

# DONOR NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2019 | VOL 4, ISSUE 1



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## IN THIS EDITION



*Celebrating 35 years of sunshine; cutting ribbon on a new building; successful outreach efforts; innovative giving options and fundraising stories; and experiences of family members and volunteers, in their own words.*

**FIND OUT MORE INSIDE!**

**A RETREAT FOR CHILDREN WITH LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESSES  
AND THEIR FAMILIES IN CASCO, MAINE**

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### 35 YEARS IN A BLINK OF AN EYE!

It would be something different; but not something entirely new. We had always worked with families, provided 5 star vacations and were known by many to be the “Cadillac of Camps”. But this would be more;...you could sense and feel that something very special had just taken place at the end of that first Camp Sunshine program.

This would not just be your typical family vacation, this would be the start of something truly amazing. A building block to something larger. More importantly this was something that would change lives. We didn’t realize it at the time; but this was the beginning of the Camp Sunshine community. A place where families could find hope, experience joy, share in each other’s successes and provide a shoulder to lean on in times of sadness or loss.

What was meant to be a “one and done” unexpectedly gained a tremendous amount of momentum behind the strong vision and driving force of our founders, Anna & Larry Gould, carried on the backs of our loyal volunteers, supported by the generosity of our donors and moved forward each year by our dedicated staff and board members. Even more telling was the insight of the families attending camp that made it impossible to not continue the program. This program needed to go on!

I have been very fortunate to be a part of this “magical” journey, from the very beginning. To have the opportunity to be a part of such a special organization, to have a front row seat to observe all that has taken place from the inception of camp to where we are today has been and continues to be an honor. At the same time, this experience has been very humbling, as families share and allow you into their lives. It is a privilege not to be taken lightly.

What resonates most with me over the past 35 years is the selflessness I have seen demonstrated by our volunteers, donors

and staff. It is a display that will reaffirm your faith in humanity. With so much craziness in the news and world around us, it is Camp that shines a beacon of light and clearly brings things into perspective. A perspective of what is really important: the children and our families.

There have been many poignant stories and opportunities for reflection over the past 35 years. Moments of joy, successes to share, milestones to be celebrated, reasons to pause, and yes, times of sadness. Through it all Camp Sunshine and the community it has fostered continues to rise.

Although the bounce in my step may not be as high, and there may be a little less hair on the top of my head (okay maybe a lot less), it still feels good to get out of bed each morning and come to a place where we are actually making a difference! Where else can you go and see Miss Maine and one of our campers come together and attend a local prom, or watch a young camper put his fears aside, get up on stage and sing a song that lights up an audience, or see a group of Navy SEALs past exhaustion push forward in support of our camp families. From a grassroots one-week camp program to hosting sessions year round, in a permanent facility... it has been a busy 35 years. Many accomplishments, with much achieved; but we’re just getting started!!!

*Michael Katz*

Michael Katz  
Executive Director

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FOR UPDATES, PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND MORE!**



## CELEBRATING 35 YEARS



What started in 1983, after my late husband and I watched a short clip of a young cancer patient in an interview simply state: “I go to bed at night and pray to God I wake up, and when I wake up, I thank God for another day”, was a miracle. After hearing that and listening to myself say “we can do something,” the rest, as they say, is the history of the reality of the last 35 years.

What a journey it has been! How fortunate to be in Quebec City and to turn on the TV just when that little boy was making that statement. Does it sound like it was meant to be? I think so. As I started to formulate the program, it struck me as how impossible it would be not to invite the parents. Yes, it was just going to be a children’s program. The more I thought about it, the more convinced I was that it could not be that way. After a few obstacles, the program was born.

I remember when I told Mike Katz that we were going to do ‘something different’. With his usual easy going way, he said ‘sure’. Neither of us had any forethought to the future, as this was initially going to be a one-time deal. I called a dear friend, who has since passed, Edna Grace, to come and help me ‘talk to the parents’. Little did I know that was the start of the parents’ workshops. One thing led to another, and in 1984, we hosted the first ever Camp Sunshine!

As a mother, I felt I could understand what the parents went through. However, I can honestly say I had no clue until I listened to the parents. The parents were the only ones who truly understood each other. The rest of us were on the sidelines.

