



# EUGENE FAMILY YMCA

A Newsletter for Donors, Members, Volunteers and Friends of the Y

August 2025

## GENERATIONS INTERWOVEN



**LAURA HOLLAND, MOM KATHY, SON GAGE  
AND DAUGHTER PRESLEE**

For Laura Holland, the Y became a lifeline during one of the most difficult chapters of her life. After losing her husband while pregnant with her youngest child, she found herself balancing work, grief, and raising two neurodivergent children. Her mother, Kathy Horak, moved from California to provide essential support.

"Before we joined the Y, everything was a little more stressful," Kathy, 66, recalls. "I was taking care of the kids all the time while Laura worked, and I didn't really have a break."

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**YOUR GENEROSITY  
MAKES IT POSSIBLE  
FOR GENERATIONS  
TO UNITE AT THE Y—  
CREATING A PLACE  
WHERE EVERY FAMILY,  
REGARDLESS OF AGE  
OR ABILITY, CAN  
BELONG AND GROW  
TOGETHER.**



# YOU'RE THE HEART OF Y

Dear Y Community,

Your generosity is transforming lives at the Y every day. This summer, **536 YOUTH** enjoyed safe, enriching activities that build confidence, independence, and lasting friendships.

With **\$101,322 IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**, **123 YOUTH PARTICIPATED** in camps and childcare, supporting their growth and giving working families peace of mind.

Thanks to your support, new specialty camps created inclusive spaces where every child belongs. From STEM and cooking to programs for LGBTQ+ youth and young adults with Down

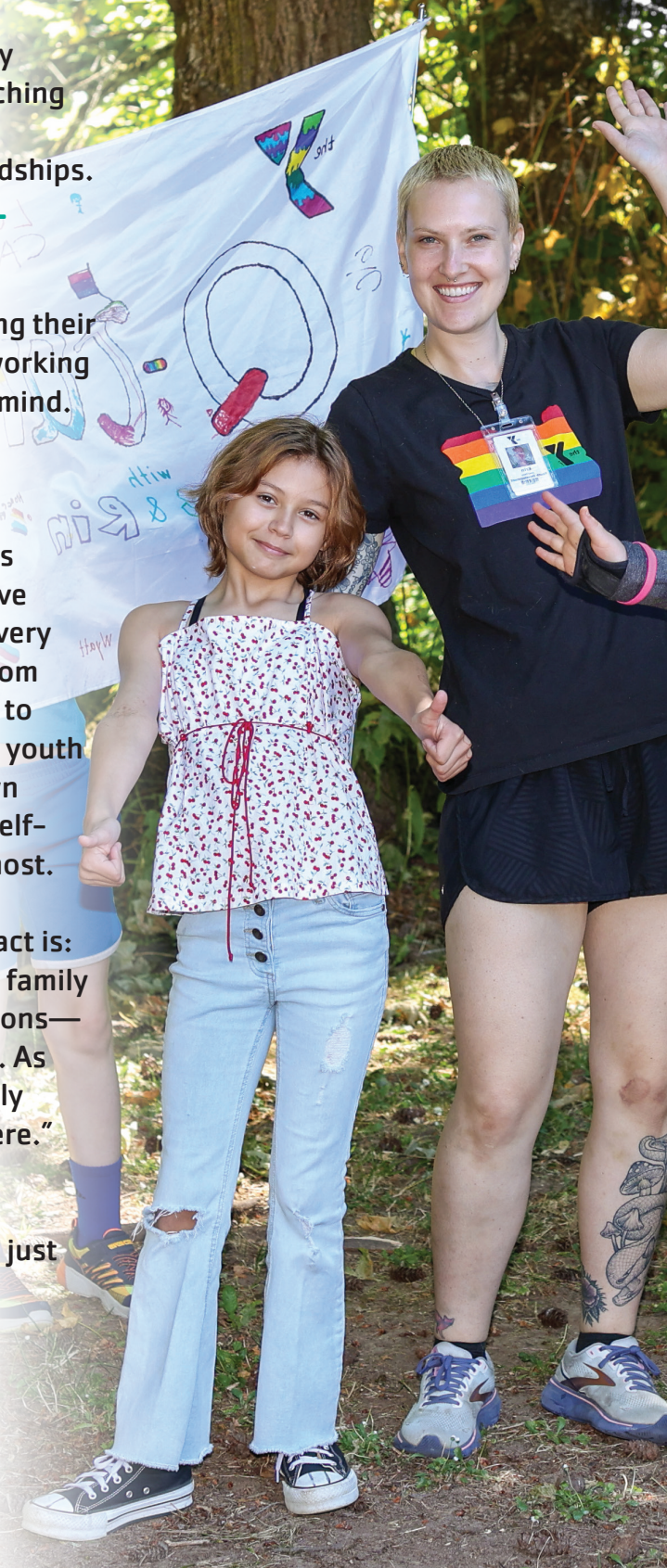
syndrome, these experiences sparked creativity, self-expression, and connection for kids who need it most.

