



## Summary of Impact and Accomplishments 2024-2025

Our Mission: Enhance the lives of adults age 55+ by connecting them with rewarding volunteer experiences that meet community needs.

In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, our amazing volunteers, collectively accomplished a lot! Here is a quick glance at the numbers from our four county service area.



**807** Volunteers  
aged 55+



Served **35,341**  
hours



Valued at  
**\$1,020,648**

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## BASE Class Starting in Colo



We are thrilled to be bringing a well-loved exercise class to Story County! Our BASE class (Balance, Agility, Strength, and Endurance) has been running successfully in Hamilton and Webster Counties for over 10 years. The city of Colo has welcomed our first class in Story County, which started December 9 with 21 individuals participating! It was a wonderful turnout and the participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have this class available to them.

The BASE class in Colo is facilitated by RSVP volunteer, Susan Hayes. Classes will be held twice a week at the Colo Methodist Church. We are grateful to the church for providing the use of this space for the class.

If you would like to see a BASE class start in your community, or if you are interested in becoming a BASE leader, contact us at (515) 733-4917!



*Your 2026 calendar is enclosed!*



If you receive an e-newsletter, please stop by one of our offices for your calendar. OR - give us a call and we will mail it to you!

## Brag Book

Featured: Transportation Program (Pat Hashman), Blanket Tying (Shelly Rivera, Patricia Ewing, Linda Galvin), Nola delivering treats, and the Cambridge Expo Booth (Arllyss Peterson, Bobbie Miller)



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From the staff at Central Iowa RSVP, we are so thankful for the priceless gift that you share - your time!

You make such an incredible impact on your communities and for individuals around you. We are blessed to be able to work with you!

We hope you will enjoy seeing a snippet of your accomplishments in the following pages with our annual report.

Best wishes for a joyful holiday and a blessed 2026! - Kalen, Linda, Kim, Laura, Paul, and Melissa!

# WELCOME

## New Arrivals to Central IA RSVP

Ginger Altmayer, Cambridge

Beverly Bass, Ames

Myrna Cakerice, Ames

Sharon Christie, Ames

Sonya Colvin, Ames

Marilyn Devick, Ames

Dena Dilka, Ames

William Dilla, Ames

Linda Doyle, Story City

Marie Edwards, Ames

Diane Eilers, Nevada

Priscilla Gammon, Nevada

Virginia Gee, Ames

Sarah Gilchrist, Nevada

Nancy Habing, Ames

David Hayes, Nevada

Harlan Hertzke, Ames

Lois Hill, Ames

Carl Johnson, Ames

Joyce Kirk, Ames

Susan Kohler, Ames

Helen Kordick, Ames

Cindy Larson, Ames

Romaine Lee, Ames

Sue Lekwa, Nevada

Melissa McFarland-Rainey, Story City

Vickie Meisinger, Ames

Kirk Mosier, Marshalltown

Mary Lou Mumm, Ames

Luann Olsen, Nevada

Mark Peterson, Ames

Arthur Pohm, Ames

Ruth Ann Robson, Ames

Betty Runge, Ames

Kim Schwartz, Ames

Sue Stidwell, Ames

Jan Stole, Roland

Florine Swanson, Ames

Marcia Tendall, Nevada

Betty Upstill, Ames

Gene Upstill, Ames

Amy Vinzant, Nevada

Stevie Walsh, Ames

Almeda Warner, Nevada

Carolyn Webb, Ames

Donna Wellnitz, Ames

Karen Wirth, Story City

## Staff Updates

We have several changes happening within our small staff! Two of our long-time, dedicated employees are retiring! Kalen (Director) will be leaving us December 31, and Linda (Marshall & Story County Volunteer Coordinator) will be leaving us January 15.

Laura Severson, who has been the Office Coordinator for the past few years, will be taking over as Director January 1. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Office Coordinator, Melissa McFarland-Rainey, who started November 1, in our Story City office!



