

TOGETHER

January/February 2022

Nesci Named 2021 Crystal Apple Honoree

by Nicole Mauro



Office and classroom functionality has a lot of moving parts, and at BOCES 2, Angela Nesci plays an essential role in this process.

Nesci was presented with the 2021 Crystal Apple Award, the highest honor an employee can receive at BOCES 2. She was honored alongside the 2021 service milestone recipients at the Celebrating You employee recognition event on Dec. 15.

Nesci began work at BOCES 2 in 1997 as a classroom aide, and she has worked in various capacities ever since. Now coordinator of the Curriculum Materials Center, Nesci oversees the ordering, stocking and distribution of curriculum software and equipment for the organization, which entails constant coordination with the business office, Communication and Technology Services, district buildings, and vendors. To ensure a smooth transition from year to year, she coordinates classroom relocations and extended school year set-up and take-down procedures.

"Angela's day-to-day efforts positively impact the work of so many of our teachers and providers," said Phil Ortolani, Department for Exceptional Children supervisor. "No order is too big; no procedure is too complicated. Angela does whatever needs to be done to help get our staff and students what they need as soon as she can."

"During the school year, she makes sure we have the equipment and materials we need to do our job, and she keeps track of everything we have in all of the various district buildings so they are waiting for us at the start of the next school year," said Gretchen Schober, school psychologist at the Department for Exceptional Children. "You name it, Angela can locate it and get it delivered ASAP!"

The majority of Nesci's work may be categorized as behind-the-scenes, but that does not change the fact that she is integral to the overall functionality of BOCES 2.

"I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that we couldn't run BOCES without her," said Schober. "I still don't know how she does it, but I suspect it has something to do with her keen sense of organization, polite and kind approach to others, and her over-and-above work ethic."

Even with the high demands for personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies, and supply chain shortages delaying delivery of various office and classroom materials, Nesci did not falter.

"Angela's dedication to BOCES 2 is unquestionable," said Sue Pratt, Department for Exceptional Children retired assistant director. "She is a role model for adapting to change. When I recently asked her about retirement she replied, 'Not now, I love my job.'"

Assistant Director for the Department for Exceptional Children Nicole Outhouse spoke on Nesci's behalf at the event. Outhouse created a word collage to display all the adjectives Nesci's coworkers used in their nominations for her. While Nesci prefers to remain behind-the-scenes, she spoke briefly at the ceremony, expressing how thankful she was for the outpouring of gratitude and support.



Angela Nesci's family joined her at the Celebrating You event.

Celebrating You Award Recipients

Staff reaching milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 and 35 years of service were recognized at our annual Celebrating You employee recognition event on Dec. 15 in the Professional Development Center. This year, we honored

54 employees who have achieved a combined 950 years of service. The event also featured snacks prepared by Personal Services students.



10 years of service: James Payne IV, Anthony Puleo, Justin Tese
Not pictured: Peter Beadling, Colleen Dox-Griffith, Traci-Lynn Farley, Timothy Hanson, Barbara Koza, Scott Mason, Jennifer Merkel, Dawn Molitor, Peter Sharpe, Douglas Van Roo



15 years of service: Diane Choromanskis, Debra Mannix, Darlene Marciano
Not pictured: D. Bryce Doty, Donna Edick, Andrea Fritz, Amy Glass, Johanna Korn, Jaime Passinault, Jennifer Ruhlman, Wendy Russell, Diane Sciabbarrasi, Kim Spiller, Richard White, Lori Williams



20 years of service: Dean Ashby, Rebecca Bailey, Pamela Suess
Not pictured: Angelina Carangi, Celeste Devries, Lucy Fagan, Steven Kilby, Viki LeBeau, Kim Melito, Cheryl Minster, Edward Mongold, David Pettine, Kathleen Pink, Barbara Swanson



25 years of service: Karen Gallagher, Cynthia Syrocki, Maria Tantillo
Not pictured: Linda Buehler, Concetta D'Alessandro, Rachael Piccolo, Christine Pisaturo-Pursel, Melissa Sheehan, Mary Zanni



30 years of service: Board Vice President R. Charles Phillips (Greece), Georgine Rusnak
35 years of service: **Not pictured:** Heidi Davis

Save the Date!

