

PREVENTION

as an ORGANIZATIONAL APPROACH



For those providing services to children and youth in out of home placements and their families, the past ten years has been a time of tremendous transition, and it's clear now more than ever: change is here to stay.

And this is not change for the worse, it is good news that these days have finally arrived where system reform of this magnitude is possible. In the past several years multiple reforms have been impacting the child welfare and juvenile services systems in Maryland that have greatly deemphasized residential services and out of home placements, and have presented a direct and deliberate challenge to the current service delivery model for children and their families. Examples of those initiatives include Place Matters, Alternative Response and the Title IV-E Waiver.

Analogous to the process of deinstitutionalization that began in the 1970's for adults with inpatient psychiatric needs; this shift in meeting the acute needs of children and their families reignites the important question of how to close the gap in the current structure of community opportunities where families reside. Ultimately, how effective can an Alternative Response be without a strong neighborhood?

But for providers of human services, who have built their entire process of care on an old model, how are they to adapt to these sweeping changes and be flexible enough to position for new models of service delivery? In the changing landscape of the child and family services systems where major change is happening today, great opportunity awaits for some who have the willingness to see, the humility to listen and the courage to act.



San Mar – A Culture of Care

Our organization came into existence in the years following the Civil War, when concern was expressed throughout the Washington County community for the orphan children with no apparent place to live other than the County Alms House where many homeless adults were also living. By 1883 an action plan was implemented as a group of prominent citizens came together to form a new nonprofit corporation: The Washington County Orphan's Home. Together, they were able to raise enough funds to purchase the property at 355 South Potomac Street, in what was to become the Bester community of Hagerstown, and to hire a superintendent and several other staff. In a report to the board of managers in 1918 then superintendent, Walter Esmer noted, "It was the first successful attempt in the State of Maryland of the people of a county, without state financial assistance, to care for their county's dependent children."



After 44 years of daily operation in that neighborhood, the growing Home moved to the nearby rural community of San Mar where they continued daily to carry out their mission of caring for the neediest of children and youth.

Today, San Mar maintains national accreditation in their quest to enable youth to effectively find healing from trauma, and gain understanding into the subsequent behaviors that have so often flowed from those experiences, so as to enable them to take responsibility for personal growth. Hope still changes lives.

To see such change become reality San Mar seeks to establish a web of healthy, nurturing connections in the context of an appropriately structured environment where a traumatized youth is valued and can find sanctuary to heal and gain ownership of their actions and life.

Recent neuroscience research has shown that such relationships in this context have the power to create

lasting positive change, and facilitate healing, as the teenage brain grows to adulthood. Indeed, experience has proven this true.

At San Mar this philosophy is referred to as "the Culture of Care" and is the base on which San Mar stands. Such a philosophy operates with the following values:

1. Each person has inherent worth and that value is intrinsic. Therefore, each person should be treated in a respectful manner worthy of the value they may not even realize.
2. Accountability. If there is value in each person, what they do and how they do it also matters! It becomes the responsibility of each staff member to help the youth discover her value by helping her to make corrections when she gets off the path. This teaches personal ownership and avoids punishment [which often focuses on the needs of the adult].
3. Interdependence. Research has shown that the brain has been hardwired to connect with others. We are social beings and to be successful in life each must learn to give and take in healthy ways. As we reach beyond ourselves and recognize and appropriately respond to the needs of others we grow stronger.
4. Coherence. Each piece of the system reinforces the other parts to form an integrated whole that is much more powerful than the individual parts. As we reach beyond ourselves and appropriately respond to the needs of others we all grow stronger.
5. Forward Motion. Change is constant! If you are not moving forward [growth] you will move backwards. It is a natural law [entropy]. Growth is a personal choice that occurs within the context of struggle and commitment.
6. Healthy living always occurs within appropriate boundaries. Contentment and meaning are found in caring for, and commitment to others.

Regardless of the individual and unique needs of each youth served, most have multiple needs. The challenge is to determine how to most effectively address the root issues that brought them to San Mar. There is a living, breathing awareness of questions such as "What if she were my child?" and does it work?

Dr. Victoria Kelly, Director of the Delaware Division of Family Services, after visiting the main campus with a team of her senior staff wrote, "In these crazy times when it seems, too often, like programs are either more like out of control warehouses or overly controlled clinical settings with a focus on pathology, you and your team have found such a

lovely balance between structure and nurture. That is the sweet spot where healing happens and trauma can be transformed. It was inspirational for us to see what is possible.”

San Mar has long experienced and demonstrated sustained excellence amidst complicated service delivery systems. In contrast, in April 2005, the Baltimore Sun ran a series of articles exposing the many horrors that often accompany placement in group homes. It was a referendum on group care and a searing statement on the almost 3,000 boys and girls in private group home programs in Maryland.

At the time, Department of Human Resources Secretary, Christopher McCabe, explained the agency, “was planning to decrease reliance on group homes by increasing the number of foster families.”¹ During the weeklong series in the Sun numerous issues were uncovered including a lack of accountability from the state, with the accompanying inability of the providers to demonstrate evidence of meaningful outcomes.