At the end of the session, when parents were telling us how much it meant to them to talk to others who “truly understood”, is when I got it. When they asked, “Can we come back?”, we looked at each other and I said “Yes!” That was the commitment

we made to Camp Sunshine and kept steadfast to for the last 35 wonderful years.

The wonder of human kindness came through loud and clear from so many who wanted to help. Most notably, Joe (Papa Joe) Pappalardo, who called and said, “I am nearby, retired, can’t write a big check but I can help.” And did he help! He really started what has become a critical part of the program, the volunteer force. Joe and Mike coordinated one of the most fundamental aspects of Camp. Volunteers came from near and far and gave of themselves unconditionally and still do to this day. Donors gave goods, labor, checks and a lot of love. What an amazing testament to humanity.

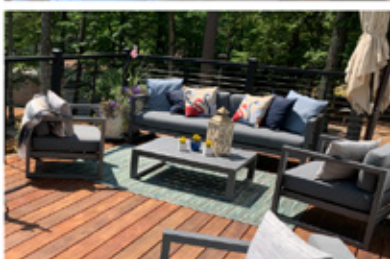
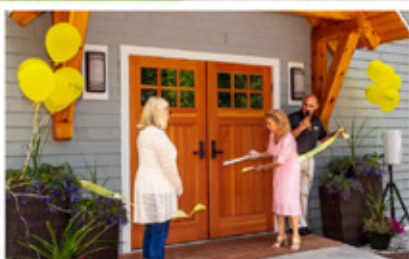
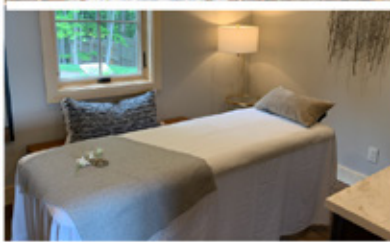
Thank you to the wonderful families who attend and share their lives with us, the wonderful volunteers who truly embody selflessness, the unparalleled dedication of Mike Katz and his great staff, the commitment of the board members to fiscal responsibility, and the devotion of all our gracious donors who continue to allow us to deliver this special gift to all that need it when they enter our unique “three doors” to a magical place.

It has been an honor, privilege and a true blessing to continue to be part of this amazing journey, and I look forward to a bright, prosperous and enduring future.

Warm regards,

Anna Tassone Gould  
Founder, Board Chair





## THE NEW CLUBHOUSE

On June 29th Camp Sunshine not only celebrated a milestone of serving families for 35 years but also the opening of our new Lakefront Clubhouse.

The building replaced an original structure which had stood on the property for more than 50 years. Its initial renovation was completed shortly after the opening of the new campus in 2001 and included a small library, non-denominational chapel, and spaces where families could play board games while taking in views of Sebago Lake. Two additional buildings nearby included an aquatic storage shed as well as changing area.

However, over time the building's structural integrity began to wear and the determination was made to construct a new building in its place.

The vision for the clubhouse would not only replace the previous facilities but also account for other growing needs.

More than 150 people gathered for the Lakefront Clubhouse ribbon-cutting and the day was highlighted by the generous donors, who underwrote the rooms, getting the first glimpse of its architectural beauty.

The interior was designed by Emily Wisecup, wife of Camp Sunshine Board Member and SEALS for Sunshine Founder, Michael Wisecup. Her attention to detail is unparalleled. Each room has a design element that is a reflection of the donor who funded it.

Guests were awestruck by the 18-foot-tall ceilings of the Great Room with a gorgeous stone fireplace and furnishings, and taken aback by the views from the Waterfront Deck and Patio. The peacefulness and details of the Serenity Room (renamed from the chapel) includes the stained-glass windows from the original building. The Adult Lounge with antique paddles and oars adorning the walls also includes a 100-year-old pool table, dart boards and seating area for parents to find some down time.

Rounding out the space is the Wellness Wing, which includes massage and reiki rooms and a salon. Those in attendance were amazed by the new building's decor and design.

Camp Sunshine would like to thank everyone who made this spectacular new clubhouse available to families. As we continue to strive to meet the needs of those we serve, we are humbled by their commitment.

