



COMMUNITY



COMMUNITY Builds

Dear Friends, Neighbors, and Partners,

This year, we invite you to consider a powerful truth: Community Builds _____.

Across the Walker Area, that truth is visible in the places we have created and renewed together. From downtown revitalization efforts that have sparked new energy, renewed pride, and strengthened local economies, to transformative projects like the Heman Drummond Center of Innovation; these investments stand as clear and lasting reminders of what is possible when a community unites around a shared vision.

These spaces matter. They are where people gather, learn, collaborate, and grow. They represent progress you can see and experience. But what makes me most proud as Chairman is not only what we have built—it is what those investments make possible beyond what meets the eye.

Because the true impact of our work lives in something deeper. Every revitalized downtown, every new facility, every strengthened organization helps build something far more enduring. Community builds leaders who step forward with confidence and purpose. Community builds opportunities that open doors for individuals, families, and entrepreneurs. Community builds futures shaped by access to education, innovation, and support. And community builds the kind of long-term growth that ensures our towns and neighborhoods continue to thrive for generations.

This is the unique role of the Walker Area Community Foundation. We are not only investing in projects—we are helping create a lasting structure for people and communities to succeed. We serve as a steady, intentional force that connects generosity with need and turns vision into reality. In doing so, we help ensure that the progress we make today continues to benefit our community far into the future.

As we look ahead, the opportunity remains as strong as ever. There is still more to build—not just in places, but in people, in possibility, and in the legacy we leave behind.

I invite you to continue building with us. Together, we can ensure that the Walker Area remains a place where opportunity grows, leaders emerge, and our collective future is strong.

Thank you for your generosity, your trust, and your belief in what community can build.

With gratitude
Robert B. Nolen, Jr.
Chair, Board of Directors



COMMUNITY Builds Leaders

Leaders are built when a community chooses to believe in the people who will shape tomorrow.

As Mayor of the City of Jasper, Josh Gates believes the choices we make today help shape the future we are leaving behind. “Leadership isn’t just about solving today’s challenges,” he says. “It’s about preparing others to lead tomorrow.”

Looking ahead has always been part of Mayor Gates’ perspective. Whether climbing a mountain or serving his community, he understands that reaching the next summit requires vision, preparation, and the willingness to put in the work long before the results are visible. “The most meaningful progress often starts with small, intentional steps,” he says. “You invest today so someone else has a stronger foundation tomorrow.”

For Mayor Gates, leadership is as much about developing people as it is making decisions. He believes every person has the ability to make a difference when they are given opportunities to grow, serve, and contribute. “Communities thrive when we help people discover their potential and give them the chance to use it.”

As he looks to the future of Jasper, Walker County, and the surrounding region, Mayor Gates remains optimistic about what lies ahead. One of the ideas he returns to often is simple: “Ceilings become floors.” Each generation builds on the progress of those who came before them, creating new opportunities and raising expectations for what is possible.

Across the Walker Area, that spirit can be seen in the people who are mentoring others, serving their neighbors, and investing in the next generation of leaders. By creating opportunities, encouraging service, and working together, we are building a community where future leaders have the confidence, support, and foundation they need to succeed.

Because when a community builds leaders, leaders build community.

Josh Gates



COMMUNITY Builds Character

Character is built when we choose to grow.

Haig Wright III grew up watching his father build—building a successful business, building a strong family, and building a thriving community. Through those examples, he learned that anything built to last begins with a strong foundation.

“Those before us created the foundation that allows us to do what we’re doing today,” says Haig.

Later in life, Haig found himself rebuilding the most important foundation of all—his own. After facing the challenges of addiction, he committed himself to recovery, choosing each day to restore his life with purpose, hope, and perseverance. Today, his story reminds others that healing is possible and that no one is defined by their past.

Like a tree, character is formed long before anyone sees the growth. A tree spends years developing deep roots before its branches reach toward the sky. Those roots give it the strength to weather every season. In the same way, recovery happens one day at a time, with each step building resilience and creating a foundation strong enough to support a lasting future.

