



THE VINCENTIAN WAY

The Official Newsletter of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Long Island

We Help People...

ISSUE 2 ♦ 2019



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A MESSAGE FROM TOM ABBATE CEO & Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As Vincentians, we are all dedicated to our Mission of Charity. We welcome into our family all of the neighbors we visit in their homes. We share our spirituality with them in their time of despair. We must also keep in our prayers fellow Vincentians helping in 149 countries around the globe, with 900,000 men and women reaching out to find the forgotten, suffering or deprived.

Recently we had the privilege of sharing time with Renato Lima De Oliveira, our Society of St. Vincent De Paul's International President, and Michael Nizankiewicz, our International Territorial Vice President, America 1 Region. They were in New York to meet with the United Nation Representatives. They also shared breakfast with Cardinal Dolan.

During their visit with us in Rockville Centre, we shared our good works that are being performed by our Vincentians. They were very impressed by the accomplishments on Long Island.

President De Oliveira and Michael also accompanied us to Dismas House, our home for men re-entering society from prison. We sat and shared dinner and conversation with these men. They spoke how they have reflected on their past and expressed their gratitude that the Society is here to help them return to a better life in our community and with their families.

President De Oliveira reminded us that throughout the world we speak many different languages and experience varied types of poverty. Some need help keeping the power on, staying warm in the cold and health care for their family. Yet others around the world are looking for a dry place to sleep, a haven for their family to feel safe.

All of this may be accomplished by following the guidelines set forth by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam over 180 years ago.

We now are seeing the global impact of what the Society can accomplish as we work to assist many new neighbors from South and Central America. As many immigrants enter our neighborhoods, we find an immediate need for food, clothing and shelter. Yet the long term response to assist will be daunting and span many community organizations. We only need to ask "how can we help."

Our mission statement is our best guide to help everyone in their time of need. "A network of friends, inspired by Gospel values, growing in holiness and building a more just world through personal relationships with and service to people in need."

Yours in the Spirit of St. Vincent de Paul,

Thomas J. Abbate
CEO & Executive Director

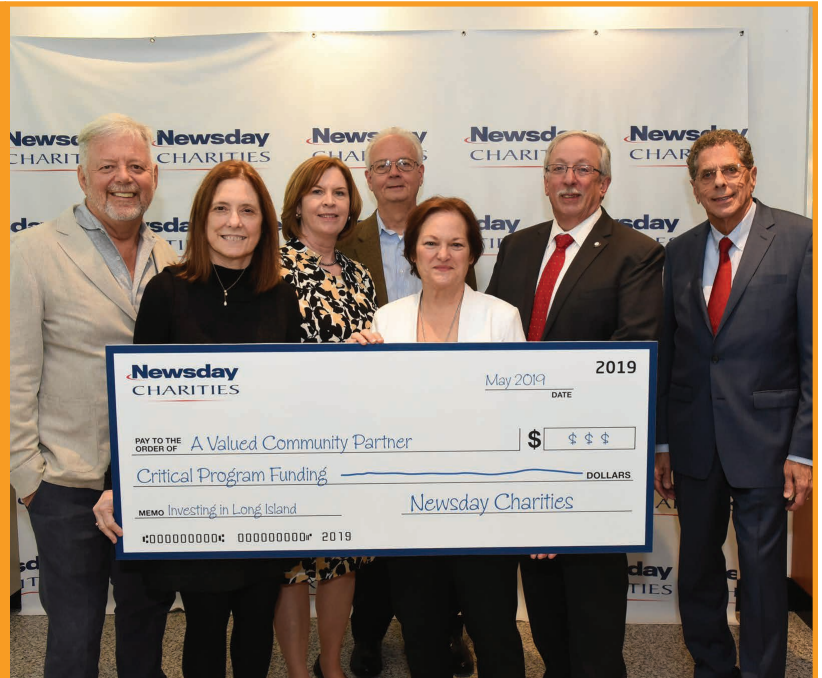
DONORS AND PARTNERS

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION DRIVE



Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church's Family Faith Formation & Religious Education group kicks off spring with a clothing drive as part of their annual Lenten Service Project.