We hear time and again how meaningful your impact is: "Thanks to YMCA's financial assistance, our whole family now has access to fitness, childcare and swim lessons—things that were outside our family budget before. As parents of a child with a disability, we are especially grateful for the Y's welcoming, inclusive atmosphere." — Sarah M., Y Member.

Because of you, inclusion and opportunity are not just ideals, they're realities for thousands.

Sincerely,

*Alexa Sharps*  
Alexa Sharps  
VP of Philanthropy



# WALK, LAUGH, REPEAT

Over 11 summer evenings, more than 275 community members gathered at Alton Baker Park to walk, roll and stroll their way toward better health, deeper connection and joy through Walk It Off with the Y.

"We started coming last year when I was pregnant, and now we bring our daughter—it's become our Wednesday tradition," says Jen Dunn. "It's pet-friendly, family-friendly, and just a really fun, welcoming way to connect."

Hosted by the Y and supported by **TITLE SPONSOR PEACEHEALTH**, this free weekly event brought together people of all ages and abilities to move their bodies, enjoy themed

celebrations, and spend meaningful time with friends, family and neighbors.

PeaceHealth showed up with purpose each week, sending a different department—from cardiac rehab to pediatrics—to connect with participants and share resources that support long-term health and healing.

Willamette Valley Cancer Institute also attended, encouraging survivors and patients alike to build gentle movement routines that could continue long after the season ended.

"I've been coming to Walk It Off for years," says Tina Shelton. "It started as a weekly

meet-up with a friend, and now it's just part of my summer routine. I tell people: come walk with me once—chances are, you'll want to come back again."



## THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM:

PeaceHealth, 99.1 The Beat, KMTR 16 News, Hunter Communications, Eugene Magazine, Bigfoot Beverages, McKenzie Sew On, Willamette Valley Cancer Institute



# Family Health in Focus

With five kids ranging from 3 months to 16 years old, Kendra Bourland **KNOWS FIRSTHAND HOW HARD IT CAN BE TO KEEP A FAMILY HEALTHY**—especially when fast food, sugary drinks and screen time are within arm’s reach. But through the 5-2-1-0 program—a partnership between PeaceHealth and the Eugene Family YMCA—her family found support, guidance and a new mindset.

**“BOTH SIDES OF OUR FAMILY HAVE DIABETES AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE,”** Kendra says. “When my teens started coming home from school with chips and cookies, I knew we needed to take action before there were long-term consequences.”



KENDRA BOURLAND AND DAUGHTER AVA

Kendra first heard about the program from her pediatrician at PeaceHealth and enrolled her 10-year-old daughter—hoping it would benefit the whole household.



“I cook a lot from scratch, we grow our own food, but when the kids are out of the house, they’re impulsive. **HEARING THE SAME MESSAGE FROM SOMEONE WHO ISN’T ‘MOM’ REALLY SINKS IN,**” says Kendra.

From nutrition classes with visual sugar demos to hands-on cooking lessons, the program helps reframe food as fuel.

