

# ANNUAL REPORT *2020 – 2021*



VOI

Visions  
Of Independence



# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Unprecedented. Surreal. Chaotic. Exhausting. These are just a few of the words that people use to describe this past fiscal year. Almost overnight, VOI changed how we provide supports. Personal protective equipment, virtual connections, lockdowns, day service closures, COVID screenings, deployed staff from other agencies, and constantly changing public health orders became our new normal. In real-time, we adjusted to rapid changes; no easy feat when there are hundreds of people changing in unison. The image of a starling murmuration, hundreds of birds, moving together as if synchronized, is a perfect analogy. As the starlings fly, they seem to be connected to each other and can twist and change at a moment's notice. Perhaps we were not as graceful as a flock of starlings, but we accomplished impressive things together. Thank you to all of the people supported by VOI, family members, employees of VOI, deployed employees, and board members.

Despite the pandemic, this year held many success stories, only a few of which are shared in this annual report. We celebrated birthdays, tried new activities, worked in new jobs, studied new subjects, met new

friends, moved into new homes, took vacations, laughed together, cried together, and said goodbye to friends. We had to be creative to accomplish the activities that were important to us, but we persevered.

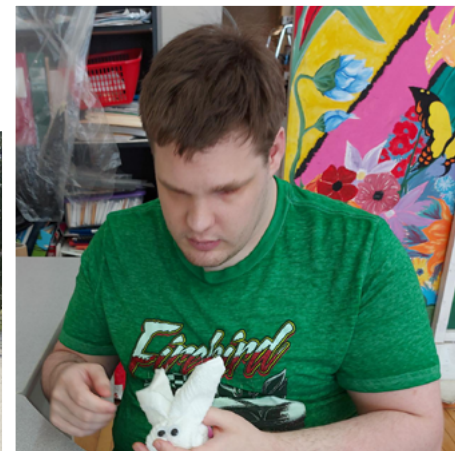
Unprecedented, yes. However, there are more fitting words to describe the past year at VOI. Resiliency. Adaptability. Dedication. Commitment. Teamwork. Although the year ahead is filled with unknowns, VOI will continue to thrive, thanks to the people and communities that surround us.

*Jen & Georgia*



# MISSION STATEMENT

VOI provides personalized opportunities for people with diverse abilities to thrive.



