

### ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

2023 was a difficult financial year for CH Trust, as we had to absorb our 2022 overspend, caused by the severe daily price rises incurred in Honduras. I would like to thank everyone who made an extra effort in their giving. It was much appreciated. You will be pleased to know that we are in a much better position this year. With your continuing help, hopefully, the effects of the pandemic and wars can be put behind us. In spite of the problems much has been achieved, some of which is shared with you in the following stories.

### HELPING WITH WATER

It has been a busy time in Honduras. CH Trust has been engaged with the building of three 20 thousand gallon water tanks for the Lenca communities. One was completed just after the last newsletter and two more are near to completion. As Cesar has now gained more confidence in the building operation and the handling of our money in Yarula, we decided to build two tanks simultaneously. This means that every time Cesar and his team make the long journey to Yarula and back in a day, they can check



- ENJOYING A NUTRITIOUS MEAL AT A FEEDING CENTRE -

the progress of two tanks rather than just one. They have to set out at 3.30 in the morning in order to make the long journey.

Yarula is up near the Salvadoran border, in a drought area that stretches through several areas of Latin America. The people live off the land. There is little employment but they can still grow and sell their produce. However, in a year of drought, they suffer very badly. Even in good years, the amount that they can produce is barely sufficient and most children and adults suffer from malnutrition, relative to the world's recognised benchmark. The water tanks will source their water from natural springs. This will enable the people to plant and grow small crops, even when larger crops are not possible in a drought year. The stored water is also piped to serve homes in the area.

What luxury! Plenty of water, even into their homes. It was the lack of water coming out of the taps which I always found so very frustrating when visiting Honduras. As we know, if the Water Authority turns our taps off for a few hours, it's almost panic stations. But that is the way of life for people in Honduras, even for those living in the large towns and including the capital city. So, we are very, very fortunate here in the UK.

### **THE FIRST TANK NOW IN SERVICE**

One tank was completed just before Christmas. The last newsletter in November 2023 showed the tank without a lid. Since then, it has been completed, painted and commissioned. I believe that about 120 people were involved in the building of the tank. Some collected water and brought it to the site, some moved building supplies from the delivery place to the building site and some helped mix and carry concrete to line the inside of the tank. That doesn't mean they were the only ones involved because for everyone that was helping, somebody else had to do their usual jobs in the village. The way the community supported this project really demonstrated how much they wanted this water tank. They worked extremely hard through many long days.

A surprise shared with me was that the village assembled a committee of 10 or 12 people to manage the task, protect the tank from vandalism and ensure that it is properly cared for. If something isn't working, say a pump or valve, funds must be raised to fix or replace the defective component. Most members of this committee are 80 year old ladies! They have many friends and relatives with lots of contacts within the community and, therefore, will have quite a bit of influence when things need to be done. They have also lived a life without a good water supply and truly appreciate its value.

Completion of the project was duly celebrated with a special ceremony. As it is built on a lump of rock, the tank is not very accessible. To attend the ceremony the people



**- FIRST YARULA TANK NEARING COMPLETION -**



**- COMMISSIONING THE COMPLETED TANK -**

had to walk up hill and then go down some steep steps. This accomplished, along with others, the 80 year old ladies walked the plank to actually get on top of the tank! It was here that the celebration and speeches took place. So, the tank is in good hands. They will keep it in good repair, as they know the importance of a good water supply.

By way of a token recognition for their contribution, Cesar asked if he could provide 150 food bags, rather than 120, so that one food bag could be given to every family in the whole village. Many of the families have quite a number of children and truly value any help they are given. Although the villagers built it for their own benefit, CH Trust did not incur any labour costs. Certificates were also given to the man that managed the project and the mayor, who helped with and facilitated some of the process as well.

It has been a joy to support the hard work and dedication demonstrated by this community. The tank will provide water for many families, a local school and the community health centre for decades to come.

## **TWO MORE TANKS IN PROGRESS**

Specific funding had been gathered for one and a half water tanks to be built at Yarula in 2024. Although the last tank was not fully funded it was decided to build the two tanks simultaneously to improve purchasing power and reduce travel. Meetings were held but the work started slowly.