### DONORS

<b>Lakefront Clubhouse</b> .....	<b>Isobel &amp; Bruce Cleland</b>
<b>Multipurpose Room</b> .....	<b>Party City</b>
<b>Lifestyle Wing</b> .....	<b>Harvard/Bolton, MA Endowment</b>
<b>Great Room</b> .....	<b>Texas Roadhouse</b>
<b>Stargazing Deck</b> .....	<b>Anton Yelchin / Omaze</b>
<b>Adult Lounge</b> .....	<b>S/A Maraia Charities</b>
<b>Serenity Room</b> .....	<b>Bravehearts FODC</b>
<b>Wellness Room 1</b> .....	<b>Carol Hancock Room</b>
<b>Wellness Room 2</b> .....	<b>Carol &amp; David Hancock Charitable Trust</b>
<b>Wellness Room 3</b> .....	<b>Carol &amp; David Hancock Charitable Trust</b>
<b>Foyer</b> .....	<b>Hancock Lumber</b>
<b>Fireplace</b> .....	<b>Noble &amp; Greenough School</b>
<b>Patio &amp; Furnishings</b> .....	<b>In honor of Valerie V. Kezer</b>
<b>Great Room Furnishings</b> .....	<b>The Fulshaw Family</b>
<b>Adult Lounge Furnishings</b> .....	<b>Bartow Construction</b>
<b>Serenity Room Furnishings</b> .....	<b>The Patel Family</b>
<b>Stargazing Deck Furnishings</b> .....	<b>The Saunders Family</b>



# COMMITMENT & COMPASSION - tropical SMOOTHIE CAFE



You don't achieve the success that Camp Sunshine has over the last 35 years without having the right partners along the way. This August, at a session sponsored by Tropical Smoothie Café, the organization's CEO Charles Watson presented Camp Sunshine with the largest gift in our three and a half decade history!

Donations collected at more than 750 stores across the nation by dedicated employees, managers, and owners exceeded all expectations and totaled \$1,142,025. That is the most Tropical Smoothie Café has ever collected for Camp Sunshine during their National Flip Flop Day Campaign!

## A FAMILY STORY



I want to start by saying Maine is beautiful. I knew on the bus ride from Boston to Portland that this was going to be life-changing and it was. My favorite movie as a kid was *Indian Summer*. I used to sit on the floor next to my mom and watch it. My favorite things about the movie were the scenery and the bonds these families made. I felt like I was in that movie. We met so many families in the same situation as us, yet every family's story is different and unique. In the end, we all walk a different walk but none of us walk alone. We are all complete strangers; but circumstance brings us together and makes us family. One thing I learned during my time at Camp Sunshine is when you can't change your circumstance, change yourself. I was able to let go of some things I was holding on to. I will be going back to Texas a new person, we all will. For two years my girls, Emily (9) and Haley (7) have not left our side. The social

workers, child life specialists and close family have all tried to get them to venture away and they have failed. Camp Sunshine was able to get them away from us from day one and for seven hours!! My husband and I were able to work on our own relationship for the first time since diagnosis. We enjoyed walks through the foliage, sharing apples from the apple tree, talking with other adults and then hearing the excitement in our girls' voices as they told us all about their day. Camp Sunshine did so much more than just entertain us. They helped us heal. Our family is returning home new and we have you to thank for that. Thank you so much! Thank you for the wonderful memories.

Sincerely,

*Meg Holt Emily & Haley*



# 2019 RECAP

2019 has been busy and full of visitors and camp fun. Here are just a



**NOR'EASTERS KITE CLUB**



**MERRYMEETING KENNELS**



**MOUNTAINVIEW WOODIES ANTIQUE BOAT CLUB**



**RENT-A-PRINCESS**



**SHORT FOLKS FOR HOPE**



**L.L. BEAN BOOTMOBILE**



**EAGLE BASS MASTERS**



few of the wonderful organizations that helped make this another great year at Camp Sunshine!