“This program is an integral component for health in our community,” says Cecelia Jacobson, Registered Dietitian and 5210 instructor. **“WE CAN HELP FUTURE GENERATIONS BY INVOLVING THE WHOLE FAMILY**—teaching them how to fuel their bodies with proper nutrition and finding joy in movement while building healthy habits.”

Most of all, 5-2-1-0 has created a healthier mindset in the Bourland household. “It hasn’t totally changed them—they’re teens!—but now they think about what they’re eating. After a big dinner, they’ll ask, ‘Do we really need dessert?’ That’s a win in my book.”

# EMPOWERING MEMORY CARE

In partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association, the Y deepened its commitment to lifelong health by launching a free monthly Brain Health Lecture Series last September. Designed to support those living with memory-related illnesses—as well as the loved ones and caregivers who walk alongside them—the 10-month series quickly **BECAME A BEACON OF INFORMATION, CONNECTION AND HOPE.**

The sessions delved into crucial topics from early warning signs to caregiving strategies for individuals with conditions affecting memory.

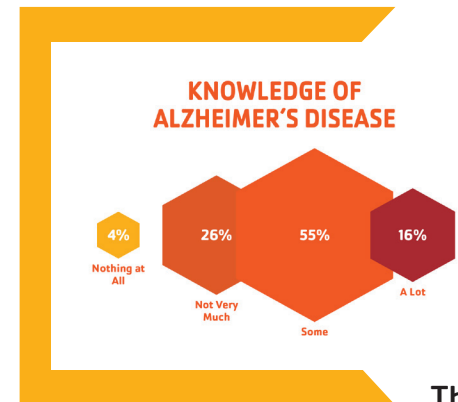
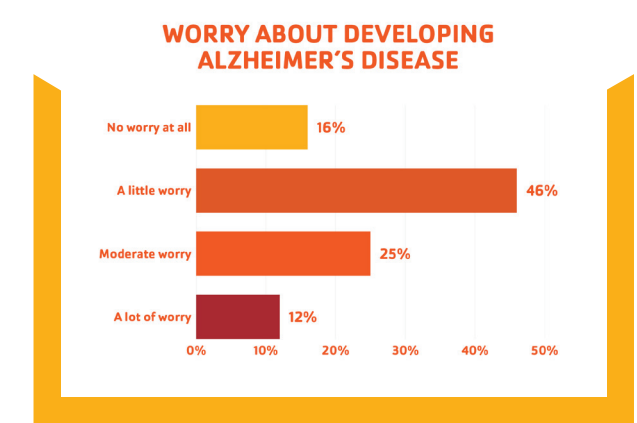
“The lectures gave me incredible insight into treatment options and helped me better support my loved one,” said Susan Anderson, a dedicated caregiver. “What you learn could make a difference.”



fewer than 1 in 5 say they know much about it.

That’s why this series matters. For many, like Maria Villa, who operates an adult foster home, it’s already making a tangible difference. **“THE SERIES HAS CHANGED HOW I SUPPORT MY RESIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES,”** she said. “Anytime I can get relevant knowledge, I’m taking it.”

The series also aligned with the annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s at Alton Baker Park, where Y members,



The need for education around brain health is clear: According to the 2025 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures report, more than **4 in 5 U.S. ADULTS (83%) REPORT BEING WORRIED ABOUT DEVELOPING ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE,** yet

staff and volunteers showed up in force—walking among a sea of purple flags and honoring those affected by Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.

This program is more than just education—it’s empowerment. Participants leave with new tools, deeper understanding and a stronger support network.





# Because here, every generation belongs.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Hollands are one of three local families where the Y has become more than a place to exercise. It's a lifeline, a second home, and a shared space

**WHERE MULTIPLE GENERATIONS CAN THRIVE—**together.



Laura loves yoga on the terrace.

Gage, 6, and Preslee, 4, found joy and stability in the PlayZone and KidsZone drop-in childcare spaces. Laura and

Kathy found their rhythm in group classes, lap swimming, and moments of relaxation in the sauna.

"Before we joined, everything was more stressful," Kathy says. "Now we have this beautiful space—and it has everything we need."