**Kalen Petersen**  
36 Years



**Linda Von Holten**  
20 Years



**Laura Severson**  
Director



**Melissa McFarland-Rainey**  
Office Coordinator

## What People Are Saying...

*"I feel good about being able to get food boxes delivered to the people they (The Salvation Army) serve. I feel I am gaining insight to more parts of the Ames community that I didn't know about. It is good to see that there is a "social safety net" in place that serves to help out our various neighbors" - Ames Volunteer placed by RSVP*

*"Driving for RSVP is as much a blessing for me as it is the client. It is fulfilling to be able to provide such a valued service to those in need in our community." - Steve Johnson, RSVP Volunteer Driver - Ames*

*"The BASE Senior Fitness program provides the opportunity for community members of any age to participate in a structured, scheduled exercise program each week. The program is beneficial for overall health and wellness with the exercises geared for balance, endurance, stretching, and mobility. When attending classes, I notice the participants modifying the exercises to suit their own physical capabilities and confidence level. It is a great opportunity to meet new people and establish lasting friendships as well. - Susan Quade, PT - Manager of Rehab Services, UnityPoint Health, Trinity Regional Medical Center*

*"Nevada Food at First is volunteer-driven and serves households in six communities in Eastern Story County. Our RSVP volunteers build relationships, pick up food donations, partner with other volunteers, prepare and pack free carry-out meals, organize food for distribution at area food pantries, and connect local residents to nutritious food closer to home. They are the duct tape, screws, zip ties, velcro, and magnets that keep the cogs of our food access system operational!" - Barb Mittman - Community Meal Coordinator, Nevada Food at First*

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# Signature Program Accomplishments



## Educational Services

Helping youth succeed academically



### Academic Success

Volunteers helped students improve their academic performance by learning important letter writing skills (pen pals) and helping students improve reading skills (reading tutors).



- **329 volunteers served** in education-based assignments
- **3,930 hours were served** being matched one-on-one or in small groups with **510 elementary/middle school students** as pen pals or reading tutors
- **93%** of students demonstrated improved academic engagement or social-emotional skills



**Partners:** Schools - Community Christian, Marshalltown, Roland-Story, South Hamilton, Southeast Valley, St. Thomas Aquinas, Stratford, Webster City, West Marshall, and Raising Readers in Story County



## Disaster Services and Public Safety

Keeping our communities safe and prepared



### RSVP Volunteer Management for Disasters/Emergencies

**Partners:** Story County Emergency Management; Story County Sheriff's Office; Iowa Department of Insurance & Financial Services; University of Iowa

*"I appreciate the opportunity to train for the Volunteer Reception Center and the Tip Hotline. While we don't volunteer regularly for these positions, I feel glad that these services are ready to be spun up in a moment's notice and that I will be able to contribute during emergencies" - Shari Reilly, RSVP Emergency Volunteer*

### Tip Hotline Trainings

Trained by the Story County Sheriff's Office Communications Commander, 15 RSVP volunteers participated in 63 hours of Tip Hotline trainings, preparing to answer calls that will come in when there is a missing/abducted child/person event.

### PrepWise

**Partnership (launched in June, 2024):** PrepWise is a University of Iowa program dedicated to preparing older adults for disasters. PrepWise helps individuals develop disaster management plans before a disaster or emergency situation happens, with an emphasis on helping older adults be prepared to shelter in place for three days.

- **3 volunteers conducted six disaster preparedness presentations**
- **138 residents learned about disaster preparedness** and how to develop a personalized disaster plan

### Fraud Fighters

The Iowa Department of Insurance & Financial Services partners with RSVP to inform the public about fraud and scams, training RSVP volunteers to present fraud prevention information to groups.

