

# NEWSFLASH

Michigan PTA's Newsletter For Leaders

May 2020

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## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH: HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH COPING STRATEGIES

Awareness and acceptance of eliminating the stigma of living with or having a loved one who lives with mental illness is an ongoing focus for many individuals. Each year during May, people around the world acknowledge and celebrate Mental Health Awareness Month. Michigan PTA, in collaboration with National PTA, strives to positively support children with managing their mental health, especially during this challenging time in our history.

As we continue to stay home to stay safe, feelings of isolation and loneliness can become exacerbated for students. Digital means have primarily replaced the routine of school, extracurricular activities, playdates, and visiting family. The non-profit, non-partisan research organization, Child Trends, one of our mutual community partners, shared that it is vital to have a safe physical and emotional environment by practicing the 3 R's: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation.

Keeping children busy with safe activities such as music, games, and secure outside play can be helpful methods. Involve your children in brainstorming other ideas to keep them occupied. Children tend to feel more in control when they play an active role in helping their family, themselves, and their community, especially in these uncertain times. Do not forget about yourself! Creating opportunities to take care of yourself may play a part in helping children to learn how to take care of their emotional well-being also. Children need to feel secure, positive, and safe about their present and future. Yes, this may present a bit of a challenge in this present day. However, by focusing on how we can come together as a community and sharing stories of togetherness, it is possible to be able to provide a sense of hope for students, which may, in turn, assist them with potential feelings of insecurity.

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With many of our school districts taking a non-traditional approach to milestones such as prom and graduation this year, teens may have feelings of frustration, sadness, or disappointment. Together with the American Psychology Association, Michigan PTA, and National PTA, we wish to share the following that may assist your teen in managing their mental and emotional health. By acknowledging these feelings your teen may have, let them know that it is okay to feel sad as we close out the school year (and for some their academic career) with their school district. Also, realize that there may be some teens who are introverts or have anxiety and that the changes that are taking place with our current health crisis might not affect them in the same way that it affects their more extroverted peers.

Be honest with your teen. It is okay if you do not have all of the answers to questions they may have regarding our current health crisis. Join your teen to try to find solutions, whether it is for fun, safe activities, post-secondary options, or just what to do beyond studying day after day.

Try to help your teen to build resilience by sharing with them how you or a friend or family member tackled challenging situations and experiences when they were teens or young adults. No, it is not going to be easy, but it may prove to be helpful during these adverse times. Encourage your teen to connect with their peers. Yes, this may seem to be a non-issue for many of our teens, especially if it appears as if they are always on their electronic and digital devices. However, many of those connections might be related to school activities. Host a Google Meet, Zoom, or Face Time catch-up with several friends or family members of your student. Being physically distant does not mean that they need to be socially disconnected.

This next suggestion may be more challenging for you than anything else : practice patience with your teen, which is easier said than done. Give them space and time to process their feelings; however, also let them know that you are available when they are ready to talk or share. If your teen is not comfortable with these methods, encourage them to write out their feelings by using a journal or creating a non-public blog. Even though this year-end may be different for you and your teen, no matter what grade or stage that they may be, celebrate and honor their achievements. Do so creatively and have fun with it. We understand that these suggestions will not replace missed events; however, we hope that they will help to ease some of the emotional and mental stress that may be present. This year, National PTA began the Notes from the Backpack podcast initiative where real conversations with parents, experts, and educators offer real-life advice, ideas, and strategies parents can use to help their children succeed in and out of school. One of the more recent podcasts, Tackling COVID Anxiety Together, addresses supporting children and families through this pandemic. The podcast can be found by accessing the National PTA website and clicking the COVID-19 resource tab on the front page. You may access the National PTA Mental Health Resolution as well by clicking here.

By Jennifer Johnson,  
VP for Student Involvement  
Chairperson, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Jennifer is a mom of an 8 and 14-year-old. She and her husband, Brian, have been members of PTA for 10 years.