The locals incurred problems deciding precisely where to put one of the tanks. Finally, they decided which would be best of the two available locations. Once started, the construction team worked long and hard on building the tanks, as they wanted to get them completed, or near completion, by 16<sup>th</sup> May. This is the official 'planting day' when the rains are supposed to start. They knew that heavy rains would make the movement of materials, construction and the setting of concrete problematic.

The team worked as fast as they could to get the bulk of the work done quickly. The first task was to clear and dig out the ground for the base of the tank. They only have hand tools and the ground is very hard, so it takes quite a while. They have to use pickaxes to make any impression on the hard earth and then shovels to remove the soil before the major construction starts. These tanks are built with bricks bonded together with lots of reinforcing iron rods. The structure is then skimmed with a very thick layer of cement, both inside and out. The base and lid are made from concrete and iron rods. The lid includes a hatch for inspection and access to the water.

So, there was a lot of work to be done. An awful lot of iron has been put in amongst the brickwork because, when you get a large quantity of water, the force exerted against the tank wall is very great. The last thing you need is any cracking, because any resulting leaks render the tank unusable. Sadly, I can't put all of the pictures in the newsletter but I will put them on our website. These illustrate the various stages of construction, which I found quite fascinating.

As we know weather patterns are rather unpredictable around the world. The last I heard it was still very hot in Honduras and the rains had not started. By the time you read this newsletter the two tanks should have been completed and hopefully, the rainy season started.

## FEEDING CENTRES

Another ongoing major expense is the food given to the children at the two feeding centres we supply each month.

Much of the money we receive is spent putting food directly into the children through the schools and feeding centres. We spend £800 a month feeding children through the two feeding centres, one in Pedrigal and the other on the north coast. These are both run by churches and their volunteers. Cesar also provides food to several schools, some of which are feeding children additional to their own school. For example, Sabaneta school feeds students from Chiquistepe, who have to walk a long distance to attend the equivalent of a UK secondary school at Naranjal. They are invited three times a week to call in at Sabaneta, where they will be given a meal. Macuelizo school also feeds many of the poorest children in the area, some of which are not school pupils.

To help this situation, extra food is given to the school kitchen. This is supplemented by any food that anybody gives them. This can happen when there is a good harvest but not always. Sabaneta has a good school garden. Help also comes from Guanacaste school, which provides them with chickens to eat, after they stop laying. They have also received chickens from Hector Medina College. We provide the startup chickens for these projects, eggs initially, then as food. Post pandemic, the schools work together to support each other, as some have land and some do not. Cesar and Juan Carlos drive this scheme. The school kitchens are also supplemented by the fruit trees we have given and planted in the school grounds. These are now big enough to provide fruit for the children.



**- SCHOOL PROVISIONS -**

Each of the schools we provision have received these items. Eggs, rice, red beans, spaghetti, flour, sugar etc. The papers in the photo read ‘Thanks CH Trust England for helping with our dining room’.



**- THE KITCHEN AT SABANETA -**



**- THE END RESULT OF THE MORNINGS WORK,  
SABANETA'S DINING ROOM -**



**- MACQUELIZO HAS ITS WORK FORCE READY TO CARRY THEIR  
FOOD UP TO THE SCHOOL -**



### - SPAGHETTI AT MACUELIZO -

Spaghetti is always a favourite, so different from the food at home. Pasta was always a main item when we sent containers. Now the cooks and children are addicted!

At Guanacaste school the children bring their dishes and drinks containers from home and go to the kitchen to collect their food before going to the dining room.

Guanacaste is serving rice with small bits of vegetables, tortillas and an orange drink.

At the feeding centre near La Ceiba on the north coast, their meals tend to be slightly different from the Valle area as vegetables are expensive. It is too hot to grow vegetables, their main crops are bananas and pineapples which they export. Bread is often given instead of tortillas.



Today's dish at La Ceiba is chicken and rice. They feed 130 children, although on many occasions more usually arrive and do get fed. The children receive food twice a week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Sometimes it is necessary to change the day due to some problem, say, heavy rain or lack of water.



**- FEEDING CHILDREN AT LA CEIBA (NORTH COAST) -**



**- ENJOYING CHICKEN AND RICE AT GUANACASTE -**

## SPONSORSHIP

The two main aims of CH Trust are food and education for the children. The latter is addressed by the sponsorship scheme.