NEWSDAY CHARITIES



A tremendous thank-you to Newsday Charities for once again supporting our efforts to assist neighbors in need across Long Island. (L to R) Newsday President Pat Dolan; Newsday Publisher Debby Krenek, SVDPLI Development Director Joanne Courtien; SVDPLI Board President Bob Meekins; Newsday Community Affairs Project Manager Dale Cole; SVDPLI CEO & Executive Director Tom Abbate; Newsday VP Public Affairs Paul Fleishman .

DIAPER DRIVE WITH THE ALLIED FOUNDATION



(L to R): Terri Zenobio, Director of Vincentian Services at SVDPLI; Gloria Schreiber, Executive Director of The Life Center of Long Island; Kerry Gillick-Goldberg, Community Relations Director of the Allied Foundation; Dr. Jennifer Shaer, Chief Medical Officer of The Allied Physicians Group; Heather Edwards, Executive Director of the Allied Foundation; Dan Minchella (Our Lady of Hope-Carle Place), Program Chairperson; Tom Abbate, CEO & Executive Director of SVDPLI

With the shortage of SNAP benefits, many people living below the poverty line do not receive access to affordable diapers. During the month of May, our Vincentian volunteers collected over 60 boxes of diapers to donate to moms and dads in need on Long Island.

We are grateful for our partnership with Allied Foundation and are excited to add the boxes of diapers to their amazing Diaper Bank. A special thanks to Dan Minchella (Our Lady of Hope-Carle Place), chairperson of our Program Committee, who spearheaded this Diocesan-wide effort, and all of the Conferences who supported the drive.

RAISING FUNDS & AWARENESS

“DRIVING OUT POVERTY” AT THE 16TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC



Clockwise from Top Left: Paula Migliore, “Volunteer of the Year” Mary McCaffery and Joanne Courtien; SVDPLI Board President Bob Meekins and SVDPLI CEO & Executive Director Tom Abbate; “Business of the Year” Honorees Donna Blanc, Ken Tirone, Bob Slater and Lance Kaufman from HUB Truck Rental Corp.; SVDPLI Spiritual Advisor Monsignor Gerard Ringenback and “Volunteer of the Year” Jack McCaffery

Thank you to all who attended SVDPLI’s 16th Annual Golf Classic dinner on Monday, May 13th (and subsequent golf portion on Monday, May 20th) at Tam O’Shanter Club. Despite some difficult weather conditions, we had a terrific time honoring Mary and Jack McCaffery as “Volunteers of the Year” and HUB Truck Rental Corp. as “Business of the Year.”

A special thanks to the following sponsors, who made our two-day celebration possible:



RAISING FUNDS & AWARENESS

TOUCH-A-TRUCK AT THE NASSAU COLISEUM



A little rain couldn't stop intrepid families from joining us at the Touch-A-Truck & Family Health Fair at the NYCB Live Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum! Sponsored by WBLI 106.1 and WBAB 102.3, this May 4th event focused on the healthcare needs of families on Long Island, and allowed children to get exclusive access to big rigs, fire trucks and military vehicles. Most importantly, families were encouraged to help stuff an SVDPLI truck by bringing donations of new and gently-used children's clothing. At the conclusion of the event, generous attendees had donated more than 2,000 pounds of clothing—completely filling the back of our truck and making a huge difference in the lives of children in need!

11TH ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE POOR 5K WALK/RUN

Join us on **Saturday, September 28th** as we celebrate our 11th Annual Friends of the Poor 5K Walk/Run. Last year's event saw more than 850 walkers raise over \$180,000 for neighbors in need across Long Island, and we're hoping to make this year's event the best one yet!

Please be mindful of the following changes as you prepare for this year's walk/run:



New Route – As always, the Friends of the Poor 5K Walk/Run will begin and end in Bethpage Community Park. However, participants will follow a straight loop around Stewart Avenue, with the option to finish at the one mile mark.



Start Time – Registration begins at 7:30 AM, with the run/walk starting promptly at 9:00 AM. We encourage all attendees to stay after finishing the 5K for awards, performances and other fun activities!