Sources: National PTA, Child Trends, National Psychology Association, NAMI

For shareable mental health resources visit:  
[nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Awareness-Resources](https://nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Awareness-Resources)

The image displays three shareable mental health resources from NAMI. The first resource is a green square with the text "May is MENTAL HEALTH MONTH" and the NAMI logo. The second resource is a blue square with the text "YOU ARE NOT ALONE" and "1 in 6 youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health condition." with a photo of a group of people. The third resource is a green square with the text "YOU ARE NOT ALONE" and "Now more than ever, we need to find ways to stay connected with our community. No one should feel alone or without the information, support and help they need." with the NAMI logo.

# Congratulations!

## HILLSIDE ELEMENTARY PTA WINS NATIONAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD

Michigan PTA is elated that Hillside Elementary PTA in Farmington Hills, has been selected to receive the Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award at the local level for 2020! It is exciting to have a Michigan PTA Local Unit be awarded this prestigious honor, especially during the 50th anniversary of the unification of National PTA and the National Association of Colored Parents and Teachers.

Hillside Elementary PTA clearly places the PTA mission of making every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children into the forefront, irrespective of race, condition, ethnicity, ability, gender, or culture. Family engagement and student enrichment activities such as Cultural Game Night, LEGO Robotics, and Math Pentathlon are a few of the many programs that enable your unit to stand out among the rest. Of special note, your uplifting program, Dream Kings, which is geared toward helping African American men to realize their purpose, and the Fourth Wall program, which is targeted toward students with special needs, are clearly innovative, inclusive and needed. Ensuring that your diverse community of 40 plus languages, and the 50% of students at Hillside who speak English as a second language, feel welcome is a reason to celebrate.

It is for these reasons, and so much more, that Michigan PTA and the Michigan PTA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee join in with National PTA and the National PTA Diversity and Inclusion Committee in congratulating Hillside Elementary PTA on this well-deserved honor as the 2020 National PTA Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award winner at the local level!

*The National PTA Jan Harpe Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award recognizes PTAs that best demonstrate outstanding achievement in the areas of diversity and inclusion, as well as efforts to end discriminatory practices. This award will be presented to one state PTA, one district/council/region PTA and one local PTA*

Prizes include:

- \$1,000 cash award
- One Plaque/Trophy
- Honored at the Awards Program at the 2020 National PTA Convention & Expo (TBD)
- Potential opportunity to be a speaker at the Diversity & Inclusion Session at the 2020 National PTA Convention & Expo
- Certificates for PTA members named in the application



## A note about the Michigan PTA 102nd Annual Convention

Per prior authorization from the Michigan PTA Board of Directors, the physical conference scheduled to take place July 25-26, 2020 at Henry Ford College in Dearborn has been cancelled. We appreciate your patience as we have contemplated the best option for our association in its devotion to keep all of our members healthy and safe. As much as we will miss all of you, we feel this is the best decision to make at this time.

The Michigan PTA Board of Directors will convene a meeting as soon as schedules allow to address areas we all have concerns about, notably, the potential for virtual education/meeting in the fall and how we will address the anticipated business of the association such as resolutions and bylaws. Elections were not on our agenda for 2020, they will take place at our 2021 Convention as scheduled.

Michigan PTA hopes to continue connecting leaders through our Facebook pages and groups, information posted on our website and through emails sent through Member Hub. Please make sure your email address is entered into Member Hub and officers are updated as elections are held to ensure we have accurate information on file.

We look forward to seeing you as soon as we are safely able to!

Tanya Pitkin  
Co-Chair Convention Committee

## WAYS TO SPEAK UP FOR CHILDREN

### Michigan PTA Advocacy

We send our thoughts and best wishes to all who are impacted by COVID-19. Today, Michigan PTA is recognized as a major voice influencing education issues at the state level. Through the National PTA, Michigan members also have an impact at the national level. Michigan PTA has been able to share information with members and the public to assist in navigating the closure of schools and then re-opening during this COVID-19 crisis.

As state leaders continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, public schools across Michigan remain closed for the remainder of the school year. We know that school closures exacerbate the existing inequities in our education system — presenting the most significant challenges to students and families who are underserved. Working with state government and community stakeholders on behalf of all children in Michigan drives our efforts every day.