So, how do we provide sponsorship? We started by linking a sponsor in the UK to a child in Honduras on a year-on-year basis. This is how the big charities do sponsorship. People like it, because many sponsors enjoy the continuity and overview of one child as they progress through their education. However, CH Trust is not able to offer the same level of feedback as the larger charities, whose donations pay for adults to help in the writing of letters and translations before sending them back to base. This is expensive and beyond our resources. We only provide one lot of feedback per year, because every penny donated is spent on the children. We don't have the capability to provide a lot of personal details about each child. However, photos are always provided together with a selection of interesting letters.

To sponsor the same child in a family over several years is not so popular with the Honduran people. This is because the money is only supporting one child per family year after year, in circumstances where there are probably another 80 children who also need help, possibly more than the chosen family. Sponsorship may have been provided to help in, say, a case of parental illness. As a result, the mother could not afford, otherwise, to put the child into school. Even though the situation might later improve, the sponsorship continues. Thus, it continues to meet a need but not necessarily the greatest need.

For some time, sponsorship has been set at £60 for the year. Despite large increases in prices, we buy what we can uniform wise with the money provided. In addition to sponsorship, there is also an education fund. Anyone who wants to help children to access education in a smaller way can contribute to this fund. We also top up the scheme with some money from the general fund, as the need is greater than the sponsorship fund can support.

The pandemic has changed education in Honduras, which closed the schools for two years. The children have not needed school uniforms through this period but they continued to need the exercise books to write in, plus the pens, crayons, scissors, glue etc. required to complete their set school work at home.

Although uniform is a government requirement, those attending rural schools will not be turned away, now, if they appear without it. When it comes to those nearer

to the capital, or nearer to the towns, enforcement of uniform can be stricter. In the poorer areas, the teachers are just glad to have the children in school. So, in this way, we have managed to provide education for more children.

Nothing is provided by the school, not even a bar of soap or marker pens for the teachers. Everything must come from home. Each child also has to provide a small amount of money each term, so that the teacher is able to buy display card and paper to put displays up on the wall. Education provision is very different from here in England!

During the lock down, homework was set either over the radio, or by distribution of local school worksheets. In the schools which CH Trust directly supports, we bought printers and provided paper and cartridges, so that teachers could prepare homework printouts for the children to do at home. These were a great encouragement to the children and the teachers. As the pandemic eased and vaccines finally arrived, the homework was marked outdoors by the teachers. Groups of children were given a set time to appear at their school. They would bring their homework, which was then marked outside, in the open air, by the teacher.

The pandemic raised the need for what we recognise as ‘the spreading of sponsorship funds’. The vision here was that without the need for expensive uniforms and shoes, sponsorship money (which would have previously been given to one child) could be spread to provide the basics to as many children as the money would allow. So, the current £60 sponsorship during the pandemic, enabled six children to access education, rather than one, at a time of virtually no paid employment.

Prices went up substantially, particularly just after the pandemic. Now, the £60 is only providing for just over five children but it still means that five children can access education, rather than just one. Without the exercise books to write in, both in class and for homework, together with the required pens, pencils, crayons and glue etc, a child cannot attend school.

Post pandemic, as the education system progressively stabilises, we offer sponsors the choice of staying with an individual child or continuing to spread their money amongst more children. I hope, in this way, we manage to accommodate everyone’s wishes.

By allowing CH Trust to spread the sponsorship money, we managed to help nearly 3,000 children into education during this past year. This isn't just in the areas that you often hear me write about, in the Valle de Angeles area but, also, four locations in the North of the country and others around the capital city where, in the past, we sent items from the containers.

The pandemic has changed the Honduran employment situation from very little paid work to even less. Basic food prices have also gone up. So, for a mother with three school age children, who all need the mandatory school shoes and the supplies needed for school, the cost is daunting. It is in fact beyond many poorer families, the ones which we try to support. When children are helped with school supplies it does encourage the parents to make more effort to send their children to school.