Today, Haig is continuing to build on that foundation in a different way. By sharing his recovery journey, he is helping others find hope, embrace healing, and discover that a brighter future is possible. Haig believes meaningful change begins close to home.

“I have a lot to give back,” he says. “This is my little corner of the world. This is where I can make the biggest difference.”

His story reminds us that recovery reaches far beyond one individual. It strengthens families, restores hope, and creates healthier communities. When people are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives, the impact extends to everyone around them.

Together, we are investing in people, strengthening communities, and building a future where hope can take root.

Because when community builds character, character builds community.

Haig Wright III



COMMUNITY Builds Futures

Futures are built when a community chooses to invest in the next generation.

That belief is reflected not only in the programs we create, but in the people who dedicate their time and talents to making a difference. One of those people is LaShirl Wilder, who returned home to help create opportunities for the next generation through her role as Next Generation Program Manager at the Walker Area Community Foundation.

In this role, LaShirl works to support programs that help students and young professionals grow, learn, and prepare for what comes next. Through educational experiences, leadership development, mentorship, and workforce opportunities, she helps connect the next generation with the tools and support they need to succeed.

LaShirl works alongside schools, nonprofits, and community partners to create opportunities that encourage young people to discover their strengths, develop their skills, and see a future for themselves right here in the Walker Area.

For LaShirl, this work is personal. Growing up in Walker County, she knows the impact a supportive community can have on a person's life. When she chose to return home to be closer to family, she also found a way to give back to the place that helped shape who she is today.

Through her work, LaShirl is helping ensure students and young professionals have access to the encouragement, resources, and opportunities they need to build meaningful futures.

“Investing in the next generation is an investment in all of us,” she says.

Through leaders like LaShirl, who choose to come home and serve, we are creating opportunities that will strengthen the Walker Area for years to come.

Because when a community builds futures, the future builds community.

LaShirl Wilder



COMMUNITY Builds Culture

Culture is built when a community chooses to preserve its story while creating space for new ones to be told.

Now open in the heart of Jasper, the historic White House on Fifth is becoming a place where stories, creativity, and community come together. Once a private residence, this nearly 5,000-square-foot landmark was gifted to the Walker Area Community Foundation by Terri Drummond Lyon with a vision for its future: a place where people can experience history, enjoy art, and connect with one another.

Managed by the Foundation and serving as a companion to the Bankhead House & Heritage Center, the White House on Fifth has been thoughtfully transformed into a museum and gallery celebrating Walker County.

Walking through the home feels like stepping into the story of our community. Carefully selected furnishings help bring the past to life, allowing visitors to see and experience the details that make this historic space special. The home also features a gallery highlighting local artists and creating a place for creativity to be shared and celebrated.

More than a restoration, the White House on Fifth represents an investment in who we are. It honors the people and stories that helped shape our community while creating new opportunities for future generations to gather, learn, and experience the arts and history.

The White House on Fifth reminds us that culture is something we build together. By caring for the places and stories that connect us, we create a stronger foundation for the future.

Because when community builds culture, culture builds community.

White House on Fifth

Why Should The Foundation Be My Partner In Giving?

EXPERIENCED

The Staff of the Community Foundation understands the changing needs of the community and has a thorough understanding of the nonprofit organizations serving in those areas. The Board of Directors is made up eleven knowledgeable community leaders and volunteers who serve as policymakers and ambassadors for the community.

RESPONSIBLE

The Foundation is responsible in how it handles the money entrusted to us and how we invest it for both grantmaking and sustainability.

GIVING

Since the Foundation's inception, it has grown from \$6 million to more than \$196 million, all the while giving away \$65 million to more than 250 nonprofit organizations throughout Alabama. The Foundation has a thorough grant review process to ensure grant dollars are thoughtfully invested in nonprofits that are creating meaningful impact in our community.

TAX ADVANTAGES

Community foundations are public charities, and donations qualify for the maximum available deduction for charitable contributions in the year in which the gift is made. (Tax credit can be banked and claimed over a period of years).

PERSONALIZED SERVICE AND CUSTOMIZATION

Community foundations will meet with you individually or with your financial advisor to discuss your charitable giving interests and needs.