Ken McClain and Maria Bolanos-McClain, both physicians, have built their lives around the Y's rhythm.

For Ken, mornings begin with basketball, cardio, and camaraderie—followed by the all-important cup of Y coffee.

"This is my morning routine," says Ken. "If I don't come here, something feels off. It's become a big part of my life."



Ken, Maria, Ana and Alejandro

For Maria, group fitness classes have become a source of **STRENGTH, JOY AND DEEP FRIENDSHIP**—especially during the pandemic, when outdoor workouts brought members together in the rain and wind.

"Those shared moments created deep friendships," says Maria, who still connects with the regulars. "We supported each other through a really difficult time."

Their son Alejandro grew up at the Y, **BUILDING LIFELONG WELLNESS HABITS THROUGH WEIGHTLIFTING AND BASKETBALL.**

But this year brought a new layer to their Y experience: Maria's 92-year-old mother, Ana, moved in—and quickly became a beloved Y regular.

"My mom says, 'I love this place. I wish we could come every day,' and I say, 'We DO come every day!'" Maria laughs.



Ana rides the NuStep Recumbent Bike, joins chair yoga and fitness classes, and finds connection in member-led aging groups.

For Garian Cika, the Y has always been part of her story. As a child, **SHE SWAM LAPS AND MADE LIFELONG FRIENDS AT HER HOMETOWN Y IN PENNSYLVANIA.**

Today, she's creating new memories—but now as a mom,

daughter, and spouse sharing the Y with three generations of her family.

Her husband, Charlie Hanna, is a regular on the basketball court. Most evenings, he can be found shooting hoops with a crew of familiar faces.

"I probably know 25 to 30 people by name now," he says. "We've got a regular rhythm—intergenerational, mostly younger guys, but a few of us older ones hold our own."

Their teenage son completed the Y's Teen Strength program, gaining confidence and independence. Their youngest daughter, Aramae, plays in the KidZone and has started exploring the fitness center alongside her dad, **LEARNING EARLY THAT MOVEMENT IS FUN**—and something they can do together.

Meanwhile, Garian's mother, Stephanie, 82, finds peace in chair yoga and lap swimming, often followed by social time with her classmates over tea.

**"We could go to any gym, but we choose the Y because it fits our whole family best. It's welcoming in a way that's hard to put into words. EVERYONE BELONGS."**

"At my age, it's not easy to make new friends, but I've met people here," Stephanie says. "We stretch together, chat and connect. That kind of community—it's rare."