However, the series also revealed how reforms to correct the problems had continuously been proposed, and just as frequently shelved, with the idea the problems were too complex or not of importance. With one week of articles the Sun changed that perspective quickly. Then U.S. House of Representative member Benjamin Cardin, now a U.S. Senator, stated, “Every state needs to make progress, but Maryland is at the bottom” and “fundamental change” was the only avenue to address systemic child welfare issues.¹ The series was not an indictment on all residential

providers, and the series even ended by featuring San Mar as an example of how life-changing a group home experience can be when the program is operated correctly. In the article the Sun interviewed girls at the campus and, “[A] girl, whom the state Department of Juvenile Services sent to San Mar, said she’d recommend the place to any struggling youth. Her view is shared by industry leaders and child welfare officials who are eager to put their young charges there. San Mar, they say, embodies the life-changing potential that good group homes in Maryland offer to abused, neglected and lawbreaking youths. It develops programs to meet the particular needs of each resident.”²

In the same article, when asked to comment on his philosophy of care, San Mar, CEO, Bruce Anderson responded, “I can’t change another person, but I can create an environment in which they want to change.”² Anderson often says, “The state rents space from us to provide services. Our opportunity is to turn those renters, into people who can take ownership of their own lives. It’s what we do... renters to owners.”

Even though San Mar was a recognized a leader in the care of challenging youth a perception continued to grow throughout the nation that children should be in families and not group homes. In a time of dwindling resources most group homes were not able to demonstrate they were effective. It was expensive to place a youth into group care.

**There must be a better way ...
The die was cast.**



HEALTH

SAFETY

ANXIETY

TRAUMA

OBESITY

ABUSE & NEGLECT

RELIGION

FAMILY

POLLUTION

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

CRIME

NAVIGATING CHAOS

ISOLATION

DIVORCE

POVERTY

ECONOMY

BULLYING

SCHOOL

DROP OUT

DISCRIMINATION

GOVERNMENT

MENTAL ILLNESS

STRESS

UNEMPLOYMENT

TRUANCY

BELONGING

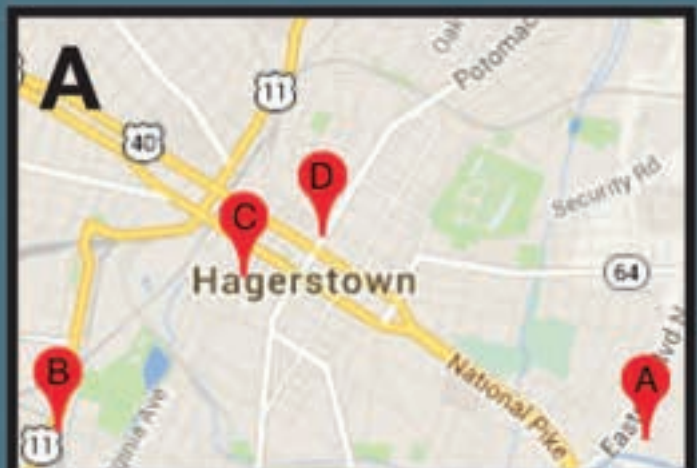
TEEN PREGNANCY

EDUCATION

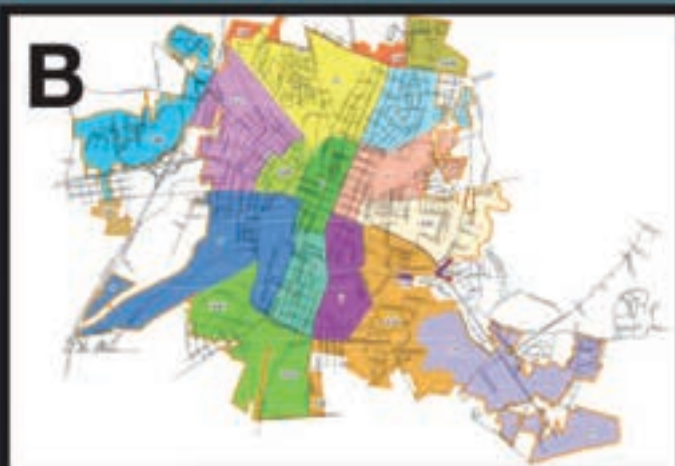
FROM CHAOS TO COHESION

For most people, navigating the systems that exist in our communities to provide basic support can be a complicated task with various barriers preventing ease of utilization. From a sociological perspective, we attempt to meet our basic human needs through the five social institutions of family, economy, government, religion and schools. It typically is not a matter of if the resources exist but the process one must follow to access them. As a catalyst in this process our goal is to create a greater harmony in this navigation through a local vehicle. In order to do that the larger institutions must first commit to an instrument used across agencies. This is where Geographic Information Systems (GIS), or maps, hold great promise in allowing data to be shared in a user friendly manner to maximize existing information collection.