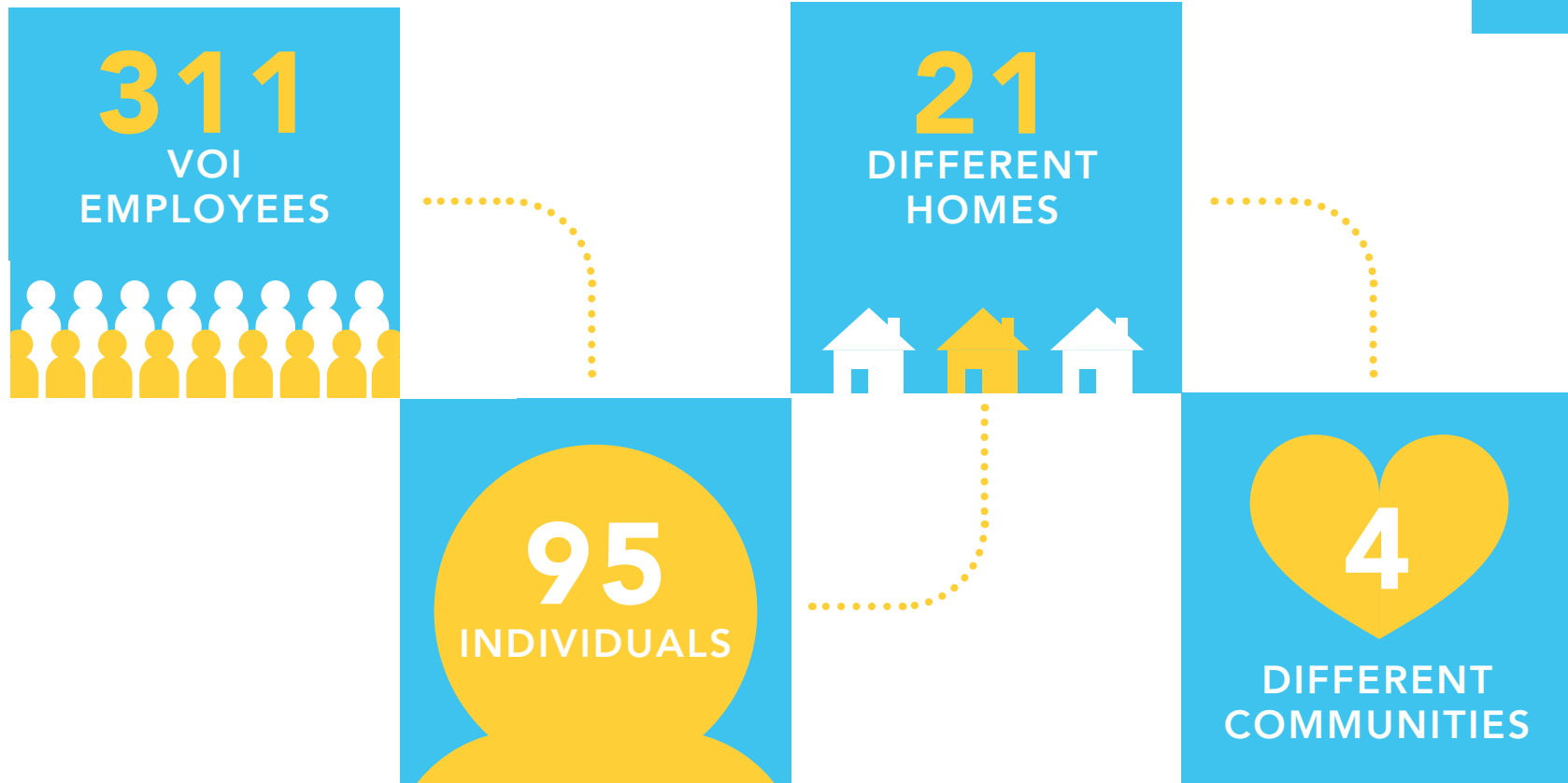


# CORE VALUES

- We are open and respectful
- We are transparent
- We value people's strengths, abilities, and knowledge
- We think outside the box
- We value people's experiences and perspective



# AGENCY FACTS



## SERVICES WE PROVIDE

DAY & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES  
INDEPENDENT LIVING & RESPITE SERVICES

# IN MEMORIAM

Saying goodbye to friends and loved ones is always difficult, but the pandemic came with its own set of challenges when it came to grieving those we lost. With gathering restrictions in place, it wasn't possible for people to come together the way they normally would to celebrate the lives of those who had passed. Many funerals were held with a small handful of attendees, some had viewings in shifts, and others had virtual components so that as many people as possible could safely say goodbye. While these opportunities still provided a chance for people to pay their respects, they were not quite the same as being able to grieve together in person.

Ivan Bynski  
December 8, 1946 – June 20, 2021

Sherry Kraska  
June 9, 1967 – March 9, 2020

Jeannine Tremorin  
July 1, 1954 – April 19, 2020

Brian Delorme  
July 12, 1972 – February 15, 2020

Deeanna McRae  
October 2, 1971 – March 5, 2021

Philip Wood  
April 5, 1963 – January 20, 2021

Judy Galbraith  
October 26, 1966 – May 27, 2021

Deanna Small  
February 28, 1941 – August 18, 2021





## PROGRAMMING PIVOTS

# VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING


As the pandemic set its course, VOI was required to redirect its trajectory to ensure staff could continue offering training and programming safely. The organization had to make this shift quickly and effectively.

In order to offer virtual training and programming that staff and those they support could access remotely, VOI had to flex its IT muscles. The IT team was able to quickly set up things like COVID-19 screening questions via QR codes to ensure staff were safely monitoring before coming to their shift and that those who were being supported were also screened.

The IT team also quickly helped move staff to virtual training on things like PPE use, which the entire organization was trained on remotely in just four days in April 2020!