The state quickly implemented the plans to conduct school during this COVID-19 crisis. The state is currently working on plans for long-term. Districts' plans should outline how they will allocate resources — including staff, time and materials — for extended learning time during the summer (if possible due to the pandemic) and for the 2020-21 school year, based on student need, ensuring that the most vulnerable students are prioritized for instructional and social-emotional support and opportunities to catch up and advance academically.

The current plans should be published on the Michigan Department of Education and district websites. Michigan PTA has the opportunity to be an active voice in each district as future planning is being conducted. We will need multiple member volunteers to be engaged in working at the local level as we all work together to create the best educational plan for Michigan children. This will be a temporary task force working on the next step of educational planning with COVID-19. If you would like to be more active in legislative advocacy affairs please email your name, contact information, and which local PTA/PTSA of which you are a member to [childadvocacy@michiganpta.org](mailto:childadvocacy@michiganpta.org).

Thank you for all that do for PTA and children in Michigan!

Marcy Dwyer  
VP of Child Advocacy

Child advocates work with policymakers at the federal, state and local levels to ensure sound policies that promote the interests of all children.

Here are a few ways PTA members can influence policy:

- Work with your school to implement a strong family engagement policy, as required by federal law.
- Serve on the school board; attend school board meetings.
- Attend school district meetings on such topics as healthy alternatives in the lunchroom and federal, state and local budget cuts.
- Work with school leaders and state education officials to implement PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- Write a letter to the editor about the importance of family engagement in education.
- Become active with your state PTA's efforts on state-level advocacy.
- Sign up for the PTA Takes Action Network and respond to action alerts to reach your legislators on important issues and legislation.
- Educate members of Congress and their staff on PTA's federal public policy priorities.
- Meet with decision-makers at the local, state or federal level. How to Lobby the PTA Way is a useful demonstration of an effective meeting.



## *Have you heard?*

Seven student artists from Michigan placed at the national level in the Reflections Art Program!

Congratulations to:

### **Danica Harmsworth**

Primary (Pre-K through Grade 2)  
Literature  
Award of Merit  
Love Never Ends Within You  
Keith Elementary PTA

### **Michael Garlinghouse**

Middle School (Grades 6-8)  
Music Composition  
Award of Merit  
Look Within  
Sarah Banks Middle PTSA

### **Crystal Orser**

High School (Grades 9-12)  
Film Production  
Award of Merit  
The Voices In My Head  
Rochester High School PTA

### **Dayton Kress**

Middle School (Grades 6-8)  
Film Production  
Award of Excellence  
Within Us All  
Power Middle School PTA, Farmington

### **Karen Wassef**

High School (Grades 9-12)  
Literature  
Award of Excellence  
Erasing the List  
Stoney Creek High School PTA

### **Jonah Cohen**

High School (Grades 9-12)  
Music Composition  
Award of Excellence  
Meditations  
Farmington High School PTA

### **Nina Kobayashi**

Middle School (Grades 6-8)  
Dance Choreography  
Award of Merit  
UNBOXED  
Farmington STEAM academy PTA



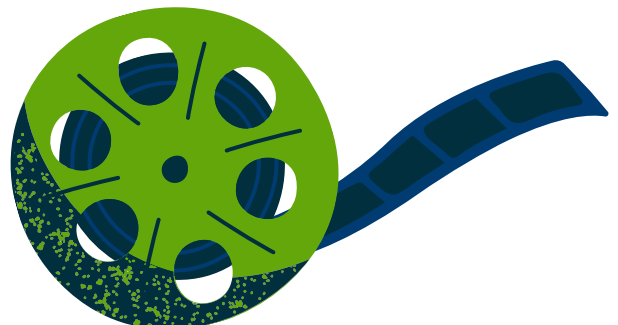
## **Let's celebrate!**

### **Michigan PTA presents the 2019-2020 Reflections Celebration- Covid-19 Edition**

Michigan PTA Would like to congratulate all of the state level awardees for the Reflections program for the 2019-2020 school year. We are sorry that circumstances have prevented us from having our yearly ceremony but hope this virtual Celebration is sufficient for now.

To view the online celebration please follow the link below and click "Present" in the upper right hand corner.