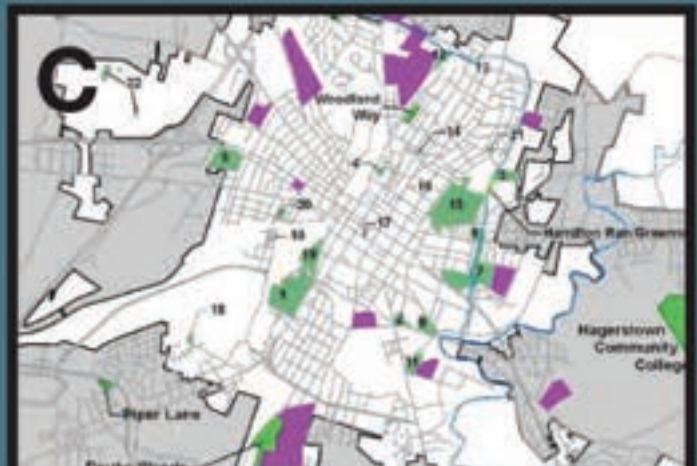
***What if agencies and citizens alike had access to all the data specific to their neighborhood?
Instead of information being used as currency, it could be used as a collective tool for change.***



Service Provider Database. Sourced on Maryland 2-1-1 on 12/15/14. www.211md.org



Courtesy of the City of Hagerstown Planning Office, U.S. Census Tract Data – 11/7/11



Courtesy of the City of Hagerstown, 2008 Master Plan - Existing Parks

HOLISTIC DATA INTEGRATION





STRENGTHS

A: Given the large volume of **service providers** in existence to address various social needs, mapping technology has the ability to “ping” locations in your area, much like you would use Yelp or Google to find a restaurant. These service providers were identified in the local 2-1-1 directory.

B: People are most often the most underutilized asset a community has to offer, understanding their locations, their demographic information and density can assist in mobilizing support and resources. This map used Census Tract data from 2010 in the City of Hagerstown, MD.

C: Green spaces are important places for communities to congregate, and maps can not only identify those that already exist, but other areas that may need to consider greater access. Using a map like this one developed for the City of Hagerstown’s Master Plan, in coordination with the other asset information could be a tool for community decision making regarding environmental modifications.

NEEDS

D: Child Protective Service reports of **abuse and neglect** are highly confidential, but accessing aggregate forms of data to conduct cross analysis to address common themes could prevent these situations from occurring. This Maptitude software transferred data from Washington County Maryland into a “vector” map to show regions where the most reports occur on various points.

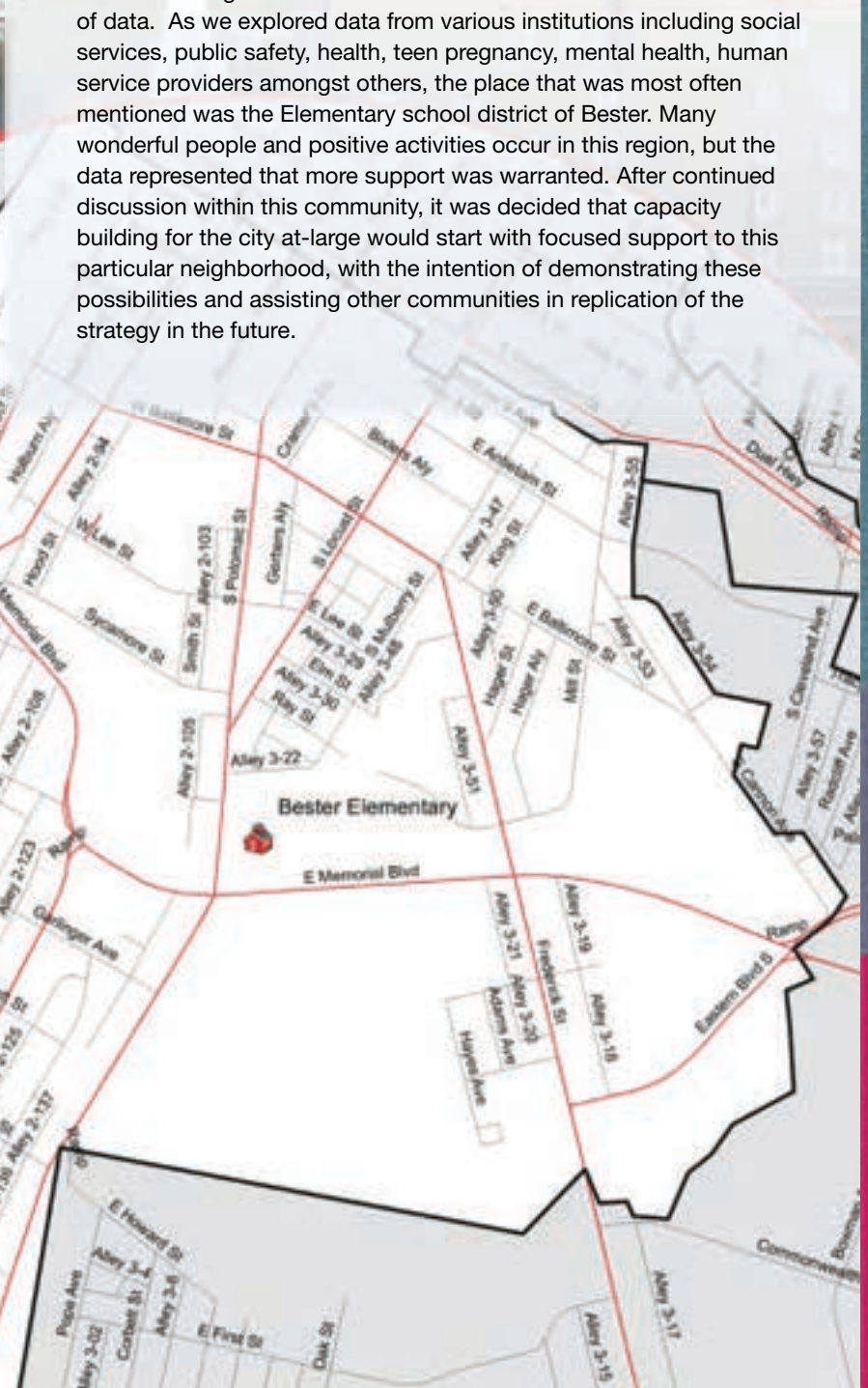
E: The City of Hagerstown Police Department uses maps to conduct crime analysis and predict areas of future supervision. These “raster” maps or thermal scans can give a visual representation commonly described as “hot spots” for criminal activity. This data set shows **criminal activity** in the City of Hagerstown between January and June of 2014. This data can be used in strategies such as predictive policing and analyzing other factors that lead to criminal activity.

