

# Improving the Quality of Life of Alzheimer's Disease Patients in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

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## Introduction and Selection of a Community in Need



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## The Problem in the Community



## Proposed Solution



Alzheimer's Disease has been identified as a major health issue in the older population of ages 65 years and older. One particular community identified to have a substantial jump in Alzheimer's Disease is Fort Lauderdale, Florida. A Mediteranean Diet has shown to decrease the risk of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

One issue the community of Fort Lauderdale, Florida faces is Alzheimer's Disease.

- Alzheimer's Disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. As per the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Disease is the most common cause of dementia, which is the loss of memory and other cognitive abilities which are so severe that they interfere with daily life and functioning. AD itself is responsible for 60-80% of the dementia cases. AD is also not a normal part of the aging process but it is common in the population of the elderly, who are 65 years and older. It has been found that amyloid plaques, which is plaque that builds up in the spaces between nerve cells, play a critical role in blocking communication between nerve cells. (5)
- As per the Alzheimer's organization, the state of Florida has the second highest incidence of Alzheimer's Disease in America. Within the 8 counties that comprise the Southeast Florida Chapter - Fort Lauderdale being one of them, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs estimates that in 2016 there were 170,567 people living with Alzheimer's disease. 1 in every 38 people of all ages has Alzheimer's disease- and these numbers are not including the population of people who snowbird there (4)