Virtual programming for those who are supported by VOI was a crucial part of the organization's pivoting to remote options. Many of the people VOI supports, as well as many staff members, found it difficult to be stuck indoors much of the time and not be able to see friends, coworkers, and family members.





Virtual programming ensured that people were staying connected and engaging in interesting and entertaining activities. Virtual activities provided were a collaboration between VOI, the Portage day program, and the IT team.

Some of those virtual activities included:

- Fitness programming, offered by a certified fitness trainer (from Portage la Prairie, MB)
- Music therapy, offered by a certified music therapist (from Carman and Winnipeg, MB)
- Amazing Entertainment, which helped celebrate birthdays and held fun events (from Winnipeg, MB)
- Portage Learning Centre, which offered a work experience program (from Portage la Prairie, MB)
- Recreation Respite, which offered build-it workshops (from Ontario)
- Adults in Motion, which provided a number of recreational activities (from Ontario)
- Canadian Mental Health Association, which offered self-care and wellness workshops (from Winnipeg)
- Community Better Challenge, which provided recreation respite (ParticipACTION across Canada)
- Food Safe program for work skills
- WHMIS program for work skills
- Seniors program

These programs were an important way for those supported by VOI to connect to others and experience new things safely during an otherwise difficult time. Those who are supported by VOI got to learn and see new things, while staff had the opportunity to learn new ways to provide support and programming. Some of the people supported by VOI met new friends from other parts of the country and beyond, and even hope to travel to see them in person one day!





# 1542

VIRTUAL SOCIAL  
ACTIVITIES

# 51

LEARNERS  
ENGAGED

# 144

LEARNING  
ACTIVITIES

# 8

BUSINESSES HELPED  
TO FACILITATE

Training moved to virtual training quickly. This happened so quickly that the entire organization was trained virtually on PPE in four days in April 2020!

VOI is extremely grateful to United Way Winnipeg for supporting our virtual programming. Their endorsement helped VOI to provide hardware, such as Chromebooks, and internet access to the people we support, as well as offset virtual programming costs.

We would also like to thank the IT team and others who were involved in helping to provide access to virtual programming and training for staff and the people they support throughout the pandemic – in particular, Jenna, Grayson, Rehan, and Twylla. Thank you for keeping us on track this year!

# ISAAC

Isaac lives in Carman, MB and enjoys attending church, as well as getting together with friends for coffee or meals. Before the pandemic, he worked outside of his home performing paper shredding duties, and he was able to continue working by having the paper shredder and documents set up at home. When pandemic restrictions were in place, Isaac participated in virtual bingo and fitness classes and spent time colouring, playing computer games, and completing word find or number find puzzles. He also enjoyed watching TV, especially sports like basketball, baseball, hockey, and gymnastics, and listening to music, including country, pop, light rock, and jazz. One of Isaac's favourite hobbies is embroidery, which is something his grandmother taught him. He likes to use his favourite colours when embroidering, which include yellow, blue, red, and purple. Isaac is a great joke-teller and is always ready to share some of his favourites, like: "What do you call a cow who just had a baby calf? De-calf-inated." Now that some of the pandemic restrictions are being lifted, Isaac is glad to be able to see his dad for in-person visits instead of only connecting by phone. He's also looking forward to being able to attend church services again and see his many friends there.



**WHAT DO YOU CALL  
A COW WHO JUST  
HAD A BABY CALF?  
DE-CALF-INATED.**

# JOEY

Joey is from Long Plain First Nation and had been wanting to attend the day program at Visions of Independence for some time. With the support of the day program, Joey attended a four-week virtual training course during the pandemic, which was offered by the Portage Learning Centre. Once he completed the course, Joey was hired at Portage Recycling, where he helps to sort recyclables that come into the facility. He continued to receive on-the-job support from VOI for an additional four weeks and then transitioned into full-time employment at Portage Recycling. Joey continues to be supported by VOI with transportation and visits from a support worker once a week to maintain his connection with the organization. The one thing Joey didn't like about the pandemic was not being able to go out as much and see his friends at VOI. As well, having been in the cadets, Joey was disappointed that due to the pandemic, he wasn't able to carry the VOI wreath at the Remembrance Day parade in 2020, something he was able to do in 2019. In his spare time, Joey likes to relax at home and watch war movies and action movies, help his dad clean the house, listen to country and rock