Join us for the Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES CTE Vendor and Craft Show on Saturday, March 26, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at WEMOCO. This fundraiser supports CTE students attending SkillsUSA competitions.

Condolences to:

Becky Bailey on the death of her father; the family of **Kathy Carlino** (retiree); **Amanda Dedie** on the death of her grandfather; **Catherine Engert** on the death of her mother-in-law; the family of **Ray Hall** (retiree); **Colleen Holman** on the death of her brother; **Keri-Lyn LeBeau** on the death of her father-in-law; **Linda Marfione** on the death of her father; **Ed Pretko** on the death of his niece.

National Technical Honor Society Inducts 27 CTE Students

This fall, 27 Career and Technical Education (CTE) students were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS), an organization that honors top CTE students and their achievements. Students must demonstrate scholarship, citizenship and leadership; maintain an average of 88% or higher in CTE courses; and maintain high academic standing at their home schools to meet membership requirements. CTE students must be in good academic standing during their senior year, have an attendance record of 95%, have high standards of personal conduct (including at their home schools), receive a teacher endorsement, receive a letter of recommendation from their home schools, and strive for excellence in all aspects of their education and/or employment. The inductees are as follows: Christopher Hall (Auto Body and Collision Repair Technology); Justin

Hunter (Automotive Technology); Kyle Czapeczka, Michah Fleischer, Samuel Keens and Malakai Sigwalt (Carpentry); Julia Courtwright (Child and Family Development); McKenna Olear, Eithen Pardi and Dalianny Vega (Cosmetology); Isabella Civiletti and Emma D'Ettorre, (Dental Assisting); Arianna Leo and Grace Olaosebikan (Digital and Visual Communication); Christian Olear (Engineering and Metal Fabrication: Machining); Chester Jabieski (Exercise Science); Logan Kibby, Vladimir Stefanovski, Kyle Surowy, Christopher TerHaar and Bennett Zarpentine (Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance); Molly Hong (Nurse Assisting and Associated Health Careers); Caridad Cassady and Amanda DiMora (Phlebotomy and Laboratory Science); and Terence Kurtz, Sean Lippa and Jeremy Lisowski (Residential and Commercial Electrical). Congratulations to all inductees!



CTE Teacher Wins National Award

The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) Board of Trustees recently named Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher Theresa Alampi-Cortez the winner of the 2021 C. Thomas Olivo Outstanding Service Award. Established in 1980, this award is NOCTI's highest honor and is reserved for those individuals who have demonstrated leadership in the areas of CTE and occupational competency assessment. Criteria for the award includes credibility, expertise, dedication, leadership qualities, knowledge of NOCTI programs and services, and participation in and contribution to professional associations.

Alampi-Cortez works as an instructional specialist for professional development at the CTE Center. She is a strong leader and advocate for CTE. She led BOCES 2 teachers in professional development training in Career Technical Educators using Data-Driven NOCTI Instruction (CTEDDI) and is using the information learned to guide instruction and prepare students for technical assessments. Recently, Alampi-Cortez completed her administrative degree and certification. She also teaches several CTE courses required for New York State teacher certification through Buffalo State College. She is a member of the New York State

Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) and ACTE's national association. Alampi-Cortez serves as the lead advisor for the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) at CTE, and she is a member of SkillsUSA.

"One of Theresa's greatest strengths is her ability to create supportive and collaborative relationships with teachers," said Supervisor Paula Boughton. "Overall, she has strong instructional knowledge, great leadership skills and a positive personality."



HaAS Students Fulfill Community Needs Through The Clothing Closet

by Nicole Mauro

The next time you are cleaning out closets, wondering what to do with clothing and shoes in good condition, consider donating them to The Clothing Closet at BOCES 2.