Across our community various state institutions at the county level, private service providers and various others spend a tremendous amount of time & energy collecting data to demonstrate outcomes. Too often this data lives within the walls of that isolated institution and is difficult to access on an ongoing basis unless “you know someone” or are persistent and can track it down. In addition to the fragmented organization of data, it is simply too much content to be accessible for the masses. It requires a knowledge base to sift through jargon and voluminous material. While it is still very important to complete data analysis in an in-depth and reliable manner, the visual representation of how that content is shared has the ability to simplify the dialogue and allow greater understanding of sophisticated information to the citizens of the neighborhood. Our agenda is to **create a data warehouse that is holistic in nature**, where institutions share data and have the ability to conduct cross analysis. This portal could have varying permission levels, with the majority functioning as open source and other more sensitive information falling under confidential permissions. Information of a more sensitive nature would be available in aggregate form and mutually agreed upon and those corresponding institutions would have to enter into legal memorandums of understanding to develop security protocols for ease of access.

Washington County already has a tremendous knowledge base and utilization in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) at the City and County level using technology developed by national companies such as ESRI. Some of the areas where maps are already developed include property zoning, land use, sewer service boundaries, priority funding areas and many more. Taking this technology and funneling data through this platform in the social impact arena would allow for shared decision making and communication while taking into account collective goals. Data would be stored for longitudinal measurement to see if we are in fact making a difference, and it could then be use as a tool for securing grant opportunities to bring an influx of external dollars into the neighborhood in the future.

During the first half of 2014, San Mar brought together a wide spectrum of leaders, to explain our desire to step out of our traditional silo'd service delivery model and assist in catalyzing existing efforts towards a collective strategy.

Through support from Casey Family Programs, numerous sites committed to strengthening families through community engagement were visited across the United States that clarified our approach. As we did this surface analysis of their information there was a pattern of discussion regarding the general areas where there were great needs as well as an exploration of existing community assets. Much discussion occurred regarding how to define the boundaries of these areas, such as considering census block groupings, zip codes, police beats, and existing neighborhood developments. Ultimately, breaking down data to the Elementary School district was deemed a manageable size for the functionality of our task and there were several existing structures that could allow for ease and identification of data. As we explored data from various institutions including social services, public safety, health, teen pregnancy, mental health, human service providers amongst others, the place that was most often mentioned was the Elementary school district of Bester. Many wonderful people and positive activities occur in this region, but the data represented that more support was warranted. After continued discussion within this community, it was decided that capacity building for the city at-large would start with focused support to this particular neighborhood, with the intention of demonstrating these possibilities and assisting other communities in replication of the strategy in the future.



COMMUNITY LEADERS

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

FORMULA FOR CHANGE

BEST PRACTICE MODELS



A Culture of Care starts with "A Good Day"

With service integration at the forefront of achieving community wellness, the key human needs described by Abraham Maslow of health, safety, education (esteem) and belonging, and the interplay between them and their corresponding social institutions must be prioritized. The challenge persists to pursue a strategy that is inclusive and consistent across developmental milestones. Developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner was a

brilliant thinker in regards to the approaches to consider the developing person in the context of their environment, and he used that thought process to ultimately create the foundation of the Head Start program in America. If tremendous energy is put towards ensuring a solid start in the "birth to five" category, there should be no disparity of coordination as that child and their family navigates future stages of development throughout the remainder of their life span. What if every developmental period had an integrated head start and they all worked across boundaries?