UKULELES HEAL THE WORLD



BIRDHOUSES WITH WAYNE COULSON



EXILE MOTORCYCLE CLUB



BEECH FAMILY ORFF LESSONS



KINGSPOKE



KIDS KICKING CANCER



CAMP CENTERSTAGE



CASCO FIRE & RESCUE



## FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Christa Erde joined the Camp Sunshine staff in early 2019 as the Activities & Program Supervisor. With a welcoming smile, an abundance of energy and years of experience as a kindergarten teacher at Fiddlehead School of Arts & Sciences in Gray, Christa is uniquely qualified to facilitate activities and help families create memorable experiences while at Camp Sunshine.

As one of the only programs in the nation that has been designed to serve every member of the family in a retreat model, being able to offer a variety of activities that families can enjoy together is an important part of each Camp session. Developing and enhancing the activities that are offered during family free time has been something that's been high on the priorities list at Camp this year. With Christa's help, family free time now includes themed outings, fun games that the whole family can enjoy, and various activities like bubble making and family arts & crafts time.

Another one of Christa's tasks is coordinating appearances from special guests during each session. This year, Camp welcomed a myriad of special guests – who all added value to the respective sessions they attended. A full list of special guests who volunteered their time in 2019 can be found on pages 6-7. If you have suggestions for future family free time activities or special guests who might be interested in visiting Camp, please email [cerde@campsunshine.org](mailto:cerde@campsunshine.org).

## OUTREACH UPDATE



To all of us in the Camp Sunshine community, November 1 marks the beginning of our "New Year" as program offerings for the coming year are announced. It's an exciting time of anticipation for the year to come as well as a time for reflection on our 2019 program year.

Renewed outreach initiatives began last fall with the goal of getting the word out about the magic of Camp Sunshine to as many families as possible. With your help we built and strengthened connections with referring partners from all 50 states and beyond. We reached more than 700 social workers, child life specialists, military family resource specialists, non-profit organizations, and other partners with materials about Camp Sunshine to share with the families they serve. We presented information and smoothies to new families in Las Vegas, participated in the Boston Children's Pediatric Transplant Family Day and the Wipe Out Kid's Cancer Ambassador Induction Ceremonies in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas. At resource fairs, professional conferences, and meetings with teams across the country we continued to "spread the sunshine" to ensure that all families hear about the opportunities for joy and hope at Camp Sunshine. As a result, so far this year more than 700 families walked through our yellow doors, creating crucial networks of support, reconnecting with each other, and filling our hallways with laughter. After a session at camp, families tell us they are leaving feeling revitalized and with renewed hope for the journey ahead.

As we look forward to the coming year, we ask for your continued support by helping us spread the word far and wide. Happy "New Year" from all of us at Camp Sunshine!





# HITTING THE ROAD - RALLY NEW ENGLAND II



The 2019 Rally New England II to benefit Camp Sunshine is in the record books as being the single largest fundraising event Rally North America has ever organized. In July, 85 teams raised funds and drove from Erie, Pennsylvania to Camp Sunshine in Casco, Maine in support of our program.

Rally North America believes the destination is only a part of any journey and is no more important than any other part. Their "Rallies" offer a competition in a scavenger hunt-style format. These are open to all makes and models of vehicles and anyone is welcome to compete or choose not to compete and just enjoy the scenery, the stops, and a nice day of driving.

As a previous beneficiary in 2013 (Rally New England I) and 2016 (Big Sky Rally) participants raised \$85,000 and \$125,000 respectively. This year's event exceeded all expectations when drivers and supporters raised in excess of \$220,000!

Executive Director, Michael Katz and Development Director, Michael Smith took on the challenge for the second time after rallying from Pueblo, Colorado to Carson City, Nevada last summer. Together they survived five straight days crossing

the Rocky Mountains, driving through seemingly endless deserts and completing the loneliest road in America. Mike and Mike somehow agreed to do it all over again. With a clearer understanding of the benefits of car air fresheners, long awkward silences, and agreeing on music genres, the Camp Sunshine team was much more prepared for their 2019 challenge.

Although they were unable to place in the top three each day, with the generous support of our constituents Team Camp Sunshine was the top fundraising team with nearly \$20,000!

The highlight of the event was the arrival of the drivers at Camp Sunshine during our Diamond-Blackfan Anemia session. Ironically, it was the same group who greeted drivers six years earlier! Teams were welcomed by children and their families with signs lining the road to camp, given handmade camp keychains, a tour of the facility, and a cookout.