RESULTS

There will always be community issues, yet here is our promise to you—there will always be a Walker Area Community Foundation to create initiatives around those issues. We will always be here to empower our citizens to create change while encouraging our nonprofits to dream bigger and funding them to do so. Your gift will last more than a lifetime.

How Can I Give To The Foundation?

GIFTS OF CASH

Donors can now deduct up to 60% of their adjusted gross income for contributions of cash. If your cash donations exceed that limit, you can carry forward any unused deductions for five years.

APPRECIATED STOCK

When you donate stock, you can deduct the full value of the stock at the time you donate it and avoid tax on the appreciated capital gains.

IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Individuals 70½ or older may roll over up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) directly to the Foundation without recognizing the assets transferred as income.

DONOR ADVISED FUND (DAF)

A Donor Advised Fund is set up by a donor and administered by the Foundation. A donor can start a DAF, receive an immediate tax benefit that year, and then provide guidance on distributions from the fund to nonprofits for as long as the fund exists.

NON-CASH ASSETS

You can also donate other non-cash assets, such as real estate. The charitable deduction will depend on the type of asset and whether it is put into related use.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE TO THE WALKER AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

Contact the Foundation or your Financial Planner if you need help choosing the method that is right for you.

ONLINE GIVING

Venmo: @WalkerArea-CommunityFoundation



Scan the QR Code to give now!

“It’s Easy To Give Away Money. It’s Hard To Give It Away Well.”

The Foundation is proud to support nonprofit organizations as they respond to the changing needs of our communities. Twice a year, we invite proposals from eligible 501(c)(3) organizations whose missions align with our commitment to meaningful and measurable impact. ■ We look to partner with organizations that bring strong leadership, sound financial practices, and a thoughtful vision for the future—grounded in community support and long-term sustainability. ■ Once a grant is awarded, recipients enter into an agreement that outlines how the funds

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

- Alabama Symphonic Association, Inc.
- Red Mountain Theatre Company
- Walker County Arts Alliance
- Walker County Christian Chorus
- Winston County Arts Council

CHILDREN & YOUTH

- Addie's Place Child Advocacy Center of Winston County
- Alabama PALS
- Backyard Blessings
- The Bell Center for Early Intervention Programs
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham
- Big Oak Ranch
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama, Inc.
- Bundles of Hope Diaper Bank
- Camp COOL
- Children's Aid Society of Alabama
- Concerned Citizens for Our Youth, Inc. (Beacon House)
- Free Will Baptist Children's Home
- Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama
- Girls Incorporated of Central Alabama
- The Healing House, LLC.
- Indian Creek Youth Camp
- Jalayah Hackman Foundation
- Kids Loving Kids
- Kids Play Alabama
- King's Home, Inc.
- Magic Moments
- Mission 34, Inc.
- Nick's Kids Foundation
- Operation Aviation Foundation
- Walker County Children's Advocacy Center
- Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Alabama Association of Nonprofits
- Birmingham Corps
- City of Cordova
- City of Dora
- City of Haleyville
- City of Jasper
- Cordova Economic & Industrial Development Authority
- DesignAlabama, Inc.
- Friends of Downtown Jasper
- Focus Walker County Workforce Development & Education
- Haleyville Chamber of Commerce
- Haleyville Community Foundation
- Main Street Alabama
- Townley Community Center
- Town of Nauvoo
- Town of Parrish
- Walker County Commission
- Walker County Growth Alliance
- Yerkwood Community Improvement Association
- Your Town Alabama

Education

- Alabama Possible
- AlaQuest Collaborative for Education
- Bankhead Middle School
- Better Basics, Inc.
- Bevill State Community College
- The Bridge Educational Philanthropy
- Carbon Hill High School
- Carl Elliott Regional Library
- Cordova High School
- Curry High School
- East Walker Education & Development, Inc.
- Heman Drummond Center of Innovation
- Impact Alabama
- Jasper City Schools
- Liberty Learning Foundation
- The Literacy Council of Central Alabama

- Lupton Junior High School
- Maddox Intermediate School
- McWane Science Center
- Oakman High School
- Oakman Middle School
- PreSchool Partners
- Saban Center Foundation
- The University of Alabama
- The University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Walker College Foundation
- Walker County Board of Education
- Winston County School System