**FOR GARIAN, THE Y STANDS OUT BECAUSE IT EMBRACES EVERYONE.**



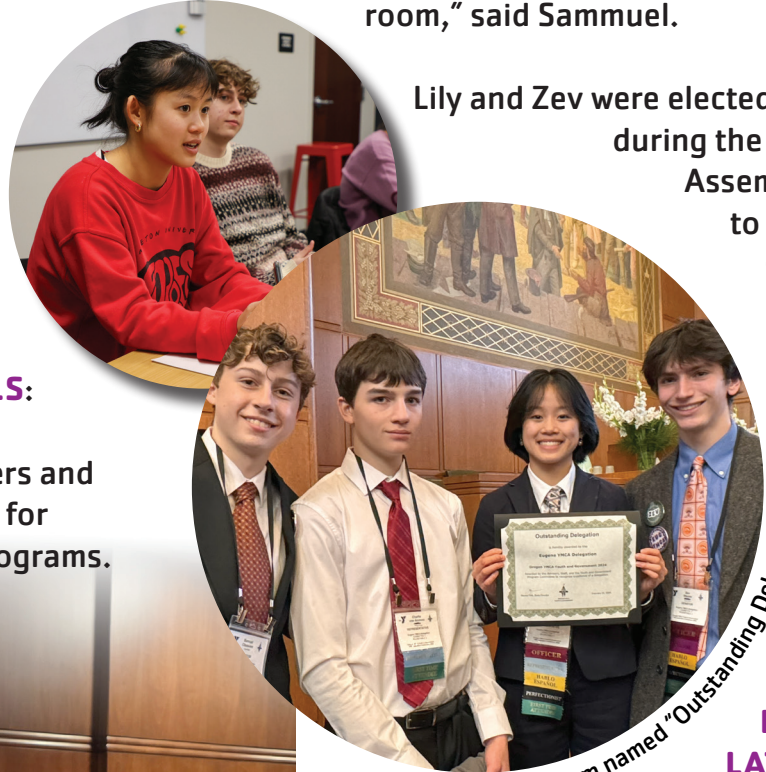
Garian, Aramae, Charlie and Stephanie



# Outstanding Delegation

In February 2024, **FOUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM THE EUGENE FAMILY YMCA MADE HISTORY AS THE FIRST LOCAL DELEGATION** to attend the 78th annual YMCA Youth and Government Legislative Conference in Salem.

For many, it was their first experience drafting bills, serving on committees, and debating in a real government setting. Delegates **LILY YAO, SAMMUEL CLAASSEN, ZEV WACKS AND CHARLIE VON AMMON INTRODUCED TWO BILLS:** one proposing a \$50,000 minimum salary for teachers and another requiring helmets for bike and scooter-share programs.



The Y's team named "Outstanding Delegation"

"I've always been curious about how our government functions," said Lily. "This wasn't just a learning opportunity—it was a way to be a part of it."

"It was electrifying! Once we started presenting our bills, the energy just flowed through the room," said Samuel.

Lily and Zev were elected sergeant-at-arms during the Pre-Legislative Assembly, a testament to the leadership skills cultivated through their Y involvement.

Zev emphasized, **"IF YOU SUPPRESS YOUTH VOICES NOW, YOU'RE SILENCING FUTURE VOTERS LATER."**

The Y wholeheartedly believes in amplifying youth voices—creating opportunities like this for teens to speak up, step forward and shape the future.

"We're here to ignite confidence, civic responsibility and leadership in the next generation—and these students proved just how powerful that can be," said Rachel Jackson, Youth, Teen and Family Director.

**THE EUGENE DELEGATION WAS NAMED "OUTSTANDING DELEGATION"**—a reflection of how the Y helps young people find their voice, take initiative and lead with purpose.



LILY YAO, MEMBER AND DELEGATE

# Jump, Flip and Ninja Kick!

**AND THAT'S EXACTLY THE POINT.**

In their primary years of development, young children benefit immensely from structured physical activity. Not only do they learn coordination, agility and strength, but they also gain whole-body awareness, listening skills and emotional resilience.

**One of our fastest growing youth programs: 67 Ninjas Strong! And 53 more on the waitlist!**



"It's not just about fitness," says Pete Lemay, Youth Sports Director. "When they learn how to fall and roll safely, **THEY'RE ALSO LEARNING HOW TO GET BACK UP**—that mindset carries into every aspect of their lives."

The Y's NinjaZone® program has quickly become a beloved outlet for young adventurers and their families. Designed for ages 3 to 5 (Itty Bitty Ninjas) and kindergarten through second grade (Lil' Ninjas), these **DYNAMIC CLASSES FUSE OBSTACLE COURSE TRAINING, GYMNASTICS AND PARKOUR** into a unique experience that gets kids moving and growing—physically, mentally and socially.

"I love NinjaZone!" said Eldon, a proud ninja whose mom, Hillary, says the program has been a game-changer for their family.

"It's a great energy outlet, especially at the end of the day," Hillary said. "All the instructors—you can tell they were really there to show up for the kids."

With each jump, flip and ninja kick, these young athletes are not only mastering movement—they're building a foundation of confidence that will serve them for a lifetime.





# Pause, Breathe, Grow

Recognizing the growing need for mental health support, the Y launched an evidence-based Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course—**AN EIGHT-WEEK PROGRAM ROOTED IN MEDITATION, BREATHWORK AND MOVEMENT.**

Designed to reduce stress and strengthen emotional resilience, it's a powerful new way to support whole-person well-being.

