kristin has done several presentations at VBIS and once again the trainees ranted and raved about it! They received a great deal of practical information, and were appreciative of how comfortable Kristin was with the material.

A big thanks to all of **altruistic individuals** who donated from their paycheques via the **United Way** and chose to remain anonymous. Also, we are so grateful to **Roger Junker**, manager at **Safeway (Foul Bay)**, who has been a constant source of support whenever we have a picnic or celebration. Last, but certainly not least, the **A.C.E. Program** took a tour of the **BC Legislature** that was very successful! They had a fantastic tour guide, **Gerardo**, a psychology student who was very familiar with brain injury. He made the group feel special and respected – thanks to Gerardo and all the friendly staff at the BC Legislature!

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the **Allen and Loreen Vandekerkhove Family Foundation** for supporting our Community Awareness program. This funding will help us educate community members on the causes and severe impacts of brain injury, resulting in better prevention of brain injuries.

We are incredibly grateful to the **Greater Victoria Savings and Credit Union Legacy Fund**, who have provided us with \$5000 for our Family Services program. This will assist us in giving families of brain injury survivors the tools they need to function as healthy, engaged members of society. Through participation in this program, families will be better prepared to deal with all the new challenges and the sense of loss they are experiencing. It will also foster positive, healthy relationships, which are key to a family’s ability to sustain themselves emotionally and economically.



*The production of this VBIS Newsletter would not
be possible without the generous support of*

Deborah Acheson &

Acheson Whitley Sweeney Foley Law Firm

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Victoria Brain Injury Society (VBIS) quarterly newsletter is distributed to almost 2000 families, clients and community professionals. VBIS is committed to producing a quality bulletin which expresses the opinions, concerns, and ideas of its members. VBIS welcomes submissions that are informative, positive and are a clear reflection of its readership. Submissions should be written in an easy-to-read and understandable format. Content should be void of labels, disparaging language, a "cure," "reversal," or "healing" of brain injury, and highly technical, medical or legal terms. VBIS reserves the right to edit and/or refuse publication of all submissions.

DEADLINES & DISTRIBUTION DATES

Nov1..... Winter 2013 (for December)
Feb 1..... Spring 2014 (for March)

ADVERTISING

VBIS requires advertising submissions to clearly state the credentials of the individual/group providing the product or service, and any benefits and/or risks thereof. Advertisers who are VBIS supporters may not imply or indicate to the general public that their support or membership or declaration thereof is an endorsement by VBIS for an advertiser's products or services. Please include payment with digital ad copy and graphics.

AD RATES & SIZES PER ISSUE

Standard Business Card \$50
Quarter Page \$100
Half Page \$200
Full Page \$400

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PRIVACY POLICY

VBIS maintains a mailing list to inform members of upcoming events and for newsletter distribution. The mailing list contains your name, address, telephone number, and email address. **VBIS does not share, sell, or otherwise disclose your information to any third party.** In compliance with British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Act, contact us if you no longer wish to be on the mailing list.

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☐ \$10/month ☐ \$25/month ☐ \$50/month ☐ Other \$ _____ /month

Please deduct my gift on the ☐ 1st or ☐ 15th of the month, starting the month of _____ 20 _____

I prefer to contribute through ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Card # _____ Expiry _____

Signature _____ Date _____

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