Our modern life, for all its great benefits, is simply too complicated when it comes to basic needs. The dedicated efforts to move each knowledge base forward has dramatically progressed our specialization areas while unintentionally creating a greater compartmentalization and disconnect of services. What if life came with directions? Where there wasn't a fork in the road to choose the right path or the wrong path; the choice was simply good or good. What if the social leaders in key community institutions could provide an all-you-can-buffet of opportunities for growth that was as convenient as it was meaningful?

Imagine, from the time they wake up, until the time they go to sleep, the children and families of the neighborhood would be overtaken by a tidal wave of positive experiences; every day would be a good day.

Boots on the ground facilitators ensuring each step of the way that youth have access to nutritious and creative meals, an already strong academic environment is strengthened with social and emotional learning objectives, there are opportunities and experiences to be challenged and build resilience, afterschool programming that builds connections and relationships, community places and faces to deepen cultural roots and create well rounded minds, and the tools for a supportive home environment to solidify the foundation created within the confines of that community. It is in that multi-modular approach, that instead of reacting to the deficits of unmet needs throughout the day, we can build an array of non-stigmatizing opportunities with the feedback of children and their families to structurally design a "good day".

BIRTH TO 5 YEARS



SCHOOL AGE (6 to 12)



ADOLESCENCE

(13 to 17)



ADULTHOOD TO LAUNCH



16

18

20

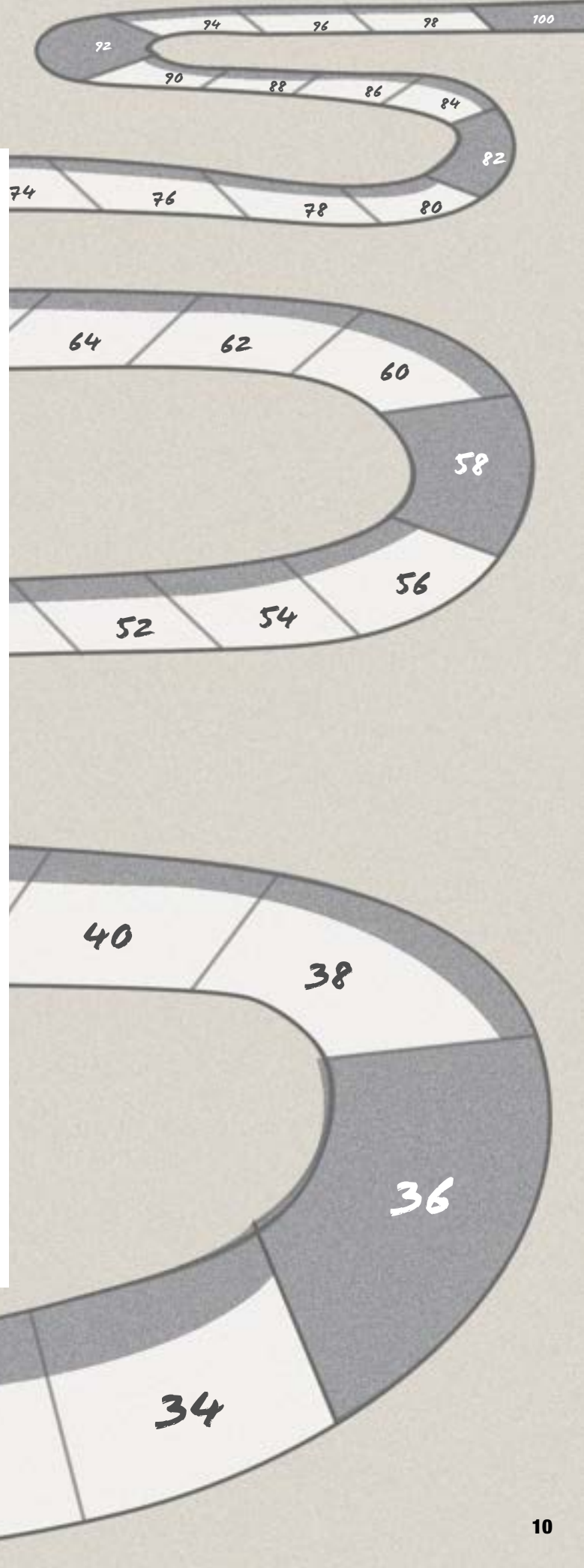
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One day at a time, a generational change process can occur, and today's school student can become tomorrow's indigenous leader, and as the years progress there can be a gradual change in the collective consciousness. And if we can move the needle on access to choices, we can also do the same with hope; we can start to see all of the fringe benefits that accompany that momentum including a sense of ownership by the people of a neighborhood. There is no quick fix to society's issues, and we can't narrowly define them to make small gains while failing in the big picture. The residents of each neighborhood should carry a sense of pride for their shared experience, and in this way everyone who lives within the boundary of a given locale' should have the same value. The only criteria should be, "Do you live here?" If so, "You matter." And if all matter, then we should all be a part of the answer to the question at the dinner table, "Did you have a good day?"