"MBSR is about building a foundation of awareness and presence," says instructor Brant Rogers. "At the Y, we're creating a space where people can learn to respond to stress with intention."

Participants describe the experience as both eye-opening and transformative—challenging at times, but deeply rewarding.

**"I FEEL LIKE I CAN SEE THINGS MORE CLEARLY,"**

says Y member Victoria DeLuise. "But I still need to pause and slow down. I'm an energizer bunny. I learned to be with discomfort instead of reacting."

The power of MBSR extends beyond personal insight—it's also about human connection. In a world where stress can feel isolating, the course offers a sense of shared experience and understanding.



BRANT ROGERS, INSTRUCTOR

"I think a big part of our mental health problems is our belief that we are alone," says Y member Brian Birtley. "For example, if we feel neurotic, we think we're the only one with that problem. **BEING ABLE TO SHARE AND RECOGNIZE SIMILARITIES IN OUR FEELINGS MADE ME FEEL MORE CURIOUS ABOUT AND ACCEPTING OF MYSELF.**"

The introduction of MBSR at the Y underscores a growing commitment to whole-person health—supporting not just physical fitness, but emotional well-being.

"The Y is here for both physical and mental well-being," says Rogers. "Mindfulness is one more way we're helping people feel whole."



# Active Families, Happy Kids

Early on this Saturday morning in May, a small army of Y staff, volunteers and sponsors were in motion, setting up sun canopies, folding tables and chalk art to make the crosswalks extra visible in anticipation of the hundreds of kids that would soon descend!



By mid-morning families began arriving, many by foot, bike, scooter, stroller or bus. **THOSE ABLE TO ATTEND WITHOUT DRIVING EARNED THEMSELVES**

**A FREE Y GUEST PASS FOR HELPING TO CHAMPION ACTIVE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION**—a Y strategic priority.



DAEGAN, NIKO AND NOEMI  
AT HEALTHY KIDS DAY

**850+ attendees!**



Underpinning all of this frenetic activity is the Y's dedication to Youth Development and Protection. Every free bike helmet and life vest distributed this day supported our mission of making safe, active activities accessible to all.

**"HEALTHY KIDS DAY REMINDED ME HOW MUCH OUR COMMUNITY CARES ABOUT FAMILIES. WE LOVED THE MIX OF GAMES, MUSIC, AND MEETING NEW PEOPLE—IT FELT LIKE THE WHOLE TOWN CAME OUT TO PLAY."**  
- NOEMI TORRES

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Today's Hits, Yesterday's Favorites

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La Que Buena

NEW COUNTRY  
93

105.5  
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# LEGACY THAT LASTS

This month is National Make A Will Month, a perfect time to reflect on the people and places that have shaped your life and consider how you can support them for generations to come.

Including the Eugene Family YMCA in your estate plans is a **SIMPLE YET MEANINGFUL WAY TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND NEIGHBORS CONTINUE TO ACCESS LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAMS, REGARDLESS OF INCOME.**

A legacy gift could sustain opportunities like the ones given to Laura Holland

and her family for years to come, helping future generations of kids and their parents feel seen, supported and empowered.

“Leaving a gift to the Y in our will was an easy decision. **WE WANT TO HELP CARRY THE MISSION FORWARD** — not just for our family, but for all families in our community.”  
—Matt and Sandie Longtin



MATT AND SANDIE

If you've included the Y in your estate plans, we'd love to thank you. Considering it? We can share how legacy gifts create lasting impact.



## CURIOUS ABOUT OTHER WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- **Online or By Mail:** Scan the QR code or make a donation at [eugeneymca.org/donate](https://eugeneymca.org/donate) or mail your gift to the Eugene Family YMCA at 600 E. 24th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405.
- **Become a Y Champion:** Set up a monthly gift to provide steady, year-round impact.
- **Other Ways to Give:**
  - Donor-Advised Fund, IRA, or estate gift
  - Gifts of stock
  - Corporate sponsorships

## TO LEARN MORE OR SHARE YOUR INTENTIONS, CONTACT:

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