music, and go for walks when the weather is nice. He also likes to visit or talk on the phone with his mom, Val, who is also supported by VOI. Before the pandemic, Joey liked to play paintball with his friends. With the pandemic restrictions now easing somewhat, Joey is hoping he will be able to reconnect with his friends at VOI's day program on his days off from work.





## LAURA

Laura lives in Portage la Prairie, MB and participated in many virtual activities throughout the pandemic via Zoom, including taking part in a women's group, workout classes, dance classes, and art classes. Laura's favourite virtual activities were baking demonstrations and live music programming, especially ones that included Disney songs. Through one of the Zoom programs she attended that had participants from multiple countries, Laura met a new friend who lives in New York. They spent lots of time chatting, especially about the weather and how hot it has been, and they hope they can meet in person one day. Laura said the worst part about the pandemic was not being able to go out and spend time with friends and family or go to work. Before the pandemic, Laura worked delivering flyers and helping out at a pet store, where her favourite task was feeding the birds. In her spare time, Laura enjoys going for bike rides and walks because she loves the outdoors. She also likes watching *The Young and the Restless* on TV, as well as movies like *Moana* and *The Lion King* and music videos on YouTube, which she will often watch with her boyfriend in the evenings. Now that the pandemic restrictions are being lifted, Laura is looking forward to spending more time with her grandson, who will be turning two years old soon, as well as getting back to work and attending day program activities in person.

# SANDRA

Sandra lives in Winnipeg, MB and participated in virtual programming throughout the pandemic, including group discussions, exercise classes, and even bingo! When pandemic restrictions made it difficult to participate in activities outside of the house, Sandra stayed busy by singing (especially Johnny Cash songs), playing electronic Tic-Tac-Toe and basketball games, and playing card games like Go Fish. She also enjoyed watching TV shows like Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy!, and Supergirl, as well as sports like basketball. Going out for daily walks to get the mail was another activity Sandra did to occupy her time during the pandemic. Keeping in touch with her sisters is important to Sandra, and she loves to speak to them on the phone, write them letters, and send them homemade cards. Before the pandemic, Sandra volunteered at St. Amant and Misericordia Hospital, where she would help people find their way around the facilities. Sandra doesn't mind wearing masks that much, but her least favourite parts about the pandemic were not being able to go out and see people and not being able to get a haircut. Now that some of the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, Sandra is excited about going to play bingo in person and going for walks to the corner store. One of the best things that happened to Sandra over the past year was getting her hair dyed a pretty reddish-purple colour!





## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# SERVICE AWARDS

The phenomenal efforts put forth by all staff this year have been incredible! Their dedication to continue supporting those they provide services to while navigating pandemic challenges and adapting to wearing PPE at all times is truly appreciated. We want to recognize some of the staff members who are celebrating important service milestones this year.

Congratulations to you and thank you for all of your hard work!

### 15 YEARS

Adrienne Sanderson  
Nathalie Valenta  
Irene Stevenson

### 10 YEARS

Wendy Hewitt  
Jennifer Hagedorn  
Posseh Kallon  
Shelley Bell

### 5 YEARS

Terra Huston  
Val Cordova  
Normita Betanio Lanip  
Sara Dayer  
Emmanuella Osinaike  
Joey Anne Clarence Pangilinan  
Jerome Smith  
Bonnie Clouston  
Shannon Nightingale  
Joby Kollankudiyil Jacob  
Twylla McLean  
Roseline Toluwa Adediran  
Bincy Niju  
Wanda Lozeau







T.S.E.N.



## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# DEPLOYED STAFF SHOUT-OUT

In addition to VOI's approximately 311 staff members, we also had more than 50 staff members deployed from agencies such as TSEN, Imagine Ability, Community Venture and Can Do People who helped to supplement our capacity to keep people safe during the pandemic. VOI was very grateful to have this additional staffing and we would like to thank everyone for working incredibly hard to keep themselves, their colleagues, and the people they support safe. Talk about teamwork!

## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# STAFF WORKING THROUGH POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES

We are truly grateful to all staff who worked in homes and facilities where there were positive cases of COVID-19. We are honoured that some staff members went above and beyond to support the staffing needs in homes that had positive COVID-19 cases, especially when staffing was short at times. We thank you and recognize you for coming forward in our time of need. Here are some highlights from a couple of staff members who were more than willing to make the extra effort during a time of uncertainty and unexpected challenges.





# TERRY

Terry has been a Recreational Direct Support Professional at Visions of Independence for the past five years and works hard to ensure that everyone participates in planned activities and that things are organized well with staff members so that recreation activities run smoothly.

Some of the activities Terry helps to plan and run include nature walks in parks, scavenger hunts, fishing, golfing, and trips to the beach. Although Terry normally works with groups of individuals, the pandemic changed the scope of his work quite a bit.

"The day program closed for a while and we were transferred to houses," he said. "For safety reasons, we were only working in one home each, so I ended up working one-on-one with someone."

During that time, Terry and the person he supported would go to the park and sit at a picnic table. They would spend time by the river watching birds like pelicans, since the person he supported really enjoys the outdoors.





Terry also helped the person he supported access virtual programming via Zoom, including things like karate classes, music activities, and scavenger hunts. Virtual programming was especially important when inclement weather made it less enjoyable to be outdoors at times.

Besides wearing masks and eye protection and sanitizing hands and surfaces frequently, Terry also had to help the individual he supported understand why there were some changes in daily routines.

"Before the day program closed, support staff set time aside to explain what was going on, how we were going to go about it, and things like seating situations when in groups," he said. "We also had to explain that masks were mandatory to keep everyone safe in the building."

One of the hardest parts of the pandemic for Terry was not seeing all of the people he usually gets to plan activities for and work with.

"I love everybody's personalities," he said. "You don't realize how much you miss them until they

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*You don't realize  
how much you miss  
them until they are  
not around.*

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are not around. It was hard not to see people, especially when you work with them eight hours a day, five days a week. You really build a friendship with them."

With some of the pandemic restrictions easing, the day program has now partially reopened and Terry is back planning some activities for a smaller group. He said the support staff work hard to sanitize every hour to ensure those who attend are healthy and safe, and he believes the extra cleaning and sanitizing will be something that continues even after the pandemic has passed.

# RHONDA

Rhonda has been working as a Direct Support Professional at Visions of Independence for three years, and describes the people she supports as fun-loving, positive, honest, and enthusiastic. Some of the activities she does with them (depending on pandemic restrictions) include bowling, going to the beach, visiting the zoo, spending time at parks, and going out for meals.

"I try to support people with anything they need to improve their quality of life," she said. "I like to help them get out in the community and stay connected with family and friends. I also try to be an advocate for them."

When the pandemic began, things changed quickly for Direct Support Professionals like Rhonda. Staff had to adapt to wearing full personal protective equipment and had to stay up-to-date on frequently shifting rules and restrictions. Most importantly, they also had to help those they support navigate the pandemic.

"We had to find ways of being able to explain the



pandemic situation in terms that those we support would understand," she said. "They wanted to know why they had to wear masks and why they couldn't see their friends or family."

To help encourage mask use by those she

supports, Rhonda demonstrated how masks help protect people by using a spray bottle filled with water and showing how moisture from outside masks is kept out and moisture from inside masks is kept in.

Keeping people engaged and occupied during periods of having to stay indoors also required flexibility and creativity from Direct Support Professionals, who helped those they support learn to use computers and tablets to connect to virtual programming and their friends and family members.

Rhonda said she was impressed with how well the people she supports were able to cope with the changes resulting from the pandemic.