The Honduran education system requires a child to attend for the full year, to qualify for and pass the grade test at the end of year. If they fail the test, they must repeat the whole year again. In the case of the children who received a school supply pack from CH Trust, reports have come back observing that they achieved full attendance at school, barring illness. Can we give them a better gift? The food we help to provide at lunch time is also a great incentive to both parents and children to attend school.

Mick Liggins bravely took over the sponsorship admin after Jenny Smith died, with very little knowledge of how it worked or of the people that have been sponsoring for many years. He did a great job but has now decided it is time to pass the baton onto Judy Davidson. A big thank you, Mick, for all your work at a difficult time for the charity, following the untimely death of Jenny, who did so much work for CH Trust.

For those sponsors paying by bank transfer nothing will alter. Those who pay by cheque will now need to send their donation to:

Mrs J Davidson, Trent Farm, Tenter Close, Long Eaton, Notts. NG10 1HX  
Email: [sponsorship@chtrust.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@chtrust.org.uk)

I would like to thank everyone for their patience and tolerance during this turbulent time. Please get in touch if you accidentally miss out with the sponsor feedback. This usually goes out by the end of summer. Together, we are making a big difference to the lives of the young people who benefit from your sponsorship. A special thank you to those who make it possible.

## ACCOLADE FOR JENNY SMITH SCHOOL

Jenny Smith's school has been declared a school of excellence by the Honduran Education Authority. This is a high honour and something that usually takes many years to achieve. It means that the school is recognised as a principal school in the area. This is the product of very hard work by the teachers. Much work was needed to ready the children for their grade exams after two years of school closure, due to the pandemic.

One of the privileges of a school of excellence is that the teachers cannot be moved by the local authority to another school, against the teacher's wishes, as is the norm. They have a job for life at the school if they want it. Cesar was delighted at this good news for Jenny Smith school and its teachers. He said that they truly deserved the accolade.

## CHRISTMAS PARTIES

The parties take place in the primary schools, which are the focal building in the community. The teachers and mums help. We started by helping six schools but now it has increased. Over the years, Cesar has kept adding just one more school! Now we supply 16 schools, 1390 children. We are delighted to help the children in such a lovely way. It provides a fun day with a much needed meal. But it also stretches the finances. The increase in food costs does not help. Cesar has managed to contain the food costs at the excellent value of £2 per child. We then have to add the delivery costs.



- A CHRISTMAS PARTY -

The parties take place during the long “summer” holidays. This is a nice time of year as the weather is usually dry and not too hot. The temperature rises to the high 30sC towards Easter.

Few of the parents have regular paid work. In the rural areas, much is seasonal and poorly paid. Building and labouring jobs can only be found for odd days in a good week. In Honduras no money equals no food. This makes these party dinners so special, as they come when the schools are on break and not providing any meals for the children.

The food this year was prepared off site and brought to the party, usually by Cesar and his team in the back of the pickup.



**- PREPARED PARTY FOOD -**

The food is coated chicken, rice and potato salad. Served with two tortillas, a banana and fruit charmusca (frozen fruit drink in a bag)

### **PEDRIGAL FEEDING CENTRE**

The Christmas party at the Pedrigal feeding centre. These ladies are dedicated cooks and have provided their own menu for the Christmas party out of their allotted money.



**- THIS SURE TASTES GOOD -**

The ladies who run the feeding centre at Pedrigal feed 330 children. 284 children are in the village of El Pedrigal. These eat on site. Another 46 children eat at a separate location. They feed the children 4 times a week, Sundays at 11 a.m., Wednesday at 12 p.m., Friday at 12 p.m. with a snack on Saturday. From the money we provide, they manage to feed the children for under 12p per meal. Out of this, they always provide some eggs and chicken each month and create a very varied diet. A credit to the hard work of the ladies that cook. Angelica wrote that (with Google Translate) the children love eating the 'birds'. They like the chicken, which they seldom get at home, as the families cannot afford such luxury food. It is easy to think that food in Honduras is cheap but it is not. It is very similar in price to England, as they usually have to buy in small quantities.

Felix, the pastor of the church, cultivates two large fields on loan to him. This year the corn harvest was good and he harvested 20 sacks of corn. The bean harvest went very badly. The beans got sick with a fungal disease but the treatment is very expensive. So, only two sacks of beans were achieved, one for the family and one for the dining room. From the food he produces, he keeps what the

family, consisting of his wife and two sons, need and then he gives the remainder to the feeding centre and people in need in the village. They are a very hard working couple.