ELDER CARE

- Alzheimer's of Central Alabama
- Arley-Smith Lake Senior Outreach
- Fair Haven Methodist Home Senior Living
- Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging

ENVIRONMENT

- Freshwater Land Trust
- Jasper Area Mountain Bikers Inc.
- Smith Lake Civic Association
- Wild Alabama

HEALTH

- 3D Revolution
- Access Vision
- Adam Bishop Center
- Alabama Lions Sight Association, Inc.
- Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resource Coalition
- American Cancer Society, Inc.
- American Diabetes Association
- American Heart Association, Inc.
- Arthritis Foundation, Inc.
- BirthWell Partners
- Capstone Health
- Children's Hospital of Alabama
- Community Grief Support Service

will be used in alignment with the goals set forth in their proposal. To help us understand the impact of our funding, grantees submit a brief report nine months after receiving support. This report includes financial details and an update on progress made toward the project's stated objectives. ■ On the following pages, we are pleased to highlight the nonprofit organizations that have received funding from our Community Fund, as well as from our Component Funds, over the past five years.

- Daybreak Vision Project, Inc.
- dreamFit AL, Inc.
- Fellowship House
- Freedom Source Inc. DBA Addiction Prevention Coalition
- Glenwood, Inc.
- HARTT, Inc.
- HEAL Alabama
- Hope For Women
- Kid One Transport System, Inc.
- Laci Jordan Agape House
- Laura Crandall Brown Foundation
- Libby's Friends
- Mothers' Milk Bank of Alabama
- Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center
- Oasis Counseling for Women & Children
- Pregnancy Test and Resource Center
- The Recovery Den, Inc.
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama
- Russel Hill Cancer Foundation
- Service Dogs Alabama
- Shriners Hospital for Children
- Sight Savers America
- Smile-A-Mile
- Special Equestrians, Inc.
- St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

RECREATION

- Birmingham Zoo, Inc.
- Black Warrior Council
- C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation
- Camp McDowell
- Curry Youth Baseball and Softball

SOCIAL WELFARE

- American Red Cross
- The Arc of Walker County
- Arley Women's Club, Inc.
- Awakening Life Church
- Barney Volunteer Fire Department

- Bethel Apostolic Holiness Church Food Bank
- Boldo Community Christian Church
- Carbon Hill Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Carbon Hill Women's Club
- Christian's Place Mission
- City of Lights Dream Center
- Community Food Bank of Central Alabama
- Corinth Baptist Church
- Country Cattery
- Crisis Center, Inc.
- Curry Volunteer Fire & Rescue
- Dilworth Church of God
- Eagles Rest Church and Ministries
- Empire Volunteer Fire Department
- First Baptist Church of Jasper
- The Foundry Ministries
- Glory Community Network
- Glory Fellowship Baptist Church
- Grace Kitchens
- Greater Birmingham Humane Society
- Habitat for Humanity, Greater Birmingham
- Here to Serve, Inc.
- Hispanic and Immigrant Center of Alabama (HICA!)
- Hometown Organizing Project
- HoneyWord Foundation, Inc.
- Hope House Church, Inc.
- Iglesia de Restauracion Familiar
- Jasper Area Family Services Center, Inc.
- Jasper First Methodist Church
- Jimmie Hale Mission
- Jubilee House
- The Link of Cullman County
- The Lovelady Center
- Main Street Ministries, Inc.
- Mission of Hope
- Mt. Vernon Baptist Church Food Pantry
- New Hope Through Gods Love
- New Prospect Baptist Church
- The R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Organization

- Rescuers United For Furbabies (RUFF)
- The Salvation Army
- Saragossa Volunteer Fire Department
- Society of St. Andrew
- St. Cecilia Catholic Church
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church
- STEPS Ministries
- Sweetwater Outreach Inc.
- United Way of Central Alabama
- UnitelUs, Inc.
- Walker County Amateur Radio Emergency Service
- Walker County Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Walker County Department of Human Resources
- Walker County Humane Society
- The WellHouse
- Winston County Rescue Squad, Inc.