It is important to note that while cruising down this developmental path to success, individuals encounter stop lights and detours on their journey to well-being and these vary in regards to their intensity level. Sometimes in order to reach their potential, an individual may need to access acute services while still maintaining residence in their neighborhood, with the goal to get them "back on track". As the severity of those needs rise many of the services exist today in sophisticated systems, that like San Mar, are away from the home communities that have the power to heal and support. As energy continues to be put into building the neighborhood capacity and service array, gaps remain a reality. The focus of this paradigm is to take a primary stance on the daily actions that we can collectively pursue to address the root issues of social problems, and stop spending the vast majority of our time reacting to the symptoms. We need to translate the tremendous knowledge that exists in isolated facilities to a more practical daily application in communities. We have to understand that it is in this potential exchange between the developing child and their family and the structural design of the community experience that we can produce lasting outcomes.



CHILD CENTERED

San Mar residential programs and foster homes provide sanctuary where children, and youth find safety and healing from trauma and where they are engaged in a process of continual learning and growth that results in long-term change.

For many of the early years of our history as an orphanage, San Mar would function in many ways to rescue that child from difficult circumstances. Following that period, treatment of specialized needs of the child became the priority. As we move forward, continuing to understand the indicators that bring about wellness in youth and targeting resources and opportunities to address those needs to allow children to maintain residence in their community will be a focus area.

The Duke Center for Child and Family Policy is one of many academic hubs that have conducted research on this subject. In 2014 they released a report identifying the key domains and factors for well-being titled, "The National Child and Youth Well-Being Index (CWI)." Their research explains that seven wellness domains need to be measured for a young person to achieve a high quality of life: educational attainment; health; family economics; emotional/spiritual; safe/risky behavior; social relationships and community engagement.⁵

FAMILY DRIVEN

San Mar recognizes that healthy families are the foundation of a strong society and will work with families that they grow stronger and thus become an ongoing resource to their children and community.

As an organization we have made many efforts to prioritize the expertise that parents and extended family have to offer to help their cohesive unit thrive. But often times human service institutions such as ours bring their expertise to the helping relationship and it becomes less collaborative and more directive. If we believe in the inherent value and capabilities of the individual we must work to provide opportunities for self-determination with education and opportunities in a supportive format.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) helped to develop a Protective Factors Framework for families that views their needs in the context of their environment. Titled the "Strengthening Families Protective Factors" it highlights both protective and promotive factors in families including: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, social-emotional competence of children. The Administration for Children and Families modified this work by adding a sixth component, nurturing & resilience, to emphasize the importance of secure attachments.⁶

COMMUNITY ENGAGED

San Mar will work to make the communities where it operates stronger by both serving and actively engaging and connecting with others in those communities who are also seeking to minister to the needs of others.

The ongoing challenge in accessing research regarding community indicators is in identifying how we can continue to move towards solidifying foundational indicators, and then complimenting those by adding indicators organic to the neighborhood. And then add indicators organic to the neighborhood to enhance those principles? The feedback of what is important to the citizens of a neighborhood should be included in any measurement, but aside from this feedback there needs to be key items measured for shared social action. This would not just be adverse experiences, but through the lens of a strengths orientation. As this research continues to grow we will think less about removing all of the variables that are required when studying the individual in a medical or academic environment, and understand the phenomenon that occurs within the interactions of the various community indicators.

The landmark study, "Hardwired to Connect", identified the ten main characteristics of an "authoritative community". A multidisciplinary team of experts came to understand that children do better in life, when they experience a greater volume of relationships and connectedness in the context of their families and communities. The ten characteristics identified were a community that is: inclusive to children and youth, sees children as ends themselves, is warm & nurturing, has clear limits and expectations, where the majority of work is by non-specialists, is multi-generational, has a long-term focus, has a shared understanding of the definition of a good person, where there is spiritual & religious development and equal dignity of all persons exists.⁷

Our hypothesis is that life in its most basic functions is worth living fully, and the accompanying connection that comes from belonging of some type is the primary strategy to achieve the goal of survival.

But too often it is in group membership where we separate ourselves from others. What if we proposed something radical, if we viewed the Community Organism (see Figure 1.1 on page 13) as a way to inoculate its entire people from social ills and as the vehicle for resilience? If we continued to explore how to maximize the exchange between children, families and their community, we may find the internal capacity for support and development much greater than we realize.

We are more fragmented and subsequently more fragile than ever before, isolated from the extended network of our families, often due to employment or other opportunities. Yet, as the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance data demonstrates, where we live matters. When considering a holistic approach to a community service array to support children and families, ultimately the neighborhood should offer the freedom of self-determination regardless of your address.

Making the Leap

Amidst this period of challenge to the entire system of out of home care of children and youth, San Mar was approached by Casey Family Programs, a large national operating foundation dedicated to reducing the number of children in out of home placement and strengthening families. Casey was interested in doing a demonstration project with San Mar and provided the opportunity to study some of the creative best practice models of care and community engagement that were being successfully developed and implemented in other parts of the United States.