New Registration Website – Register for both the walk and run by visiting **RunSignUp.com** and search "SVDPLI Friends of the Poor." \$10 walk registration fee includes t-shirt; \$25 run registration fee includes t-shirt, bib and timing chip.

COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

“GETTING AHEAD IN A JUST-GETTIN’-BY WORLD”— AN INVITATION TO SERVE, IN THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF NASSAU NORTH

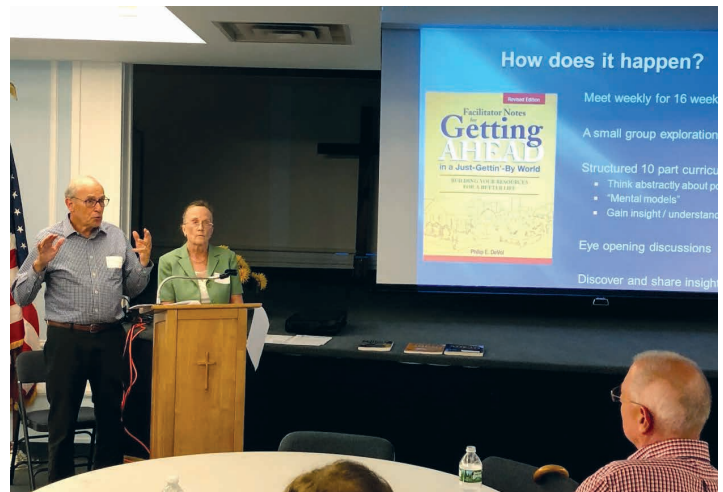


We all know how the Society of St. Vincent de Paul regularly provides charitable assistance to neighbors in need. Beginning with the home visit, Vincentians perform numerous good deeds, many of which involve financial assistance (rent and utility bills), immediate needs assistance (food, furniture, etc.) and also counseling.

However, the challenges facing those in poverty are ever more acute today. The “Getting AHEAD” program, offered by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul across the country, is one approach to help these neighbors rise above the “tyranny of the moment” or crisis mode in which they are too often bound. It also answers the questions raised by many Vincentians: “What more can I do for my neighbors beyond the traditional home visit?” and “Is there a structured process I can become involved with that would make a difference?”

“Getting AHEAD” is based upon the studies of sociologists, Ruby Payne and Philip de Vol. Their two books, *Bridges out of Poverty, Strategies for Professionals and Communities* and *Getting AHEAD in a Just-Gettin’-By World*, focus on people who are living in poverty or in unstable situations and provide a structured program along with the tools to help build economic stability and create a better future for themselves and their communities. Through a series of workshops held in a secure place over 16 weeks, participants—referred to as Investigators—explore a curriculum that helps them to think abstractly about the conditions of poverty, create new “mental models” of their own circumstances, and dream of a new life story. The small group discussion, which is facilitated by two or three Vincentians, offers an opportunity to reflect and gain insight into their personal situations. The sessions are usually 2 to 3 hours long, begin with dinner and include a stipend, “goody bags” as well as babysitting or travel costs. At the completion of the program, 2 Vincentians “mentor” each investigator for at least 3 to 6 months so that they may have support to realize some of their newly-established goals.

In 2018, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul of Long Island conducted its first “Getting AHEAD” program, in Long Beach and was sponsored by the Tri-parish Conference at St. Mary of the Isle. Now, a steering committee made up of Vincentians from the Diocesan Council plans to conduct a second program starting in January, 2020, in the District Council of Nassau North. On Tuesday, June 18th an educational session was held at St. Mary’s parish in Manhasset to explain the “Getting AHEAD” program and to solicit interested parties to join our study this fall in preparation for launch in January. Training for team members will commence in the fall of 2019. If you are a Vincentian in Nassau North and would like to become directly involved in this effort as a Facilitator, Mentor, or supportive Volunteer, please contact Paula Migliore or Terri Zenobio at 516-822-3132.