For years, BOCES 2 has offered readily available, gently used apparel to students and staff, free of cost. Officially adopted by the Hospitality and Applied Skills (HaAS) program in 2017, The Clothing Closet allows students to develop skills that help them excel in their future workplaces while simultaneously providing resources to those in need throughout the BOCES 2 community.

Donations for The Clothing Closet are collected at the Career Exploration Center (CEC) where students check items for quality and wash them in the laundry room. Then, the items are passed on to HaAS for students to sort, tag, hang, fold and stock the closet. Any items deemed unusable get recycled.

HaAS is a 12:1:1 half-day program located within the Department for Exceptional Children at the Big Ridge Road campus where students with disabilities, age 14-21, develop skills for work-readiness. Students can attend sessions up to five times per week, combined with a classroom placement within BOCES 2 or the student's home district. The Clothing Closet functions like a thrift store, which is a common field placement for students.



Casual and formal apparel, jackets, footwear, work uniforms and seasonal items of all sizes can be found at The Clothing Closet. Whether it is a student from CTE's Building Trades program in search of steel-toed

boots, or someone in need of clothing for an upcoming interview, The Clothing Closet is always a free resource for students, staff and families of BOCES 2 and its component districts.

During the holidays, students often pull items to fulfill Holiday Connections requests. "Students really enjoy when we get orders because they feel that they are helping others," said Samantha Fowler, HaAS special education teacher. "They see the practical side of that, that it's benefitting a real person, which helps them build connections. It's not just pretend work, it's real work they get to perform."

Recently, a BOCES 2 family lost all their belongings in a house fire. The Clothing Closet team was quick to act, reflecting just how beneficial donations are when unforeseen tragedy strikes.

Prior to the pandemic, families were able to shop for themselves, but now HaAS matches items to their needs. To place a request, call, email or submit a confidential online form indicating what type of items are required. HaAS students fill the order, and staff arrange delivery or pick up.

To reach The Clothing Closet, please call 585-617-2437, email clothingcloset@monroe2boces.org or visit www.monroe2boces.org/ClothingCloset.

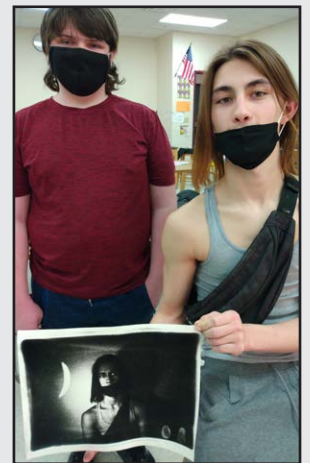


Breaking Boundaries at Westview

by Chris Klem

Creating art by pushing technology beyond what it was designed to do is an everyday occurrence in art teacher Tom Carpenter's studio at Westview in the Department for Exceptional Children/Westside Academy. His students are constantly exploring and experimenting with traditional art media, 3-D printing, cutting-edge digital design programs and innovative ceramic techniques. They also benefit from Carpenter's rare expertise with the creative use of electrophotographic (xerographic) technology.

Electrophotography may be an old technology – invented in 1938 by Xerox's Chester Carlson – but Carpenter's students are using it in new ways. Detailed, large format photographic images can be created, without a darkroom or chemicals. The manual, multi-step process allows students to manipulate their images to express their own individual aesthetic. Westview students, like Thomas, who is drawn to science and technology, enjoy the creativity involved in breaking established rules and thinking in unexpected ways. His photographs of fellow student-artist Rocco are a perfect example of the exciting originality and imagination fostered in Carpenter's classroom.



Thomas and Rocco with their finished electrophotographic collaboration.

Computer Tech Equipment with a Past and a Future

by Amy LaGambino, CTE Outreach Assistant

There's a place where old desktop computers, laptops, cell phones, entertainment systems and all kinds of tech equipment go for a chance at a second life. Sunnking Electronics Recycling in Brockport gave CTE Computer Technology seniors an inside look at this tech wonderland.