Camp Sunshine extends our sincere thanks for the continued commitment and support of Rally North America and the leadership of Tony Intriери and Scott Spielman. Be sure to check out this year's rally on MAV TV beginning this January!





## AWARDS & RECOGNITION



**MICHAEL WISECUP**  
HONORED WITH  
GOVERNORS VOLUNTEER  
OF THE YEAR AWARD



**AMERICAN CAMP  
ASSOCIATION**



**GREAT NON-PROFITS**  
HONORED AS TOP RATED  
CHARITY BY THOSE WE  
SUPPORT AND SERVE

## VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVES



CRISPR Therapeutics is focused on developing transformative gene-based medicines for serious human diseases

### CRISPR TEAM

CRISPR was honored to be part of such a special weekend at Camp Sunshine. The CRISPRites who attended were excited to meet the families and hear their stories. What we didn't expect was to be so integrated, so engaged with families' experiences at Camp. We were so impressed with the

organization and options of activities for the campers, ranging from outdoor sports and water activities to board games. We had so much fun diving in the sand at the volleyball court and playing ping pong in the game room – a CRISPR favorite!

The CRISPRites that were part of the Teen group quickly learned what a special group it was. Every single teen was so unique and demonstrated their leadership in their own ways; whether speaking up and bringing together their team members or being the voice of reason when we needed it. It was such a special feeling to get to know each teen individually. We got to listen to their stories, hobbies, and life aspirations. It was inspiring for us to hear what it is like for a kid to live with sickle cell disease and it made us hopeful for the kids' future. It was especially valuable to hear real experiences since we have been researching purely the science of sickle cell disease for years.

The families shared their feelings about what it's like for their kids to make friends halfway across the country that really understand what they're going through-- be it late-night hospitalizations, transfusions and chronic pain or just being a kid with SCD. We talked to many families that have been going to camp for years that spoke about how much of an impact camp has made on their lives. Yet the families had also made a huge impact on all of us, the volunteers, as well.

It was a humbling, empowering, overwhelming, and very impactful four days at Camp Sunshine. We are all looking forward to next year!

-Lauren, Nipul, Mariam, and Vivek



### VICKY & VINNY LETTIERI

Volunteering at Camp Sunshine means the world to us. Camp Sunshine helped us through so much when we were Campers. It is so wonderful that we get to give back, after all they did for us. We love meeting new families, and seeing other families when they return. It's a great feeling knowing that we can relate to the families. When we talk to a family (especially a new

family), we listen more than we speak. It is so nice knowing we understand what they are going through and being able to help them get through it. Being up at Camp, is being with our second family, our home away from home. We don't go on vacations. Camp Sunshine is our vacation, and we wouldn't change it for the world.

Volunteering at Camp Sunshine helps us give back to those who are going through so much. Going to Camp is like a family reunion, over the years we have met many families and have watched their children grow. Vicky loves to do one-on-one and has made lifelong friends that keep in touch throughout the year. Working in the kitchen has its perks as Vinny gets to see everyone 2 to 3 times a day and they are always happy because it is food time. We have been going to Camp Sunshine since the 1990's and have watched it grow from a few weekends in April and September to year round sessions. The campus has grown from a few trailers to the campus it is today. One of the best things about Camp is that when the kids are here they can be kids again. In closing if there are sick children needing a place to go, thank God there's a Camp Sunshine for them to go to, and that they let us volunteer, we only wish we could do more.



Charity Navigator has again awarded Camp Sunshine its highest 4-star rating, showcasing Camp's overall financial responsibility, expediency, and transparency.

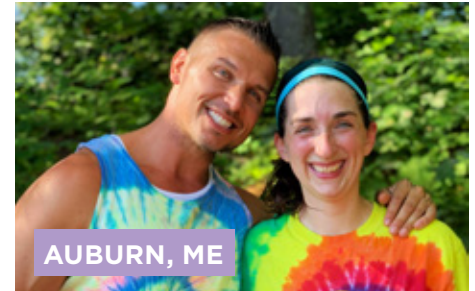


## FUNDRAISING STORIES

### WOLFPACK FITNESS FUNDRAISER

One of the pillars of creating a successful fundraiser is making sure it's FUN – fun for you to organize and fun for those who will be involved (the word fun is right in the name, after all). For Camp Sunshine family member Jerusha C., bringing two of her passions – fitness and Camp Sunshine – together

was a perfect fit. In September, with the help of Luke Robinson who is the owner of Wolfpack Fitness, Jerusha and other Wolfpack Fitness members raised more than \$180 for Camp Sunshine! The money was raised at a drop-in class where each participant made a \$5 donation to take the class.