COUNCIL HAPPENINGS

RECRUITING NEW HISPANIC/LATINO VINCENTIANS

The National Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul was awarded a grant for the purpose of engaging members of the Hispanic/Latino communities in our parishes and specifically welcoming them into our ministry. Sonia Burgos, the Nassau Central District Council President, supported three applications from her district and St. Kilian's (Farmingdale), Corpus Christi (Mineola) and Our Lady of Loretto (Hempstead) were each awarded \$5000. These Conferences were very fortunate to be recognized for their initiative as only 24 grants were given out across the country! The funds will be utilized for not only the recruitment of new Hispanic/Latino members, but also the facilitation of "servant leadership" growth and development. As a result, we will have 6 new Hispanic/Latino Vincentians attending the 2019 National Assembly in Denver this August.

The effort to strengthen Conferences through diversity and the inclusion of Hispanic/Latino Vincentians will happen through Invitation to Serve presentations and receptions, formation events with material translated into Spanish, and mentoring opportunities that focus on home visits, spirituality, and governance. The projects also include some cultural agility training for current Vincentians in each of the Conferences to increase their awareness of some of the unique gifts and talents the Hispanic/Latino community can offer, and to assist them in integrating the new members into the Conference structure.

Special thanks to Sonia Burgos for her support and enthusiasm of this initiative and the three Conferences who are working on innovative and creative ideas to grow and strengthen Hispanic/Latino membership & leadership among us! We are grateful for your examples and hope that a comprehensive model of how to build diversity and inclusion for other Conferences will emerge.

TAKING OFF WITH THE JET PROGRAM

Every year, men and women return to our communities after serving time in federal and state prisons, and many serve time through our local jails. Research shows that economic opportunity, education, strong family bonds and civic engagement are the pillars of a successful return from prison. And in turn, successful re-entries reduce recidivism, improve the safety of our neighborhoods and provide economic benefits for our communities and our country.

At the Nassau County Correctional Center, Kathleen Kearns works to provide many of the inmates with valuable information while serving their time in the hopes that it might assist them with some of the roadblocks to reentry and put these returning citizens on the path to a brighter future.

Since 2011, she has voluntarily led the JET (Jobs, Education & Training) Program, a quarterly five-week program of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for female inmates in the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Tier (DART). Each week, Kathleen tackles new subjects—from legal obstacles, to mock interviews and resume writing, to the importance of maintaining sobriety—all in an effort to prepare these women for post-incarceration life. Upon completion, participants join together for a "graduation" ceremony, where they are given a certificate of completion and are asked to evaluate their experience in the program. Kathleen is always fine-tuning the program, ensuring that the topics covered reflect the needs of its participants.

Kathleen began her career as a nursery school teacher in the early-1970s, but felt compelled to study social work after noticing that anxiety and depression were two topics that often went ignored in the school system. After receiving her MA in Counseling Psychology from SUNY Albany, she began a 35-year career as a rehabilitation counselor. In 2003, Kathleen became an employment specialist with the Work and Gainful Employment Services (WAGES), where she was introduced to Zack Singleton, former program administrator of Dismas House. Upon retirement, she began using her specialized knowledge to mentor the residents at Dismas House, and started her current volunteer position as facilitator of the JET Program.

Looking ahead, Kathleen hopes to expand upon the current JET Program, and is currently working to pioneer a new program with male inmates at the Nassau County Correctional Center. We are thankful to Kathleen for her efforts as she looks to give back to this community and ensure that those returning from the Correctional Center come home to a meaningful second chance.

VINCENTIAN FORMATION

A GATHERING OF NEW PRESIDENTS AT THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

As St. Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, “There are different kinds of gifts but they are all given by the same spirit. There are different ways to serve but they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways to work but the same God makes it possible for all of us to have all those different things.”