Director of Ecommerce Nick Castronovo led the students on a behind-the-scenes tour. The company relocated in 2016 to double their floor space, which is evidence of the demand for their services. Students saw employees testing and prepping equipment for reuse. Up to 12 laptops can be diagnosed, have their hard drives wiped clean and Windows software installed on them simultaneously, all at one workstation. When computers are fully restored, the higher quality equipment goes to Sunnking's retail store in Brockport. Other equipment is sold wholesale.

For a group of students who've done their share of tearing apart tech equipment, the work going on at Sunnking wasn't a surprise. The eye-opener was the volume of equipment waiting to be tested, disassembled, repaired or recycled. Students were intrigued by unexpected things they saw, such as computers from the 1990s ("from the AOL days" as one student quipped) or a bin full of earbuds that included the most recent models.

Through Work-Based Learning, Sunnking and the Computer Technology program are planning a co-op project that can be done on site at WEMOCO. Computers will be delivered from Sunnking and students will run the diagnostics. CTE students will help meet the high demand for this work. For example, Sunnking was working on four pallets full of retired Chromebooks when students visited.

The enthusiasm of the students was obvious. Phil Bove, Sunnking's Director of IT Asset Disposition, said that CTE students' training "would put them at the top of the list for jobs here."



Sunnking's Nick Castronovo points out components of desktop computers awaiting testing.

Strategic Plan Update Department for Exceptional Children

Strategic Goal: Resource Management

Demonstrate integrity, accountability and effectiveness in all personnel and financial decisions with an emphasis on enhancing teaching and learning.

Key Strategies:

Recruit, develop and retain qualified personnel committed to our mission and vision.

The Department for Exceptional Children seeks to recruit, hire, support, develop and retain staff through participation in recruiting events and interviews where appropriate, advocacy at regional and/or state level meetings, morale building activities, etc.

Specifically, the Department for Exceptional Children always has postings for our open positions up on our Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES website. In addition, we have focused on hiring and recruiting events such as our own Department for Exceptional Children Job Fairs, the Brockport Job Festival, Oswego Job Fair, Finger Lakes Virtual Career Fair, ShiftDiff's "You're Hired!" Job Fair, Rochester Works! Virtual Recruiting Spotlight, and Keuka and Nazareth Colleges' Career Fairs.

We have collaborated with area colleges to connect with students who can provide substitute teacher coverage through the Teacher Immersion Fellowship Program, and paraprofessional coverage during college vacations and class days off. We advertise on the BOCES 2 electronic billboard, on the radio and in the Pennysaver newspaper.

We strive to support our current staff by paying attention to their wellness and social-emotional learning wherever we can. Administrators are modeling their dedication to our teams by substituting as paraprofessionals and teachers to ensure that our learning environments are safe, and that staff know we are "in this together."

Our recent Superintendent's Conference Day was made into an IEP workday for professional staff to "catch up" on things during a stressful year and a workshop day for paraprofessionals with offerings around self-care, stress management and more. Our Trauma, Illness and Grief Support Team has worked with programs to assist them in dealing with stressful classroom situations such as managing students unable to move to a higher level of care due to program closures, staffing shortages and safety concerns.

Advocacy efforts include requests for additional compensation for current staff in the form of incentives and pay increases to acknowledge their important contributions to our students and families. Locally, Administrative Council works closely with our component school districts' special education leaders to advocate for their support with recruitment. At the state level, our Director participates on the Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education and the Statewide Network for Special Education, advocating for increased flexibility with teacher certifications, which will assist with the candidate pool for incoming teachers.

Remembering John Gigliotti

by Beth Nash

John Gigliotti, a BOCES 2 employee for 13 years, sadly passed away on Dec. 18. He worked as a B Shift Security Worker, and he was the Chief Shop Steward for the United Public Service Employees Union. Hired as the second security worker at the WEMOCO building, Gigliotti worked with Senior Security Worker Jeff Lootens to create the Security Department.

Because Gigliotti typically worked late afternoons and evenings during the week, he was a friendly face known to adult students and staff alike. “John was often the first person Center for Workforce Development (CWD) students came into contact with on campus, as they searched for their classrooms during evening hours,” said Safety and Security Coordinator Doug Comanzo. “He was always polite to students, staff and visitors alike. I received many compliments from people on their positive interactions with John.”