*“The people we support are absolute rockstars,” she said. “The adjustment for them was abrupt, and they weren’t given any transition time. But they just kept going; they didn’t stop and complain. Their resiliency has been amazing.”*

Rhonda didn’t hesitate to continue to provide the same level of care she normally does, even while facing a variety of challenges throughout the pandemic, including covering additional shifts when needed, constantly adjusting to new and

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*“The people we support are absolute rockstars. The adjustment for them was abrupt, and they weren’t given any transition time. But they just kept going; they didn’t stop and complain. Their resiliency has been amazing.”*

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changing protocols, and trying to keep things as normal as possible for the people she supports.

She shared that she was touched by the acknowledgment she and other Direct Support Professionals were given regarding how important their roles are.

*“It really made us feel good to know that our work was appreciated during a time that was very difficult for us,” she said.*

Rhonda and the individuals she supports are looking forward to things opening up again so they can spend more time with others doing the things they enjoy most!

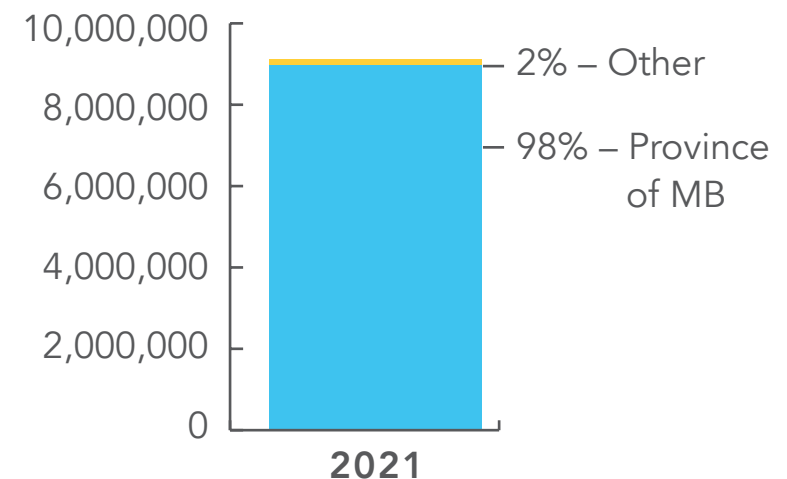


# FINANCIALS

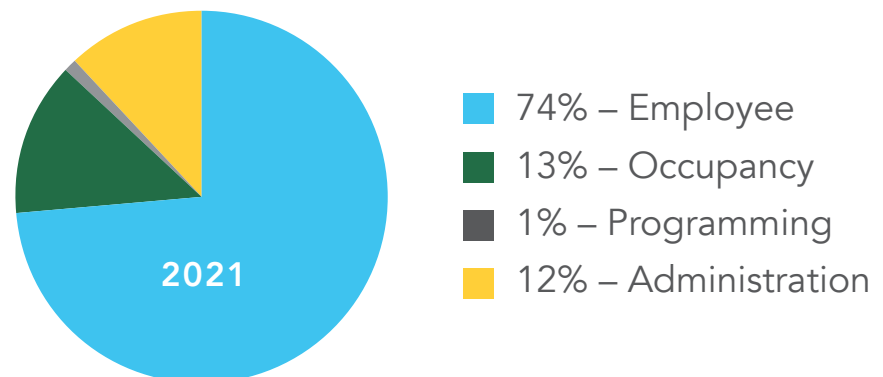
In a year in which normal daytime programming all but stopped, and people were “locked down” in their homes for most of the year, VOI managed to essentially have a break-even year. We are thankful to the Province of Manitoba and to our partner agencies for this (page 15). Although residential funding did not directly increase for the 24 hour in-home support, we as well as our partner agencies were able to retain day program funding, and re-deploy these staff into our homes. This was our life-line, and we are grateful.

*Ven Block*  
Director of Operations

Revenue	2021	2020
Province of MB	8,980,321	8,836,254
Other	138,752	137,292
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,119,073</b>	<b>8,973,546</b>



Expenditures	2021	2020
Employee	6,721,270	6,887,230
Occupancy	1,206,797	1,036,426
Programming	111,880	227,179
Administration	1,065,116	1,007,966
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,105,063</b>	<b>9,158,801</b>



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