- **10 RSVP volunteers conducted 11 Fraud Fighter presentations** in Marshall, Story, and Webster counties to community groups and organizations
- **342 retirees were provided fraud prevention tips** - 96% of those surveyed reported an increased understanding of how to protect personal finances and avoid becoming a victim of fraud



# Health, Wellness, and Independent Living

Helping citizens stay healthy and maintain control of their well-being

## RSVP Transportation Program

Primary Purpose: Providing Story County's older adults with safe and reliable transportation to and from medical appointments and other essential services

- **47 volunteers served 2,034 hours** providing **1,804 rides for 71 clients**
- **22,119 miles were driven**, taking Story County residents to needed services
- 100% of surveyed riders reported an increased capacity to maintain their independence and overall well-being



*"The RSVP Transportation Program is heaven! I don't know what I would do without it. I haven't met a driver that wasn't absolutely wonderful. They are so kind and I always look forward to the conversations (and laughs) I have with them" - Donna Erickson, Story City - Transportation Program Client*

## BASE Senior Fitness



Free senior fitness exercise program helping older adults improve **Balance, Agility, Strength, and Endurance**

- **25 volunteers served 1,331 hours** leading fitness classes for **348 participants** in 17 locations throughout Hamilton & Webster Counties, with one volunteer trained to start a class in Story County in 25-26
- 94% of surveyed participants reported improved overall health as a result of the classes

## Food Security Assignments

### RSVP Grocery Delivery Program

- **232 grocery deliveries** made to homebound individuals
- **19 volunteers served 268 hours and drove 3,653 miles** delivering groceries



### Other Food Security Assignments

- **81 volunteers served 2,602 hours** serving hot meals, helping at food pantries, stocking mini pantries, and assisting with food rescue programs
- **63 volunteers served 1,933 hours** delivering meals and commodity food boxes to individuals and families



## Capacity Building

Providing diverse volunteer recruitment and placement support that supplements or enhances the services of public, nonprofit, and healthcare agencies (*not reflected in other areas of this report*)

## Environmental Stewardship

- **29 RSVP volunteers served 504 hours** at conservation centers, garden spaces, and Reiman Gardens

## Other Education

- **61 RSVP volunteers served 1,602 hours** at libraries, museums, ISU Extension, community programs, school-based activities, and adult literacy programs



## Housing/Financial Stability

- **41 RSVP volunteers served 1,450 hours** as representative payees/bill payers, and at agencies meeting housing, shelter, and financial security needs

## Medical and Support Services

- **105 RSVP volunteers served 4,682 hours** at local medical/senior facilities, substance abuse prevention and support programs, hospice, agencies serving the disability community, and serving Military Veterans

## Other Public, Non-Profit Support

- **166 RSVP volunteers served 3,715 hours** at thrift stores, special events/projects, historical societies, senior service agencies, government and other offices (clerical support), etc.

# Current Volunteer Opportunities

The following opportunities are currently available in Story & Marshall Counties. Mileage reimbursement is available. For additional assignment details, please contact: Kim in Story County at (515) 292-8890, [story@rsvpvolunteer.org](mailto:story@rsvpvolunteer.org), or Linda in Marshall County at (641) 752-0279, [marshall@rsvpvolunteer.org](mailto:marshall@rsvpvolunteer.org).

## ACCESS (ASSAULT CARE CENTER EXTENDING SUPPORT & SERVICES) – Ames

- **Office:** (Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, 4 hr shifts) Answering phones and other admin tasks.
- **Caring Cards:** (At home on your own time) Write letters or cards and send them to clients.
- **Handmade Blankets:** (At home on your own time) Make blankets for survivors as they rebuild their lives.

## AFFORDABLES THRIFT STORE – Story City

- **Clerk:** (Tuesday - Friday, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM) Sort and price donations.

## ANCHORED HOPE – Ames

- **Miscellaneous Support:** Volunteer needs include mentors, transportation, skills training, and events.

## BERTHA BARTLETT PUBLIC LIBRARY – Story City

- **After School Program:** (Wednesdays, 1:45 – 4:00 PM) Assist with after school program and crafts.

## CAMELOT THEATRE FOUNDATION – Nevada

- **Concessions:** (Times/Dates vary) Stock concessions, assist with orders, ushering, and clean up.

## CARE INITIATIVES HOSPICE – Story & Marshall County

- **Friendly Visitors:** (Days/times determined by the volunteer & client) Offer a variety of support Hospice clients such as reading, playing music and games, or simply listening.