As part of his responsibilities, Gigliotti trained new security workers. “John was thorough in his instruction to new employees,” said Comanzo. “He lived close to the Big Ridge Road campus, and he was always available to respond quickly after hours. He enjoyed coming

to work, and he would tell me that he was never going to retire because he had the best job.”

Gigliotti was well-liked by his coworkers. “John had a good sense of humor, and he could tell a story that would make everyone laugh,” said Comanzo. Lootens agreed, saying that he and Gigliotti would often play pranks on each other. “We would do little things like turn up the volume on the sound system in the security vehicle and set it to an opera or classical station, so the next person to start the car would have the music blasting at him,” said Lootens.

Comanzo said Gigliotti was always looking for ways to improve his job and working conditions, not only for himself, but also his coworkers.

“John took his role as shop steward very seriously,” said Lootens. “He was professional in his approach, and he was successful in expanding the security department.”



Gigliotti worked the second shift so he could spend time with his grandkids during the day. He would bring them to campus when he wasn't working and let them ride their bikes around the parking lot. Lootens said Gigliotti's love of family was evident when he talked with him. “John gave everything in his life to make sure his children and grandchildren were always well taken care of,” he said.

“John was a faithful guardian of students and staff when he was on duty,” said District Superintendent Jo Anne Antonacci. “He went above and beyond to keep us safe and secure. May he rest in peace.”

New Director Appointed for the Center for Workforce Development

Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES has selected Shawna Gareau-Kurtz as the new Director of the Center for Workforce Development. She succeeds Tom Schulte, who was recently promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Programs for BOCES 2.

Gareau-Kurtz has held several positions during her more than two decades-long tenure at BOCES 2. She most recently served as Assistant Principal, a position she has held since 2013. She previously worked as an Instructional Specialist, an Academic Support Teacher and a Business Education Teacher. Gareau-Kurtz began her new role on Feb. 1.



Holidays Around the World Take on New Meaning

by Chris Klem

The winter holidays provide many opportunities for teachers to share with students different cultures and world views. In the past, international Christmas and Hanukkah observations were often the focus. While BOCES 2 students continue to learn about these familiar holidays, they now learn about diverse cultural traditions like Kwanzaa, Diwali, Omisoka and Ramadan.

“BOCES 2 classrooms include students and staff who reflect society’s increasingly rich mix of backgrounds, ethnicities, beliefs, family history and customs,” said Department for Exceptional Children Director Barb Martorana. “It’s important that they all learn to understand, value and respect our differences. As educators, we can help facilitate this appreciation and celebration of our shared humanity.”



In the Department for Exceptional Children, teachers are expanding student experience of cultural diversity with an exciting variety of learning activities designed to build literacy, creativity, life skills and character.

At Kendall Elementary School, 12:1:1 teacher Paulette Semke used holiday themes as springboards for lessons on diversity, reading, geography and math. Speech Therapist Melissa Dibley incorporated multicultural

awareness into skill-building activities like following directions, reading comprehension and verbal articulation.

Teacher Kate McElhaney took her 6:1:1 Medically Fragile class at Brockport’s Hill Elementary on a virtual trip around the globe. Students decorated their own “passports” and used their imaginations (and a video of an airplane simulation) to “fly” their desks to Israel, France, Sweden, Nigeria and Mexico.

“We further explained the concepts of diversity and inclusion by talking about the supports that some of our peers might need that others don’t,” said McElhaney. “For example, some of my students are able to use their own voices while others communicate with their devices. We emphasized the importance of respecting that everyone is different and that does not mean less. It means equal.”

Ridgecrest Academy celebrated Holidays Around the World Bingo, organized as part of the school’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) activities. Students initially read about, researched and discussed



different holidays in their individual classrooms, learning about meanings and traditions. Then they had a chance to demonstrate what they learned in a special

bingo game. “Prizes were given that represented the holidays - like tea lights for Diwali, tiger coins for Chinese New Year, or Hanukkah dreidels and gelt,” said School Social Worker Dean Ashby. “The game also provided chances for students to practice social skills and work together, along with additional teaching opportunities around respect, sharing, empathy and inclusion.”