Today's meal is flavoured rice with red beans and a tortilla. The bananas are on a cassava banana tree, which they planted in their garden. Again, I am sure the fruit will be shared with others.



**THE LADIES WHO ARE DEDICATED TO THE FOOD THEY COOK FOR THE CHILDREN**

In both pictures you will see a lady cutting green beans and carrots into very small pieces, so that they can be spread throughout all the rice for the children, making it look very attractive. I am not sure I would have the patience, especially as this could be a weekly task. The peelings will go to feed the hens.





- GUANACASTE SCHOOL KITCHEN -



## A NEW CLASSROOM FOR CHIQUISTEPE

Chiquistepe school is one that we have supported for over twelve years. The school has expanded. They now have 80 children, all being taught in one large room. There are six different grades, which one teacher has to try to teach simultaneously. Another classroom is needed but the government will not help. The need was so great that they started to fund raise. Chiquistepe is a small rural village in the mountains. Their ability to raise money in this poor community is limited. They have, however, got together and raised some money. With this, they have managed to lay the foundations for a classroom and built halfway up two walls using blocks.



**- STARTING THE CLASSROOM AT CHIQUISTEPE -**

Unfortunately, they have come to a standstill. They asked us if we could help them to complete the walls and put the roof on. Cesar is in agreement with their request because they desperately need another classroom. I approached one of our donors, who agreed not only to build the walls and roof but also to provide the floor, windows and door. It proved an expensive build, because of the location of the village. Access is by difficult and scary roads, making for unfriendly delivery of materials. There was also a lot of infilling to the uneven land. They asked if we could include a metal fence, so that the children would not fall or be pushed off the wall outside the classroom. The new building is shown in the photo.



- NEW CLASSROOM AT CHIQUISTEPE -

## FOOD BAGS

This year, we have not had enough funds to give out food bags, except to the indigenous tribes. They are the most forgotten and poorest of the people in Honduras.

I received a request from Adalicia, Cesar's sister, for money to purchase food bags for a community down south, in the Choluteca area. CH Trust agreed to help.

Ada wrote :-

The villages we have visited are communities that border the Nicaraguan border. They are very remote villages. It takes 5 to 6 hours to get there by car and another two hours walking. They are villages forgotten by the government. Both villages are very remote places in which it is difficult for people to go out to the city to bring their supplies. There is no source of work and the lands are arid due to the extreme heat of the area. There is no cultivation of any kind. Most of the men live on the remuneration they receive from the planting of melons and watermelons. That only occurs in the hot season.

One of the villages is called Aldea San Felipe, Cacerio el Zapatón in the municipality of Apacilagua in Choluteca. To get to the village you have to cross the river, since there is no access to the street. People transport their food on donkeys or horses. This is their means of transportation. You can see the horses carrying the food you sent

in green sacks. The other village is called Agua Blanca, municipality of Apacilagua department of Choluteca. Here there are 250 inhabitants. To get here you have to get there by boat.



I wish we understood how important the food bags are to these families. They are not just much needed food for the family but also hope. They have been remembered. Many will give thanks to the Lord for this provision. There will be stories of how this food met specific needs but, unfortunately, we will not get to hear them.



The adjacent page shows our team in Honduras taking supplies to the Tolupan people on Monta Flora Mountain. This is a river that they must ford. Sometimes they have to delay their trip when there has been heavy rain and they know the river will be too high.



The roads are very muddy, and it can be difficult to get traction.



Cesar is taking 300 bags to the Tolupan people that he has arranged to meet. He also took another 133 bags. He gave some to people who were near the ford and to a group of workers he passed on the road. Even when they can get paid work, it is not usually enough to feed the family.



**- CESAR, ON THE LEFT, IS GIVING OUT THE FOOD BAGS AND JUAN CARLOS BISCUITS AND JUICE FOR THE CHILDREN -**

When the team first visited these people they were very shy and fearful and never smiled. Many of these people live a long way from the road and have little contact with the world outside of their community. They are now used to the team and are all smiles and joke amongst their own group. They do not all speak Spanish, as do most of Honduras. They use their own native language. They have a few leaders and those that mix with other people who can interpret. This was done when Juan Carlos gave them advice on planting the young trees we gave them on one of their trips.