## CENTRAL IOWA RSVP – Story & Marshall County

- **Transportation Program:** (Times/Dates vary) Provide occasional rides to medical appointments and essential services for older adults who can no longer drive. **Story County only**
- **Fraud Fighters Presenter:** (Dates/time vary) Give presentations to community groups to educate the public about common scams, following Fraud Fighters booklet and PowerPoint. Training provided.

## EASTERN STORY COUNTY FOOD AT FIRST – Nevada

- **Meal Assistance:** (Mondays and Thursdays) Assist with the 400+ free meals. **Preparation** (2:00 – 5:00 PM), **Packing** (4:30 – 6:00 PM), **Delivery** (4:30 – 5:45 PM), **Clean Up** (5:30 – 7:00 PM).
- **Food Rescuers:** Pick up food and transport to Nevada First United Methodist Church. (Nevada Dollar Fresh & DG Market Mondays & Thursdays 1:00 PM, Crumbl Cookie (Ames) Tuesdays mid AM.)

## EMERGENCY FOOD BOX – Marshalltown

- **Miscellaneous Support:** Assisting clients with pantry items; sorting donations, and reception duties.



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# Current Volunteer Opportunities

## GOOD NEIGHBOR – Ames

- *Customer Contact:* (Monday - Friday, 1:00 - 4:00 PM) Assist at the reception area, answer phones, assess client needs, and distribute vouchers, must be able to respect confidentiality.

## HARMONY CLOTHING CLOSET – Nevada

- *Clerk:* (Mondays, 3:00 - 7:00 PM) Welcome guests, hang/sort clothing, assist customers, tidy up.
- *Board Member:* (Once a month) Board member who might be interested in a treasurer role.

## HEARTLAND OF STORY COUNTY – Story County

- *Volunteer Drivers:* (Monday - Friday 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM) Deliver a hot lunch to seniors' homes in Story County. Pick up the meals at Mary Greeley and deliver to the clients listed on the route.
- *Commodity Box Delivery:* (Once/month) Delivery commodity boxes to seniors' homes in Story County, pick up at Heartland.
- *Polk County Delivery:* (once a month) Delivery commodity boxes to seniors' homes in Eastern Story County (Nevada/Cambridge/Maxwell), Pick up at SCORE Park in Nevada.
- *Adult Day Center:* (Monday - Friday, 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM, flexible shifts). Assist clients with daily activities.

## HOUSE OF COMPASSION – Marshalltown

- *Miscellaneous Support:* Volunteer needs include assisting clients at the Supply Closet, assisting with cooking and serving meals, processing, moving, sorting, stocking, and cataloging donations.

## IOWA ARBORETUM & GARDENS – Madrid

- *Gift Shop:* (Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM) Accept admissions, sell gift shop items.

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## IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION – Marshalltown

- *Miscellaneous Support:* Volunteer needs include clerical assistance when staff is away, re-stocking the Free Little Food Pantries, and assisting with Youth Programming (library, workshops, trips).

## IOWA VETERANS HOME - Marshalltown

- *Caring Cards:* (On your own time) Write letters, make cards, or send caring notes to hospice patients.
- *Escorting Residents:* (On your own time) Taking residents to chapel services or other activities.
- *Fidget Blankets:* (On your own time) Make lap size fidget blankets for Alzheimer's/Dementia patients.
- *Gift Shop Assistant:* (On your own time) Aid the gift shop staff by helping customers, handling sales, and restocking shelves when needed
- *Handmade Blankets:* (On your own time) Make quilts or crocheted blankets for residents.
- *Library Volunteer:* (On your own time) Assist at the library by helping residents find and check out books or other items. Volunteers would also check in materials and arrange shelves.

# Current Volunteer Opportunities

## IOWA VETERANS HOME - Marshalltown (continued)

- *Resident Visits:* (On your own time) Spend one-on-one time with residents to provide support, friendship and encouragement, going for walks, visiting, reading, writing letters, playing games, etc.