Component Funds

Component funds allow families, individuals, or organizations to focus on the charitable needs of our community and leave the administrative tasks to the Foundation. These funds are a permanent source of community capital, which will help the Foundation to continue its work today and far into the future. Behind each fund is an abundance of success stories. Each one holds its own purpose and history but gains strength from being managed and deployed together. Donations can be made to any fund at any time by anyone.

Alabama Free Will Baptist Children's Home Fund	Drummond Thorne Stukes Fund	Oliver Wright Fund
Amy Bette Salter Fund	Engel and Mitnick Family Fund	Onward Fund
Andrew and Samantha Byars Family Fund	Excellence in Education Fund	Pam and Kevin Callahan Family Fund
Anonymous Fund	Freewill Baptist Children's Home Fund	Patrick and Debbie Drummond Fund
Aubrey Lea Gates Fund	Friends of Camp O'Rear Fund	Phillip Fraley Memorial Fund
Bankhead Fund	Haig Wright III Fund	Pinnacle Bank Fund
Bankhead House & Heritage Center Fund	Haleyville Alumni Association Fund	Rebekah L. Black Fund
Barbara Drummond Thorne Fund	Haleyville Downtown Project Fund	Reed Family Fund
Big Oak Ranch Fund	HDCI Innovate Fund	Retired Fire Chief Monroe Marian Cooner and Retired Police Chief Connie Cooner Rowe Fund
Bradley Bo Fund	Healing Network Fund	Rotary Club of Jasper Fund
Cannon Family Fund	Health Action Partnership	Samuel Lee Smith Advised Fund
Coach Mickey Beaty Family Fund	Jackson Family Fund	Sherer Family Foundation Fund
Community Fund	Jasper Main Street Fund	Sonya Violet Webb Fund
Cordova Library Fund	Jasper Recreational Fund	Steve, Karen and Caitlin Hudson Fund
Clyde "Sappo" Black Family Fund	Joe and Annette Kelley Fund	Steve Byars Fund
Crump Family Fund	King's Home Fund	Terri Drummond Lyon Fund
Disaster Relief Fund	KUB Philanthropic Fund	Thompson Family Fund
Don Drummond Family Fund	Larry Drummond Family Fund	Tony and Tammy Smith Family Fund
Dr. Bobby T. and Betty Hooks Underwood Fund	Laura and David Ulz Family Fund	Victims of Violent Crime Fund
Dr. Buddy Larry and Rieta Thorne Fund	Lella Carl Hamiter Preschool Partners Fund	White House on Fifth Fund
Dr. Saywer Mullen Memorial Fund	Matthew and Ashley Laird Fund	Winston County Fund
Dr. W.E. Birdsong Fund	Molly Wright Ruble Fund	Wright Family Fund
Drummond Company, Inc. (DCI) Fund	Nick's Kids Fund	

By The Numbers

\$65,177,366	Total amount awarded to nonprofit organizations over the last 29 years
\$196,103,884	Total amount of assets held by the Community Foundation on 12/31/2025
\$6,000,000	Amount of original gift, given by Community Health Systems, Inc., to begin the Foundation
5,701	Number of grants made to nonprofit organizations since inception
75,000+	Number of people whose quality of life has improved because of the Foundation