Students in Darlene Mikulski’s 6:1:1 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) classroom at Spencerport’s Cosgrove Middle School also took a trip around the world, visiting cultures from Mexico to Sweden and learning how children in each country celebrate their winter holidays. They practiced thoughtfulness with letters to Santa that included lists of gifts

they’d like to share with family members - and then found many of those gifts in the Cosgrove Holiday Shoppe, which was stocked with donations from kind staff members.

There were all kinds of projects in Jessica Weese’s 8:1:3 preschool class at Craig Hill Elementary in Greece: even our youngest students were inspired by the diversity of the season’s cultures and customs. They learned new vocabulary words and talked about the meaning of Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. They painted dreidels, made Christmas trees from ice cream cones, and crafted traditional mkekias - decorative woven Kwanzaa placemats.



Despite the cancellation of Breakfast and Lunch with Santa due to COVID-19, our Special Education Parent Teacher Organization (SEPTO), along with partners Greece Rotary and West Central Kiwanis, supported multicultural learning efforts with Winter Holidays Around the World games and crafts. BOCES 2 student volunteers in Work-Based Learning, Career Exploration and Early Childhood classes helped organize the craft materials for distribution.

The pursuit of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) throughout all BOCES 2 classrooms and departments will continue, thanks to the efforts of the newly formed DEI Committee, which kicked off in January. The work of the committee and organization-wide DEI initiatives will be featured in future Together newsletters.

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Editor

Beth Nash
bnash@monroe2boces.org
585-349-9028

Contributors

Ed Buttaccio, Tricia Croce, Steve Dawe, Ashley Decker, Amanda Dedie, Chris Klem, Nicole Mauro, Beth Nash, Lindsey Reddig, Gretchen Spittler

Graphic Designer

Shannon Sweeney



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Monroe 2–Orleans Board of Cooperative Educational Services

3599 Big Ridge Road
Spencerport, New York 14559-1799
Telephone (585) 352-2400
www.monroe2boces.org

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Mission

We provide quality, cost-effective educational services in partnership with school districts and the community in a manner that supports excellence and equity for all learners. We are committed to customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and personal and professional growth.

Vision

Monroe 2–Orleans BOCES is the educational partner of choice. We strive for continuous improvement in serving the diverse needs of our community, helping all students achieve their full potential.

The Monroe 2–Orleans Board of Cooperative Educational Services does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, creed, marital status, veteran status, military status, sexual orientation, prior criminal offense, domestic violence victim status, gender identity, gender expression or genetic status in its programs or activities, and it provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle complaints/inquiries regarding the BOCES' non-discrimination policies: Director of Human Resources, 3599 Big Ridge Road, Spencerport, NY 14559, 585-352-2420, and is also the Title VII and Title IX Officer.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/addresses.html> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481. Please note that those wishing to file a complaint may also do so through the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintprocess.html>. See also New York State Executive Law 296.

An Invitation to Play at Autumn Lane

by Chris Klem

If you create the right atmosphere, where students can overcome shyness and express their creativity – a place where they can freely play with each other – the results can be astounding. One of those magical places has been created in the integrated preschool classrooms at Greece's Autumn Lane Elementary School, where our youngest students are communicating, sharing and playing in their own imaginative gingerbread bakeries.

BOCES 2 preschool special education teachers Meghan Davis and Stephanie Sekaz worked together to design the friendly and colorful bakery activity centers.

"The main focus for this activity is open-ended play," said Davis. "Students collaborate with peers and take what they know about bakeries and apply it to their own play scenarios. Our bakery center is open during less structured times of the day to let students take charge of their learning and feel a sense of ownership with the theme."

The two teachers guide student play with changing situations that gently build new collaboration and motor skills. "We started with making paper cookies this week to practice with," said Sekaz. "Next week, we're going to make gingerbread playdough and use it with cookie cutters in the bakery."

We'd love to see where imagination takes these inventive young minds next!



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