## KIDS AT FIRST - Nevada

- *Child Caregivers:* (Monday mornings) Care for kids before school starts. Prep and serve breakfast, help in the “kid rooms,” indoor activities, walk group to elementary school. Background check required.

## MARSHALLTOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT - Marshalltown

- *Reading Buddies:* (Mornings, Monday - Friday) Read to elementary students in the morning before school begins.

## MARY GREELEY MEDICAL CENTER - Ames

- *Medical Telemetry Support:* (Mondays 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM) Provide admin support, answer phones, and direct visitors.
- *Patient Safety:* (Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. 2-hour shift between 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM) Visit patients who have been designated at risk for fall. Document compliance of fall protocol on a spreadsheet. Training provided.
- *Pet Enhanced Therapy:* (Variety of days and times) Volunteers and their registered\* dog will visit clients in the Acute Rehabilitation Unit and Behavioral Health.

## MICA (MID IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION) - Ames

- *Food Pantry Assistants:* (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, 2 hr shifts) Check individuals in, stock pantry shelves, compile orders, and contactless delivery driver.
- *Food Rescue:* (Mondays and Fridays, 8:00 - 8:45 AM) Pick up donations from Kum & Go and Kwik Star. Deliver donations to MICA. Volunteers can use their own vehicle or MICA van.



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# Current Volunteer Opportunities

## OVERFLOW THRIFT STORE – Ames

- *North (202 S Duff Ave), East (919 E Lincoln Way) & West (4723 W Lincoln Way):* (Monday - Friday, 10:00 - 6:00 PM, Saturdays 10:00 - 4:00) Run the registers, sort merchandise, clean items, and stock donations.

## RAISING READERS OF STORY COUNTY - Story County

- *Welcome Desk:* (Mondays and Tuesdays, 12:00 - 2:00 PM, Wednesdays, 10:00 - 12:00 or 3:00 - 5:00, Thursdays, 10:00 - 12:00) Greet visitors, assist guests with questions, and maintain documents.

## REIMAN GARDENS - Ames

- *Butterfly Wing Docent:* (Daily, 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM, 2 hr shifts) Monitor the butterfly enclosure and interact with the public.
- *Caterpillar Club:* (Thursdays, 10:00 - 11:00 AM) Lead or assist with a program Pre-K and younger kids about nature exploration. Set up, clean up, read books, sing songs, assist with activities.
- *Garden Guide:* (1 hr tours) Guide groups through the butterfly wing, conservatory, and outdoors.
- *Indoor Gardening Assistants:* (Flexible shifts) Water, plant, deadhead, trim, weed, other projects, etc.
- *Indoor Pot Washing:* (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM) Scrape, soak, and wash plant pots.

## SALVATION ARMY - Ames

- *Food Pantry:* (Monday - Friday, 12:30 - 3:30 PM) Fill food boxes for distribution.
- *Food Inventory:* (Tuesday - Thursday, 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM) Accept donations, sort and shelve items.
- *Delivery Driver:* (Monday - Friday, 12:30 - 3:30 PM) Deliver food packages in Story County.

## SALVATION ARMY - Marshalltown

- *Sal's Cupboard:* (Times/dates vary) Assist sorting food and helping clients in the food pantry.
- *Thrift Store:* (Times/dates vary) Meet customers, sort and hang clothing, sort/display merchandise.

## STORY MEDICAL SENIOR CARE CENTER - Nevada

- *Friendly Visitors:* (Days/times flexible) Provide companionship, read, reminisce, games, walks, etc.
- *Men's Coffee:* (2nd and 4th Thursday/month, 1 hr) Visit, snack, play games, do crafts, etc.

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# Current Volunteer Opportunities

## SUNCREST HOME HEALTH & HOSPICE - Story & Marshall County

- *Caring Cards*: (On your own time) Write letters, make cards, or send caring notes to hospice patients.
- *Fidget Blankets*: (On your own time) Make lap size fidget blankets for Alzheimer's/Dementia patients.
- *Hand-Made Blankets*: (On your own time) Make hand-made, crocheted or quilted blankets.
- *Friendly Dog Visits*: (Flexible days/times) Bring your dog, and you with a staff member will, visit patients in their homes or facilities.