WACF Financial History

YEAR	GRANTS AWARDED	GIFTS RECEIVED	TOTAL ASSETS
1995	-	6,000,000	6,000,000
1996	-	75,000	6,439,025
1997	289,300	147,250	7,595,028
1998	295,000	51,869	8,192,311
1999	367,300	100,154	8,542,749
2000	311,106	60,425	8,627,833
2001	294,490	179,278	8,226,235
2002	223,377	211,236	7,410,969
Gift and grant totals from this point forward include both our unrestricted Community Fund as well as our Component Funds.			
2003	330,213	359,556	8,770,491
2004	264,158	358,402	9,902,100
2005	308,211	244,765	10,695,867
2006	489,473	552,806	12,018,241
2007	569,170	432,961	12,164,567
2008	705,627	995,255	9,730,123
2009	465,969	776,138	12,143,056
2010	627,450	887,699	13,361,818
2011	1,190,071	10,701,343	22,328,994
2012	3,626,636	2,507,746	23,366,184
2013	3,073,770	1,187,125	23,976,770
2014	1,288,044	632,233	23,971,032
2015	1,015,748	1,317,305	23,697,848
2016	1,245,495	472,913	24,069,051
2017	1,393,391	1,959,290	26,844,697
2018	2,055,904	43,579,423	66,352,747
2019	3,024,560	424,999	72,387,187
2020	2,373,134	7,906,078	83,301,998
2021	3,838,641	5,907,913	94,076,906
2022	14,170,352	43,616,089	114,547,461
2023	5,721,955	6,842,038	127,746,758
2024	7,653,825	19,847,516	151,899,197
2025	7,964,996	38,491,160	196,103,884
TOTALS	65,177,366	196,825,965	

*Beginning in the year 2003, totals include designated gifts and grants.

History And Milestones

In 1995, Community Health Systems contributed \$6 million from the sale of Walker Regional Medical Center to establish the original endowment for the Walker Area Community Foundation. What began as a \$6 million gift has become a lasting investment in the Walker Area, empowering the Foundation to respond to emerging needs, support visionary projects, and build a stronger future for our community.

Together, John T. Oliver, Jr., Pat Willingham, J. George Mitnick, and Larry Drummond created a foundation that will forever serve as a resource for solutions to our community's greatest problems.

Since 1995, the Foundation's endowment has grown from the original \$6 million to more than \$196 million. This remarkable growth has been made possible through stewardship, the establishment of new Donor Advised Funds, and, above all, the generosity and trust of faithful donors who continue to invest in the future of the Walker Area.

The first two years were a time of growth for the endowment. In 1997, the first seven grants were awarded to organizations in our area. In addition to awarding grants where warranted, the Foundation staff is dedicated to developing the internal capacity of nonprofit organizations. We began providing training sessions to assist with business operations and to further assist in their receipt of out-of-county funds from state, federal, and private sources.

The Foundation made a lasting investment in our community with the opening of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center. Purchased, renovated, and maintained by the Foundation through the generosity of dedicated donors, the Bankhead House & Heritage Center serves as a treasure trove of local history, artifacts, cultural events, and diverse forms of art. It connects our proud past to our optimistic present while inspiring a bright future.

In 2011, disaster struck our county in the form of tornados. From those first days, a different kind of relationship was brokered between the Foundation and Walker County nonprofits involved in disaster relief. We quit being just the funder and became a partner. We forged stronger bonds with local donors as well as regional and national funders. Because of our leadership, we became known throughout the state as the ones to call with questions because we were “getting it done in Walker County.”

In 2014, the Foundation created its own strategic plan and began to lead the way in planning for Walker County as a whole with partners, including the Walker County Commission, Chamber of Commerce of Walker County, Jasper Industrial Development Board, Walker County Economic and Industrial Development Authority, then Senator Greg Reed, and all of the municipalities in our county.

The Foundation was fortunate to receive substantial financial gifts in 2018, tripling the size of our endowment. Through all the gifts the Foundation has received over time, we now have the ability to fund the dreams of our community or citizens—expanding their scope of influence—in addition to meeting our nonprofits' operational needs.

As we celebrated 30 years of impact with our largest-ever investment in the community and the launch of the Heman Drummond Center of Innovation for students, we stepped boldly into a future shaped by collaboration, growth, and leadership. The past three decades laid a strong foundation—but our work was far from over. This was not the end of the story. It was just the beginning.

Board Of Directors



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BANKHEAD HOUSE
& HERITAGE CENTER

WHITE HOUSE
ON FIFTH

You can give your money to all kinds of organizations and institutions, and they will send you a nice letter and may even put your picture in a newsletter or report. There's a place for that, but I hope you are giving to the town you are living in, or to your hometown.

Then you can walk down the street and say,

I HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

JOHN T. OLIVER, JR.



Scan the QR Code to give now!

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WALKER AREA
Community Foundation

RESPONSIBLE GIVING RESULTS

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