### S/A MARAIA GOLF TOURNAMENT

In just a six week span, between March and April of 2012, the Maraia family tragically lost two brothers, Stephen and Albert. To celebrate their lives, family and friends formed S/A Maraia Charities to benefit children. The Maraias had become familiar with Camp Sunshine during their many visits to the adjacent Point Sebago Resort and immediately considered Camp as a beneficiary.

The family first purchased a brick in our Angel Walkway to honor the brothers,

then committed to raising \$25,000 to endow a family sponsorship in their memory. The establishment of the S/A Maraia Family Sponsorship Fund allows a family in perpetuity the opportunity to attend Camp Sunshine. The partnership did not stop there. When the capital campaign was launched for the new clubhouse the Maraia Family knew immediately they would participate by underwriting one of the rooms.

The fundraising would continue and on September 23 at Black Rock Country

Club in Hingham, MA more than 100 participants honored these special men. In addition to a spectacular round of golf, there was a putting contest, silent and live auctions hosted by Boston College football standout and former Patriot, Giant, Jet and Dallas linebacker Steve DeOssie.

Thanks to event supporters more than \$40,000 was successfully raised by the tournament. Funding will go directly to the charity's commitment toward the clubhouse and the *Stephen & Albert Maraia Lounge*.

### QUARTERS FOR CAMP

Quarters for Camp is an initiative that began after volunteers Jane Herrion and her son Chris returned home from a Camp Sunshine session in 2013. They knew they wanted to do more to support Camp Sunshine's mission in a financial way, and started a grass roots fundraiser with a simple concept: challenge friends, coworkers, family members (and really anyone else who would listen) to save their quarters for the first quarter of the year. At the end of that time, participants got really creative with the ways

they submitted their change to Jane. Submissions included traditional checks, 35mm film containers filled with quarters, three months of calendar pages with a quarter taped to each day, piles of change dropped into Jane's piggy bank (proudly decorated at Camp) that she keeps on her desk at work. "Camp Sunshine is a place where our family gets bigger every session – and our Camp families – to whom we are related by that same love for Camp – continues to drive us to run Quarters for Camp every year," said Jane. Since 2013, Quarters for Camp has raised more than \$10,000 for Camp Sunshine!







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Casco, ME 04015



## 2020 PROGRAM DATES

Feb 14 - 18.....	Oncology
Feb 19 - 23.....	Oncology
April 21 - 25.....	BCH: Solid Organ Transplant
May 21 - 26.....	Bereavement
May 28 - June 2.....	Dyskeratosis Congenita
June 4 - 9.....	Oncology
June 11 - 16.....	Retinoblastoma and Other Eye Cancers
June 18 - 23.....	Oncology
June 26 - July 1.....	Fanconi Anemia
July 5 - 10.....	Oncology
July 12 - 17.....	Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome
July 19 - 24.....	Brain Tumor: Low Grade
July 26 - 31.....	Lupus
Aug 2 - 7.....	Oncology
Aug 9 - 14.....	Hematology / Oncology
Aug 16 - 21.....	Nephrology / Solid Organ Transplant
Aug 23 - 27.....	Oncology: Off-Treatment
Aug 29 - Sept 2.....	Mixed Diagnosis*
Sept 3 - 7.....	Oncology: Spanish-Speaking
Sept 25 - 28.....	Sickle Cell
October 9 - 13.....	Brain Tumor
October 29 - Nov 1.....	Mixed Diagnosis*

*\*Families of children with any diagnosis served by Camp Sunshine are encouraged to apply.*

FIND OUT MORE AT  
[WWW.CAMPSUNSHINE.ORG](http://WWW.CAMPSUNSHINE.ORG)

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