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10b8M9C75k5FZIP3XOE9jIDzkNuiy5nWuPBjXanL7mKc/edit?usp=sharing>



## Transitioning Into Summer

The final stretch of school typically involves so many activities encompassing the end of the academic school year as well as planning for next one. When I have served as a PTA Leader as President of a unit, I always liked to schedule a summer planning session. This strategic analysis serves many purposes including reviewing the mission, planning the calendar, and most importantly: our leaders getting to know each other and strengthening those relationships.

Getting acquainted could be as simple as doing introduction and asking each of them to answer questions such as: What sport or instrument did you play in school? If you had to pack up and take an all-inclusive vacation right now, where would you go? People might find common interest amongst the team that they didn't realize. Another fun and simple game is to play "Two Truths and a Lie." Each person discloses two facts and one falsehood about themselves. You can write them down and put them in a bowl for everyone to draw and guess WHO it is and if it is a truth or a lie. Or everyone can take turns sharing their two truths and a lie and everyone guesses during the players turn, etc. For example: I have watched every episode of the show Friends, I am trained as a cake artist, and I won my high school talent show singing Whitney Houston's I will Always Love You. One of those statements is completely and totally false. Which one? Keep reading to find out.

Let's consider some basic planning guides:

- Determine who will facilitate your planning meeting. Will it be the president? Will it be a Council or other local leader? The facilitator needs to be sure to create a plan to engage and lead the group in a purposeful and meaningful way
- What will the team plan for? There are many important elements to plan for a successful PTA school year with membership, fundraising, family engagement, planning the year and more. Provide the planning agenda in advance so the team can brainstorm and come ready to contribute
- Empower your PTA leaders to be prepared to present their ideas; assign tasks for them to own and deliver at the event
- Be sure to have a note taker
- Summarize and return the notes and ideas to the team to continue structure and build on

How does this look in our stay-in-place environment? All the basic planning, including getting to know each other, can be done virtually. Some key things to consider:

- Plan on the social interaction event, even in a virtual event
- Utilize breakout rooms in Zoom for large retreats, for more meaningful dialogue on a variety of topics
  - o Designate a lead and note taker for each room
  - o Do not give each breakout group the same assignment. This will ensure everyone's input from each topics valuable and not duplicate efforts.
  - o Have the retreat facilitator visit each breakout room for the same amount of time. Near the end of the breakout time, give everyone a 3-minute warning
  - o Breakout periods of longer than 30 minutes tend to be tiresome; 10-minutes doesn't allow sufficient time. Give each group equal (and set) time to report back and allow the rest of the attendees to ask questions

I have always recommended having the planning meeting in-person, but if you are unable to facilitate that style of event, or even a small group at a local park is out of the question, then lay the ground rules proactively. Participants must be able to be viewed and seen by the everyone else. There might be one or two who do not own a computer or a smartphone, but regardless encourage them and work with them to find a way to participate and fully engage.

Thank YOU for being a PTA Leader and continuing the mission of making every Child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

As for the big reveal? I have seen EVERY episode of Friends (multiple times). I own the entire anthology and actually sat in the audience for the 100th episode being recorded LIVE! I am a hobby cake decorator having trained in various cake skills including royal icing and fondant and have been commissioned a couple of times. And when you really get to know me, you'll acknowledge and appreciate that I cannot sing in-tune what-so-ever. Like, not even a little bit. There was never (ever) a time that I could serenade a crowd nor have I never conducted a performance that could even slightly resemble or pay tribute to the angelic voice of the late Whitney Houston. Proving this to you would require earplugs on your part and likely result in a restraining order. We just don't need that now do we!!! Two truths and a lie. 😊

Tracey Troy (De Witt, MI)  
Vice President - Outreach & Support  
Outreachsupportvp@michiganpta.org

# Greetings Membership!

From Brian Johnson, VP of Membership  
membershipvp@michiganpta.org

Thank you for all your hard work, dedication, and spirit during this health crisis. My hat goes off to all those essential workers, teachers, business owners, and parents who are making the best of this challenging situation. Let us take a moment of silence in honor of those who have lost their lives or the lives of loved ones due to COVID-19.