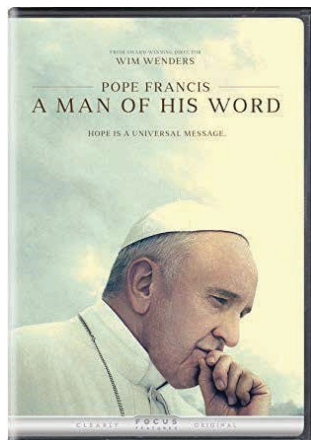
In June, ten new Conference presidents gathered at the Central Council office for an evening of prayer and formation as well as informal conversation -- it was an evening of fellowship and sharing of the best practices in our ministry. Presidents were encouraged to “communicate, motivate, and delegate” in order to further the participation of Vincentians in District Council activities, formation and training programs, and recruitment/succession planning efforts. Presidents were able to discuss their successes and their challenges as well as share insights into the role with each other.

It is a blessing to have individuals accept this leadership role and the evening is organized to offer support and to assist the new presidents with their responsibilities. The staff at Central Council works closely with all the Vincentians and it is evident that the dialogue among the group is very useful.

After the meeting, one new president offered the following, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart. The conference was very informative and inspiring for me! Always glad to meet people and share our wealth of knowledge! Blessed are those that lead with a Vincentian heart. I know that Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, Blessed Rosalie Rendu and St. Vincent are guiding this district thru your hands, minds, souls and especially your hearts!”

To be a Vincentian is a vocation, a calling, and we are so grateful for all of the efforts of the new presidents on behalf of the Society and those in need! We continue to pray to God for the blessing and grace for all of our Vincentian Servant Leaders.

A CONTEMPLATIVE IN ACTION—“POPE FRANCIS: A MAN OF HIS WORD”



Can a movie serve as a meditation? Can a movie serve as a motivation? Few films can be answered with a “double yes” than that of the film featuring Pope Francis and his own words about the “hot topics” facing our Church and our World today.

As seen through a Vincentian lens, “Pope Francis: A Man of His Word” captures the essence of what it means to be a contemplative in action. The beauty of its messages essentially resting in the face of Pope Francis and his personal reflections. The viewer is compelled to not only meditate on the issues discussed but also to motivate themselves to action. Even if that action is simply to hone “the apostolate of the listening ear” and truly bear witness to our neighbor.

The Voice of the Poor Committee invited Vincentians to a special viewing of the film followed by a facilitated discussion on Tuesday, May 7th in the SVDP Annex Building in Bethpage. Several Conference members from around the Diocese of Rockville Centre came together for this special event, focusing on issues of social justice.

Throughout the film, Pope Francis illustrates principles of Catholic Social Teaching, such as “the dignity of work,” “preferential option for the poor,” and “care for God’s creation” by sharing his own experiences of these concepts in humanity. The depictions encouraged thoughtful consideration and open dialogue among those in attendance.

Sandy F., Spiritual Advisor at the Conference of St. Boniface in Elmont, NY, commented, “I found the movie an excellent presentation of the Church’s official position on Catholic Social Teaching. Rather than just using text that is already in the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the film shows the commitment of Pope Francis in proclaiming the Gospel and evangelizing through service. Many of the scenes with Pope Francis talking and meeting with the poor are heartwarming and leaves the audience close to if not in tears. The film reminds us of our vocation as Vincentians.”

For that is the example Pope Francis offers throughout the scenes of the film. He is ever present—offering compassion and love—to each individual affected by circumstance. Whether praying at the site of a capsized refugee boat off the coast of Syria or granting forgiveness to prisoners in a Philadelphia jail, he is seen moving beyond any possible judgements to bring them God’s grace.

FOCUS ON A VINCENTIAN: SANDY FIGUEROA



Sandy Figueroa is a woman who isn't afraid to shake things up. Born and raised in the Bronx, she recently celebrated 47 years of teaching, beginning in 1972 with a Federal Training Program, and culminating with a professorship at the Hostos Community College School of Professional Studies. Now nearing retirement, she looks back on her time as a teacher, a mentor and a volunteer, and stresses the importance of advocacy in her lifelong pursuit of making a difference in the lives of those around her.

After graduating Spellman High School in 1965, she began volunteering with the Sisters of Charity, and became an associate in 1979. She then relocated to Elmont, and received an *Invitation to Serve* from the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Boniface Church in 2002. Following the death of her husband, she credits her involvement with her Conference as a guiding force during a particularly difficult time. "Seeing other people's struggles really helped me get through my own," says Sandy. "I looked at our neighbors as equals, and learned from them as they learned from me."