I have learnt that Juan Carlos, as well as working part time teaching horticulture at the local College to 14-16 year olds, has his own business growing food. I have learnt that he gives a lot away. A man with a big heart.

### **THE STORY OF MACUELIZO SCHOOL**

I was speaking to Cesar and found out some lovely news about Macuelizo school. I learnt that seven years ago there was no school on this site. There were two derelict and abandoned classrooms but no teachers and no children. Cesar knew

that there were children around who were not able to access education because they lacked a school. He hassled the education department and got the school reopened. A few years later the school had grown so much that they were teaching the kinder class of over 30 children in an outdoor corridor, as the classrooms were full of older children. CH Trust built them a kinder classroom, which has that beautiful picture on the front wall. More recently we built a dining room and kitchen and another classroom. In just seven years the school has gone from nonexistence to 190 children. These children come from the poorest families in the Valle area. Many walk long distances down the mountains to attend. There are a group of children who walk for two hours each way to attend. One little girl is only four years old but manages the walk each day. A mother walks with them and then stays around school until it is time to walk home. There is no transport to take and they would not be able to afford it if there was. This shows how education is valued. Due to the great need of these children, we support the dining room so that they can provide meals three days a week. This meets the nutritional needs of the children as well as encouraging good attendance. The more food they receive the more days they can feed the children. Sometimes they will be given food by the community if there has been a good harvest of vegetables or fruit.

### **THREE MINI LIBRARIES FOR SCHOOLS**

There are three bookcases, with books, which will go to three different schools. They are small rural schools that have been forgotten by the government. (The libraries were gifted in memory of a loved one). Such resources are highly valued. Although the schools are provided with a teacher, little else is. The libraries were delivered Friday, which is PE day, so the children are not in school uniform.

We have achieved much with the money we received this last year, despite its difficulties. Again, a big thank you to everyone. Cesar does incredible work with the money provided. With your help, water has been provided to needy communities, many children have been able to access education and nutritious food has been fed directly into hungry children. This has only been made possible with your gifts and prayers.

Going forward, alongside of our core activities, many things are happening right now such as tree planting, tank completion and seeds planted in the school gardens. These you will read about in the next newsletter. Here in the UK plans are also being formulated and discussed with Cesar, considering new projects that might be affordable within the available likely resources available to us. Without your help, of course, none of this would be possible.



**- TWO SCHOOLS BLESSED WITH A MINI-LIBRARY -**





**- CHILDREN READING THEIR NEW LIBRARY BOOKS -**



**- THE BUSY PEDRIGAL FEEDING CENTRE -**



**- FOUND A FREE SPOT AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY -**



**- HANDING OUT SUPPLIES TO INDIGENOUS TRIBES -**

## **DONATION FORM**

Please complete the form below and return with your donation. Please make cheques payable to "CH Trust". Address on the front cover.

I would like to:

- Donate to the General Fund
  
- Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ (Number of children) with a full/half sponsorship for the next academic year

I have enclosed £ \_\_\_\_\_

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## **ADMIN**

### **GIFT AID**

The Inland Revenue has a scheme called Gift Aid where, if you are a UK taxpayer, CH Trust can claim back 25% on top of the value of your donations/giving. If that's you, it would be great if you would complete the Gift Aid details on the back page of this newsletter. We will do the rest. Please remember to tell us if you drop out of paying tax.

### **BANK DETAILS**

To (Bank) Name: HSBC	Sort Code: 40-19-37
Account No: 61589865	Account Name: CH TRUST



**- ENJOYING OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY -**

**GIFT AID FORM**

If you are able and willing to grant to us Gift Aid, please complete the authorisation form below and send it with your donation.

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I would like Gift Aid to be authorised for:-  
(please tick all boxes you wish to apply).

- Today
- Back dated for the last four years
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I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax each tax year.  
I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1

Signature

Date

Address

Postcode

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Please notify the charity if you decide to cancel this declaration or change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax.

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