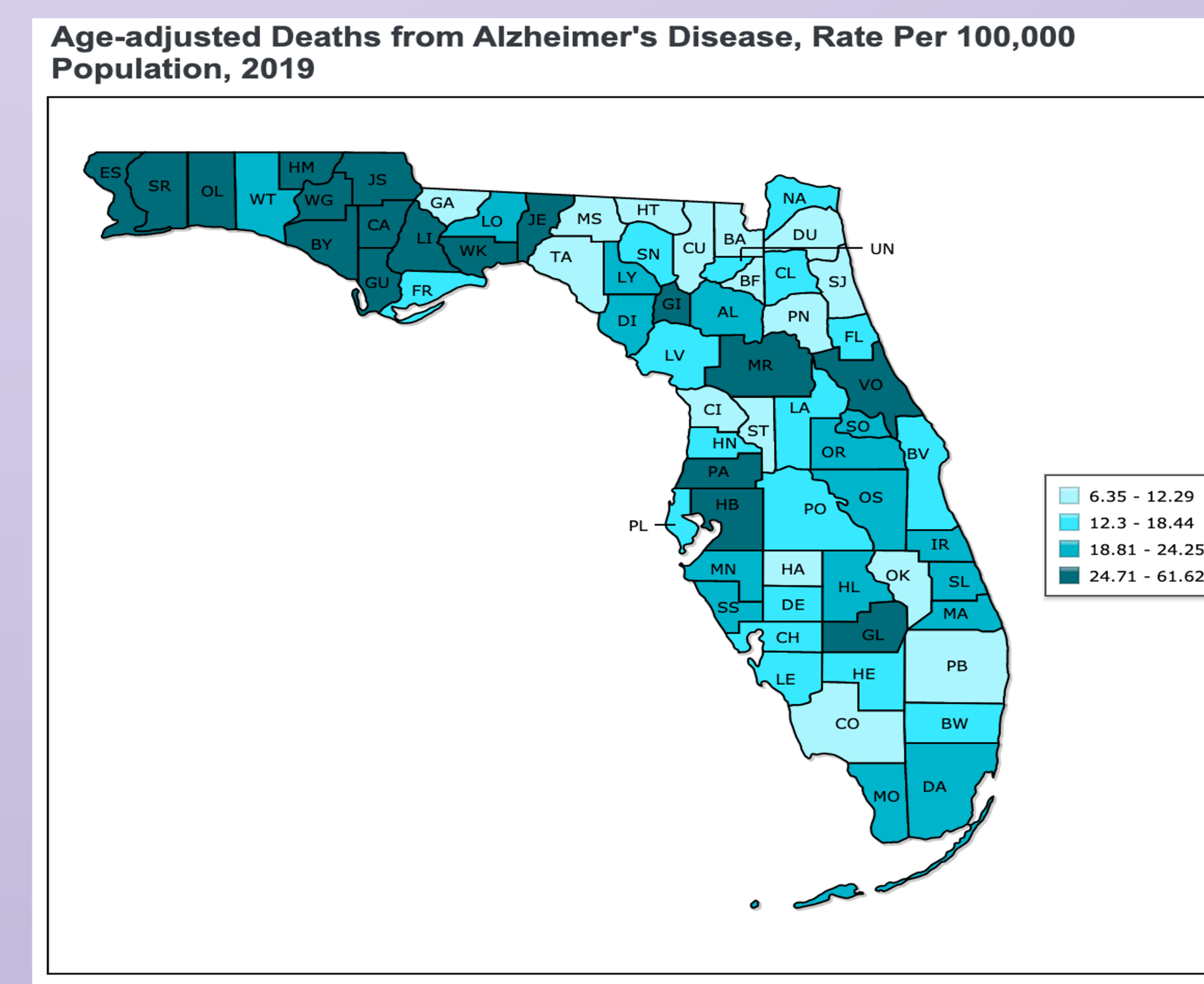
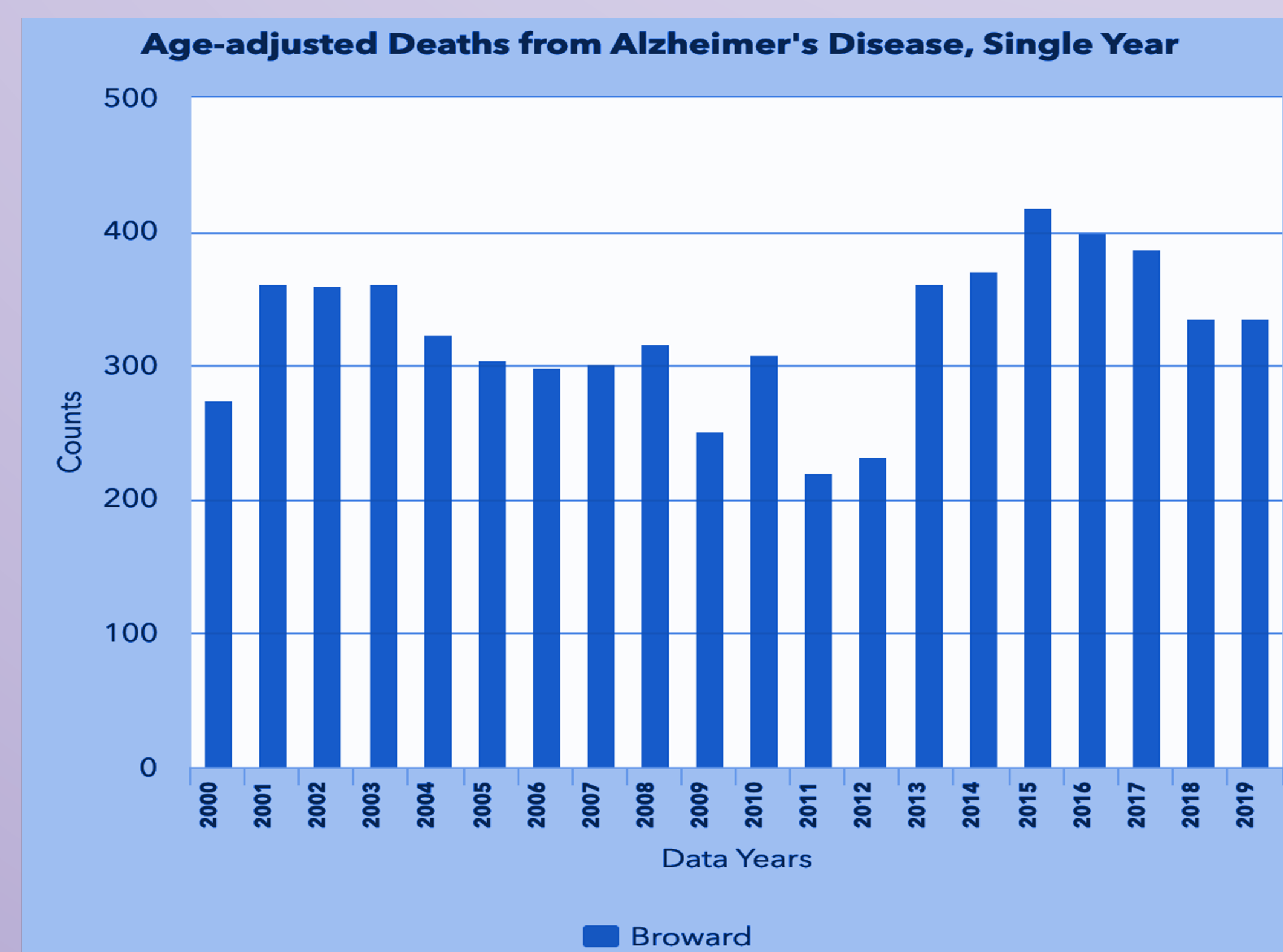
- One theory that has been found is the lack of a certain diet is being linked to an increase in Alzheimer's. With further investigation, a Mediterranean diet has been shown to decrease the prevalence of Alzheimer's. Research suggests that it slows cognitive decline in older adults, reduces the risk of mild cognitive impairment, and then further reduces the risk of MCI progression into Alzheimer's. The income rate of Fort Lauderdale is average to lower, therefor the population there may struggle to obtain the correct groceries to abide by this diet.
- In comparison to other countries around the world, in 2018, a study of the epidemiology of dementia was done in the population over 65 years of age in Greece. It was found that only 5% of the population had dementia and 75.3% of the 5% of people were diagnosed with AD. The prevalence of dementia in Greece is of the lower ranges of what has been reported globally. As per Dementia Statistics from 2015, East Asia is the region with the most people living with dementia, roughly 9.8 million, followed by Western Europe with 7.5 million (Global prevalence 2018).