Throughout the years, Sandy served as a Conference President, and also got involved with the youth group at St. Boniface. Yet still, Sandy's desire to change the system remained. ***"I wanted to show these young people that they should do more than 'good deeds.' I wanted them to consider why they were doing it."***

Sandy is now part of a group of Vincentians who make up the Voice of the Poor (VOP) Committee, a group aimed at exploring the root causes of poverty. Together, the VOP discusses issues such as incarceration, homelessness and discrimination, and how each issue does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, they listen to the experiences of the poor, and learn how these issues often work in tandem to perpetuate a cycle of poverty.

Most recently, Sandy spearheaded a program at Dismas House inspired by her work at Hostos Community College. In 2010, Hostos started a summer camp to prepare returning citizens for college, which was later absorbed into the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Prisoner Reentry Institute. Sandy has begun inviting alumni from this program to speak at Dismas House, sharing their post-incarceration experiences and serving as role models for its residents.

Outside of her work with SVDPLI, Sandy also works with the Coalition for Women Prisoners, advocating for clemency for senior inmates. She also participates in an annual trip to Puerto Rico, helping to rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria while simultaneously learning about her heritage. And perhaps most importantly, Sandy spends time with her three children and two grandchildren.

In the end, Sandy's greatest wish is for others to realize the importance of advocacy. ***"When we see ourselves as brothers and sisters, we begin to wonder why things are still like this,"*** says Sandy. ***"Because of that, I think it's okay to challenge the system. After all, Jesus challenged the system every day—and he didn't even have email!"***



NEIGHBORS STORY

A STORY TO INSPIRE: “HOW A VINCENTIAN’S CONNECTION HELPED A FAMILY ON THE BRINK OF HOMELESSNESS”

For Mary*, the struggle to stay afloat began during Hurricane Sandy. As a full-time registered nurse and the sole supporter of her grandson, the added expense of repairing her Oceanside home in the superstorm’s aftermath left her with mounting debt and an unsecure future.

Nearly seven years later, Mary had finally secured the funds needed to raise her home, but had fallen considerably behind on her mortgage in the construction process. After speaking with her mortgage company, Mary was able to negotiate a deal that would allow her to enter a repayment plan, if—and only if—she was able to produce one full month’s rent. Furthermore, Mary knew that going forward, she would need to rent the upstairs portion of her home to afford her repayment plan.

With the threat of homelessness looming, Mary visited St. Anthony’s Conference, with whom she was already familiar from her financial troubles post-Hurricane Sandy. Nonetheless, this was her first time meeting Catalina Guttilla, a new Vincentian at the Conference. As luck would have it, Catalina’s fortuitous business connections would prove to be the answer to Mary’s problems.

Catalina, a full-time real estate agent, was able to quickly find a family that would serve as Mary’s upstairs tenants. Additionally, Catalina’s agency had recently launched its own nonprofit—the Heart of American Homes Foundation—and after much deliberation, the Foundation agreed to pay Mary’s one-month rent, putting her on the path to financial security. The Conference was also able to get Mary’s grandson into summer camp, allowing her to continue working full-time while his school remained out of session.

Mary’s story is a testament to the power of the Vincentian community, and the successes that can occur when we reach across to “Non-Vincentians” in our own networks. It is a reminder that in the end, the Long Island community can come together in the name of creating positive change, and truly making our home a place for everyone to call home.

*Name changed for anonymity

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The following donors have made a commitment to give a scheduled amount to the Society on a monthly basis.

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IN MEMORY OF DECEASED VINCENTIANS

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Elsie Barrone

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THANK YOU DONORS & SUPPORTERS!

FEBRUARY 2018 - MAY 2019

The generosity of private and public funders is essential to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul as it fulfills its commitment as an international organization of Catholic laymen and women who seek in a spirit of justice and charity to help the poor, the needy and the disadvantaged through practical works of charity.

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FEBRUARY 2019 - MAY 2019

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