As we come to the end of this fiscal/membership year, it is time to look at our membership data. If you are a unit who has increased its membership, think about how you obtained your goal, whether your goal was 2% or 1%. What did you do? Was it programming, increase in enrollment at the school, communication to membership, community partnerships, member training, or involvement with the school programs? Did you study your demographics and formulate programs geared towards engaging and empowering that population? If you haven't already, look at [greatschools.org](https://greatschools.org) to check your demographics. Identify a population and make an intentional effort. If it is that reason(s), try your best to duplicate your efforts.

If you are a local unit and you are at the same membership number, think about what could be done to gain another ten to twenty members. What programs can be implemented that can grab more members? Perhaps an electronic survey to parents and current membership to find out interests. For those who lost membership, reflect on problems and potential solutions so membership can increase. Was the loss attributed to families moving away or moving to another school? Was it due to lack of programming and lack of interest in current programs? What programs have worked for other units around your size? Remember, you can always reach out to the leadership at the council or state level for support. We can be a part of visiting your meetings via zoom or participating in your program or even promote the program via our connections and communication tools. For those who have their sights set on increasing membership at the state level and want to work with other units, I invite you to join my team. All I need is an email to start your state leadership journey. I am always interested and welcome new ideas.

**Don't forget our membership challenges and awards! Go to [michiganpta.org](https://michiganpta.org) for details.**

## Tips and Reminders

After **elections** all officers need to be entered in MemberHub, even returning officers. This will ensure they receive communications from the state.

**Postponing** elections until the Fall? Be sure to email MiPTA's VP of Outreach and Support to let them know.  
[Outreachsupportvp@michiganpta.org](mailto:Outreachsupportvp@michiganpta.org)

Thinking ahead about **virtual fundraising**? Here are some ideas for your Unit to consider:

Craft Kits – create or buy craft kits and have them delivered for a cost/donation

Build your own pizza kits. Work with a local supplier/restaurant for sale of pizza kits and delivered or arrange a single pick-up date with safe social distancing.

Raffle Fundraiser. Be sure to have your raffle license details worked out in advance!  
(<https://www.michigan.gov/cg/0,9673,7-403-95973---,00.html>)

Add Donations as an item to purchase to the MemberHub store. Create items in amounts like \$25, \$50, \$100 and \$1 allowing the purchaser to set the quantity of their donation.

Dine Out restaurant fundraiser. Work with a local restaurant for a special date where a percentage of the proceeds of a particular days sales (take out) go back to the unit.

Set up a MemberHub.gives fundraising account – the host site is free as a MIPTA Unit/Council. Use the features for fundraisers that include Crowd Funding, Raffles, A-thons and Events (when we can host them again) all from an online portal.

Have you joined the new Michigan PTA Leadership Community group? Get help and inspiration or share ideas and best practices.

[facebook.com/groups/636047820289160/](https://facebook.com/groups/636047820289160/)

*Deadlines have been extended!*

Fran Anderson Scholarship  
[michiganpta.org/scholarship.html](https://michiganpta.org/scholarship.html)

Michigan PTA State Award  
[michiganpta.org/state-pta-awards.html](https://michiganpta.org/state-pta-awards.html)

### ***A Message From Kathy Carter, President of Michigan PTA***

Hello everyone!!! I truly hope this finds you and your family safe and well. We have all felt this current situation on so many levels. Some have suffered losses, others isolation from family and friends. We are all in this together. Thank you to our members who are on the front lines for helping us to move forward.

Though it has been a rough ending to the school year for PTA all across the Nation with this uncharted experience, I believe we are trying to make all the right decisions about our Units. Please let us know what we can help you with, we want to help.

By now you have heard both National Convention and Michigan Convention have been cancelled for this year. We at Michigan PTA and National are still deciding what we are going to do. It is going to take our Convention Committee a couple of weeks to gather the ideas and such for what we might be able to present. They are planning on providing some training, but are not sure what it will look like at this time. Stay tuned - I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

Again, let us know if you need something or have concerns. Watch our Facebook page and website for updates.