There has been evidence supporting the effect of a Mediterranean food plan on the improvement of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease. Mediterranean dietary patterns can provide 1 ½-3 ½ years of protection against Alzheimer's disease. (3)

- The solution to help this community is by starting a food delivery program called CusineMeDi that delivers Mediteranian style items to individuals over the age of 65.
- The CusineMeDi delivery service will include food items such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, seafood, and olive oil.
- Each individual will be able to customize their meal plan which will also allow them to make decisions. Therefore the patients' cognitive level will remain functioning at a normal rate. This also gives the individual to feel empowered since they are not in control of their diet.
- Along with CusineMeDi, there will be a brochure which includes a list of walking trails, information on the International Swimming hall of fame, and a crossword puzzle that individuals can take part in.

## Community Assessment and Analysis

- Fort Lauderdale, FL is very diverse.
- According to the 2019 US Census Bureau, there are 187,437 people who live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (1).
- There are 580,000 Floridians living with Alzheimer's Disease (4).
- There are 61.2% of Whites, 32.2 % of Black/African Americans, 18.5% of Hispanics or Latino and 1.6% of Asians living in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (1).
- The current employment rate is about 3.4% with US averaging at about 3.7% (2).
- There are many resources available in Fort Lauderdale to help aide patients living with Alzheimer's Disease and their families, including Alzheimer's Association of Southeast Florida, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County (FL) and 'Today's Caregiver'.



## Conclusion

- In conclusion, studies show that people who eat a Mediterranean diet will have a lower risk and will be less likely to have Alzheimer's disease than people who do not eat a Mediterranean diet. By following the CusineMeDi diet, the goal is to improve the quality of life for people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.
- The specific community health goal for individuals in Fort Lauderdale, FL for those diagnosed with AD, can be met by incorporating healthy lifestyle modifications into their daily lives.
- Although AD is a serious life-threatening disease, there are many options that individuals can take n order to promote the quality of life of the individual with Alzheimer's Disease

## References

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