As these agencies and practices were identified San Mar completed multiple site visits. A dialogue began across institutions throughout the nation as best practices were studied.

The consistent message everywhere was that those who hoped to continue providing quality out of home services to children and youth into the future, needed to view each child in the broader context of his or her family system and the community. Lasting change must occur within the family and the community. There was clearly a need for residential and foster care, but it must exist within the context of strengthening these larger systems.

As San Mar grappled with this reality, a greater priority was made towards breaking down and erasing barriers to sharing resources so as to ultimately achieve strong families and community revitalization, including access to existing resources and natural supports.

We realized that the utilization of objective data had to be a key tool for shared decision making and for providing initial direction. One example was found in the Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance, which could track the “Key 11 Vital Signs” of a healthy community at the neighborhood level.³ They created a portal where you can click on a neighborhood and find meaningful data related specific to where you live.

Another example came out of Los Angeles; the Children's Bureau devised an intricate plan instituted in a high risk, densely populated 500 block area of East Los Angeles. Their strategy brought together neighborhood ambassadors on each block, seventy-five organizations and churches as well as all the other services providers in their catchment area using a strengths approach.⁴ They identified the need to reduce competition over resources so as to meet the common goals of their citizens. The centerpiece of this work is a state of the art centralized hub for all their citizens called Magnolia Place along with a website with the tools where anyone can locate needed resources anywhere in the entire region.

Over fifty years ago, in a time of tremendous division and social unrest in America, as Martin Luther King Jr. advocated for the anti-slum campaign, James Rouse pushed for homogenous neighborhoods. As a transcendent developer and urban planner Rouse pushed for the idea of an economic core through his revolutionary idea of the shopping mall, but of greater significance was the marriage he saw between that economic plan and ten self-contained villages surrounding those businesses. He had the unique opportunity to do this with an empty parcel of land with the city of Columbia, Maryland which “opened” in 1967.⁸ By partializing the city into these manageable neighborhoods, he allowed for ease of access to all the necessary opportunities of all of its citizens, regardless of their race or income level. What if we could reverse engineer his process with cities that already were in existence, by taking the overwhelming issues found in cities and focus on more manageable solutions at the neighborhood level? Instead of devising broad brick and mortar sites or strategic land use, we could focus on development of the systems of support. Each neighborhood coalition would work as a clearing house of resources and the procurement of opportunities. The villages of Columbia became places of opportunity, and their collective success allowed for the development of a city of hope.

Systematically eliminating the factors that lead to an environment of poverty and trauma is certainly a big concept, but if it is possible isn't it worth our full attention? San Mar has long been viewed as a sanctuary for children, a safe place. Why can't the strong relationships within the community be utilized to create that same sense in each neighborhood? It has already been demonstrated that San Mar has the capability to do it in a campus-based environment. Let us take those skills and create a culture of