Stay safe. Stay healthy. Continue to do what you are doing for your children, your families, your Unit and the Community.

Gratefully,

Kathy Carter  
Michigan PTA President

### **A Note From the State Secretary**

As we move through life in the days of COVID-19, we face many challenges. This will continue in our post-COVID-19 life, too. We are discovering ways to be flexible, to modify procedures, and still to stay true to our mission as PTA. What will we look like in the future? Some of the changes we are currently implementing may be temporary, and others may stick around.

Is your unit meeting virtually? We have seen an unusual phenomenon: there has been an increase in attendance by meeting virtually. Maybe it's because we are stuck at home. Maybe it's the convenience. Whatever the reason, if your unit has not tried meeting on line, or over the phone, it is time to try it. (See last month's newsletter for details about virtual meetings.) There is nothing to stop you from continuing to hold virtual meetings in the future—although we encourage meeting in person as well, at least half the time. We encourage you to modify your bylaws and standing rules, to include a section on virtual meetings. MiPTA is drafting some verbiage to get you started, and will get that out to you soon.

If you have had success—or indeed, challenges—meeting virtually, please tell us about it! Send an email, or share on the Michigan PTA Facebook group. We can all learn from each other. How do these changes affect our other year-end activities? As a board, you will be holding elections, either in the spring (virtually) or in the fall (anyone's guess). You will need to update your officers in MemberHub, even if they are staying in the same role. You will need to make sure your Standards of Affiliation are up to date. If you are not sure, please call! 734-975-9500. If you haven't sent in dues for your members (\$5.50 per person), please do that right away. You can check your dues status in MemberHub, under State Payments.

You may find you have to make changes to your calendar and your budget, as events and fundraisers are cancelled. This is difficult, but it is also a learning moment. Are you going to lose a non-refundable deposit? Maybe the vendor will allow you to reschedule for next year, and will apply that deposit to the rescheduled event. If not, check your insurance policy. Do you have coverage for cancelled events? Maybe you want to add this to your policy at renewal time.

When you are planning your budget, you might have money left over from this year's cancelled events. That money can be allocated as start-up funds for next year. It can cover summer expenses. These represent changes to your budget. Keep in mind that all budget changes require a discussion and a vote of the membership. Virtual votes are fine, just make sure everyone voting is a paid member of your unit. Roll call votes are recommended for digital votes.

As always, if you have questions, give us a call. We have been where you are, and we are happy to help you! 734-975-9500.

Liz Jarvis  
Secretary, Michigan PTA



## NOTEWORTHY

### Annual Unit & Council Dues

MITPA Bylaws, as well as the MIPTA Standards of Affiliation require annual Unit & Council dues of \$40 be paid by June 1st each year.

**Due to the impact of COVID-19, for the 2020-2021 Standards of Affiliation qualification only, MIPTA will extend the 2020-2021 Annual Unit dues payment until October 1st, 2020.**

Remitting Unit Dues can be done one of two ways:

By check to: MIPTA PO Box 510535 Livonia, MI 48151

Or through the MemberHub Store at <https://bit.ly/2WRtLXb> (Select PTA Unit Dues)

In either remitting method, please include your PTA Unit Name 6-digit State ID number

## Connect With Michigan PTA!

Website: [michiganpta.org](http://michiganpta.org)

Facebook Page: [facebook.com/everychildonevoice/](https://facebook.com/everychildonevoice/)

Facebook groups by interest:

- Michigan PTA Advocacy
- Michigan PTA Reflections Network
- Michigan PTA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Michigan PTA Membership/Memberhub
- Michigan PTA Leadership Community

## *We're Here to Help*

Although Michigan PTA does not have a physical office and no staff at the moment, volunteers are still available to help answer questions. How you can reach us:

734-975-9500

P.O. Box 510535  
Livonia, MI 48151

President- Kathy Carter  
[president@michiganpta.org](mailto:president@michiganpta.org)

Secretary- Liz Jarvis  
[secretary@michiganpta.org](mailto:secretary@michiganpta.org)

Treasurer- Dianna Sharpe  
[treasurer@michiganpta.org](mailto:treasurer@michiganpta.org)

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