## THE WELL RESOURCE CENTER - Ames

- *Hospitality*: (Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM, 3.5 hr shifts) Manage reception area, welcome guests, offer refreshments, engage in conversation with guests, office tasks, and tidy up.

## WOLFE RANCH/QUAKERDALE - Marshalltown

- *Cat Lounge Volunteer*: (On your own time) Socialize and cuddle with the cats, greet visitors and answer questions, support weekend hours if available, and help with occasional cat transport.

## WORLDLY GOODS - Ames

- *Store Associate*: (Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, 2 hr shifts) Greet customers, assist shoppers, organize shelves, keep the store tidy. Receive 20% discount on purchases!

## YSS (YOUTH & SHELTER SERVICES) - Story County

- *Skills Training at Cambridge Ember Recovery Campus*: (Flexible days/times) Teach a class or work one-on-one with youth on specific skills. This could include card games, crafting, knitting, baking, etc.
- *School-Based Mentoring*: (Once/week for 30-60 minutes) Meet with your mentee during the school day to reach goals.



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# A note from Karen... Cheers to RETIREMENT!

Over 36 years ago, I began what I thought was a new job; but what I was really beginning was a journey. I had a lot to learn! I didn't know then that being a part of this amazing organization would ultimately be my life's work (professionally speaking), bringing me so many rewarding experiences as I developed an immense appreciation for the mission and work of RSVP. It had my heart.

I am so humbled to think about all of the incredible people, past and present, I have been privileged to know because of RSVP...amazing volunteers, co-workers (the best staff in the world), colleagues, fellow RSVP Directors, our Board of Directors, Advisory Councils, and many other RSVP supporters. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Special thanks to Connie Clark, my amazing predecessor (and the person who hired me). I am also very grateful to my husband Scott (who has always supported my career and has been a trouper about being signed up for things he was unaware of) and for my daughter, Shelby, who has literally grown up with RSVP and has always been my cheerleader.

Even though my Mom, Mary O'Neal, passed away in 2012, I want to acknowledge her. She loved what I was doing and never missed an opportunity to support my work. She could even be talked into making 30 lbs. of potato salad for fundraising events, more than once. She was my biggest fan and knowing I made her proud was the icing on the cake.

## 2026 calendar

Most importantly, my thanks to God for his faithfulness in my life and for being there when I celebrated professional victories but also when challenges and losses brought me to my knees. The good times and "not so good" times were part of my personal and professional growth journey, experiences that have taught me valuable life lessons. I have been so very blessed because of RSVP but my journey doesn't really end. I look forward to transitioning from Director to Volunteer! The pay isn't as good but, I can say "No" whenever I want!

I am excited about the future of Central Iowa RSVP! It is in great hands with the leadership of Laura Severson and staff, the support of the SCSC, Inc. Board of Directors, RSVP Advisory Councils, the incredible RSVP volunteers, and more.

*Love to you all!*

## Office Locations

Business Office  
503 Elm Avenue  
Story City, IA 50248  
(515) 733-4917

Ames Office  
205 S Walnut Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010  
(515) 292-8890

Marshalltown Office  
2608 S 2nd Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
(641) 752-0279

For RSVP staff contact information, including email addresses, please call one of our offices or visit the staff page of our website:  
[www.rsvpvolunteer.org](http://www.rsvpvolunteer.org)

## RSVP Advisory Council Members

Thank you to this great group of RSVP Advisors and Ambassadors for your service!

Marlys Barker, Nevada

Nic Briseno, Ames

Marsha Hegland, McCallburg

Mary Ann Lovell, Marshalltown

Arlyss Peterson, Cambridge

Maryna Salas, Marshalltown

Diana Schwendinger, Ames

Gaylan Scofield, Story City—Chair

Jeff Sodt, Nevada

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