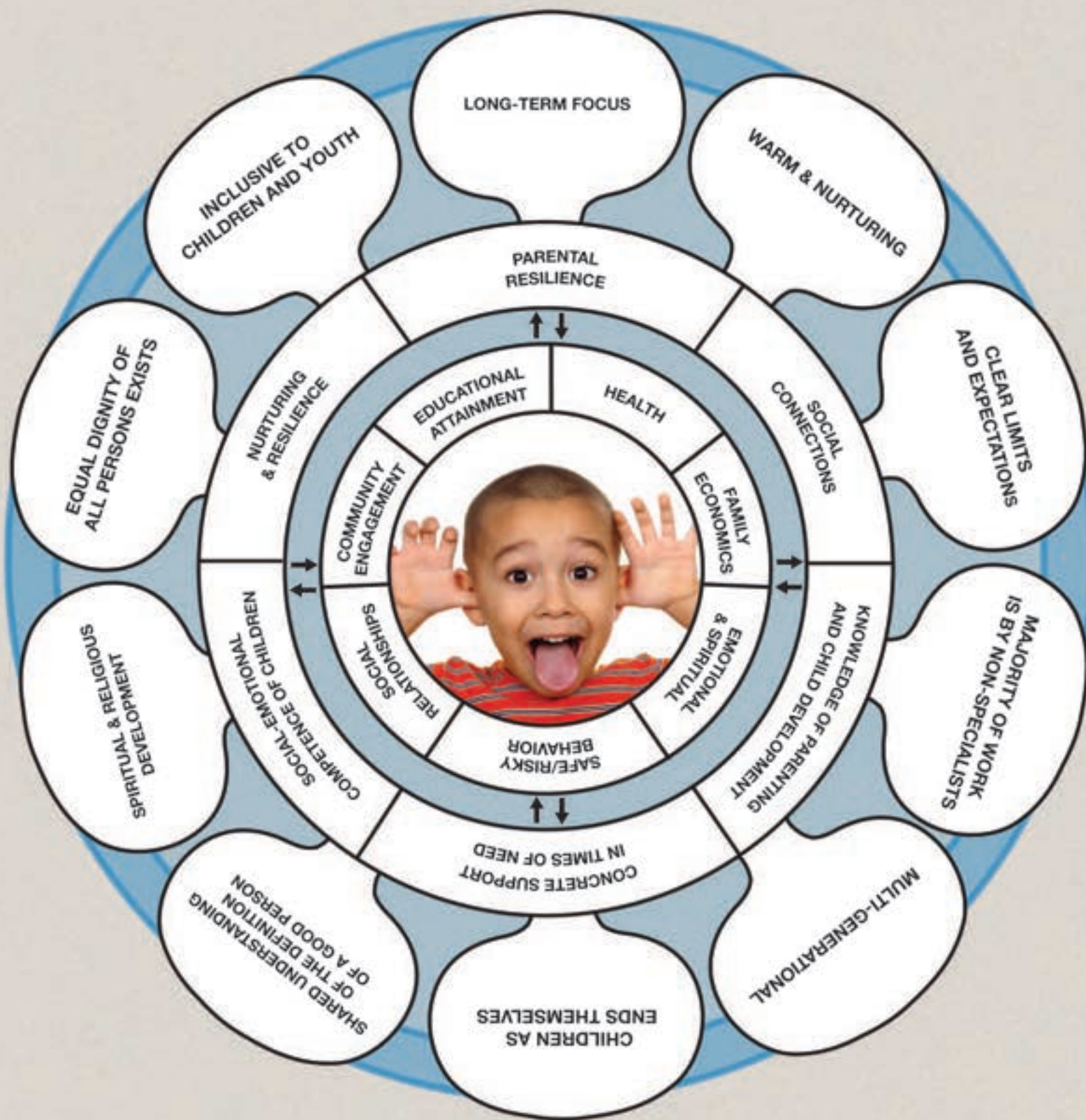


FIGURE 1.1: **THE COMMUNITY ORGANISM**

care in the communities where these children and families originate. Many children could be prevented from ever having to enter an out of home placement, and regardless of how outstanding a facility like San Mar may be, it is not better than a child being in the presence of their own family or in their own community.

"Social workers are almost unanimous regarding the family as being the proper place for children to be cared for. No institution, no matter how well managed can take its place."
(Walter Esmer, San Mar Superintendent, 1918)

San Mar purposes to partner with community organizations to bring about the momentum needed to catalyze a grassroots effort for social change. Such a role starts with the understanding that the models seen in other areas and the policies being developed in other states may not work in Maryland, the answer of what a community initiative should be for Western Maryland remains to be found in the needs of the people of that community. There needs to be a structure and guiding process that helps a community to identify and achieve its goal, but the strengthening of the groups of community stakeholders and current working consortiums must occur organically. Each community presents with different variables including strengths, weaknesses and demographics that will guide a community solution catered to those considerations amongst others.

Why not us?

If it is known that a service has been done effectively elsewhere, why can't it be done here? Why can't Western Maryland become a place that is a best practice model? What if we could make Washington County a destination, not a place to escape when the first opportunity arrives? This is where our region needs support. Guidance and technical assistance from those who have experience navigating these complex initiatives is needed. It's not as simple to provide research and data; there must be facilitators.

It has often been said that, "It takes a village" to help children and families thrive, but the human service financial structures at local, state and federal levels have historically not had the capacity to flexibly address these issues and give those most in need access to resources and services without bureaucracy and red tape. Prevention as a concept, used to be an idealistic perspective; it did not fit in well with the

medical model of reactivity and symptom management. While those services are still critical, too little emphasis has been placed on root cause issues that bring children and families into poverty and human service systems.

For San Mar, a community initiative such as the types seen in other parts of the United States is appearing as a tangible reality; however it is acknowledged that all members of the community may not have the same vision to approach this effort. Depending on the areas from which these community members derive, there is a tremendous shared benefit across subgroups in entering a coordinated planning effort of this type. For example, if a strategic plan centered on enhancing community wellness was carried out, it could be used as a base for economic development and growth. Stronger and more attractive communities for all would attract businesses and subsequently jobs. This is just one example of how an integrated human service delivery system can have tremendous benefits to every resident of a community, not just those who are trapped in poverty.

A Time to Act

San Mar was born in response to identified community needs that a group of citizens came together and acted on. Over time the organization moved out of the community and focused on the complex needs of children and youth. Today, the challenge and responsibility seeks to return the focus back to empowering the local community and families to unite to address needs.

For over 130 years a tremendous amount of regional support of volunteers and finances have enabled San Mar to carry out life changing services to vulnerable children and families in need. While we believe in the importance of a continuum of services, we also see it as our moral responsibility in the pursuit of social justice to identify every avenue to appropriately respond to the needs for youth and their family, in the context of their community. Each individual variable in the community is so important to address, but it is the sum and marriage of these specialties that truly brings about a stronger community.

Together we are stronger.

CONTENT:

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1: Urish (Cascade Aerial Photo)
www.flickr.com/photos/urish/2593706711/

2: Alan Siefert (Cover Photo)

3: Potomac Street courtesy of the City of Hagerstown



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