



Confronting Mental Health **HEAD ON**

ANNUAL REPORT 2020
July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



Photo by Houcine Ncib on Unsplash

EXECUTIVE LETTER

It is an honor to once again find ourselves writing a message of thanks to all of our supporters of Youth Outreach Services. We are proud of the creativity and innovation YOS has shown throughout the day to day programs at our various community sites, in the youth activities that we plan around our great city, and through the financial growth we continue to see improve year after year.

Following these accomplishments in 2019, the year was soon followed by an unprecedented and challenging 2020 that underscored the prevalence of mental health and substance use issues particularly for youth and young adults. There are a variety of ways the coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated the state of all of our mental health, including closures of schools and virtual instruction, social isolation, income insecurity, and increased symptoms of anxiety or depression. Households were disrupted and daily routines were changed. Communities of color experienced disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths, with increased reported mental health impacts as well.

At Youth Outreach Services, we pivoted to telehealth services and virtual engagements with clients and their families. We double downed to provide social, emotional and mental health support, as well as basic needs and financial assistance. In this year's annual report, we share how we've leaned into our community partnerships and our staff's resiliency to support teens and families.

Throughout the turbulence of 2020, we kept our focus on the youth and their access to care. History has shown that the mental health impact of disasters outlasts the physical impact, suggesting today's compounding stressors and mental health need will continue well beyond the coronavirus pandemic itself. As we look ahead, we will continue to provide new and safe opportunities to youth, celebrate their milestones, and help guide their visions for their futures.

We deeply appreciate your support, and hope the information in this annual report will spur a call to action, galvanize our resources, accelerate greater progress, and lead to more investment in mental health care.

Jamie Noto
Executive Director

Karl Stark
Board Chair

More than 2,700 youths' lives transformed this year!

Behavioral Health Counseling

1,117 youth received treatment for mental health issues or substance use in the community or inside the Illinois Youth Centers.

1,117

In-School Prevention Services

1,467 youth participated in teen pregnancy and substance abuse prevention classes during their school hours.

1,467

Juvenile Justice Programs

151 youth diverted from the juvenile justice system with support from YOS' detention alternative programming.

151

Child Welfare and Housing Support

30 youth from the child welfare system received a variety of YOS services including foster care and transitional living housing, and 18 youth were served in crisis situations related to homelessness or domestic battery.

30

Highlights By Month

2019

January

YOS kickstarted the new year with interactive outings including rollerblading at Fleetwood Roller Rink, bowling, and a trip to Urban Air Adventure Park.

February

YOS co-hosted a youth symposium for 80 freshman students from westside high schools with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office's Community Justice Centers.

2020

April

YOS was awarded the Susan F. Berkowitz Award for Outstanding Service to Children, by the Francis W. Parker School, focused on sustaining healthy learning and development.

March

YOS pivoted to virtual services with a remote workforce as the pandemic began. We launched a COVID campaign to collect PPE supplies for our frontline workers and clients.

June

YOS staff began to return to in-person work, as the agency offered a hybrid service delivery. Families benefitted since we helped to eliminate transportation and technology barriers.

August

Over 30 clients got to enjoy an adventurous hiking excursion and BBQ end-of-summer celebration at Waterfall Glen, in Lemont, Illinois.

November

YOS hosted multiple events including a series of open houses at 3 of our community sites, and a bowling event at Punch Bowl Social, to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

July

YOS employed 75 youth for 6 weeks over the summer as a part of its efforts with the City of Chicago's One Summer Chicago program.

October

YOS's annual Back to School drive successfully collected over 1,000 school supplies and backpacks, through our Amazon wish list and other corporate partnerships.

September

YOS trained its staff in a new evidence-based treatment for adolescents impacted by trauma, called Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

December

YOS staff and clients celebrated the holidays, filled with a month-long of parties and gift giveaways, including 392 donated gift cards and 46 family meals.

Read more about our community impact here:
www.yos.org/newsroom/news

MENTAL HEALTH In a time of COVID

How Our Clients and Families Are Coping in these Challenging Times

With the securing of Paycheck Protection Program funding from the CARES Act, YOS successfully shifted to remote work between mid-March and June of 2020. This allowed us to maintain our staffing levels at 100%. With that, our most important concern facing our programs was the need to strengthen our IT infrastructure and technology, in order to operate virtually. The immense challenge was to quickly adapt in order to pivot to different ways of engaging in clinical services and prosocial activities using virtual platforms. Thanks to funders including Meridian Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, and the W.P. & H.B. White Foundation, YOS transitioned the entire agency to Office 365 and new laptops were issued to staff. Programmatically, it was enlightening to observe some of our clients with social anxiety begin to thrive academically during the pandemic, as a result of social distancing. Yet, others with clinical depression struggled more so, due to the lack of access to activities, such as clubs, sports, and friends.

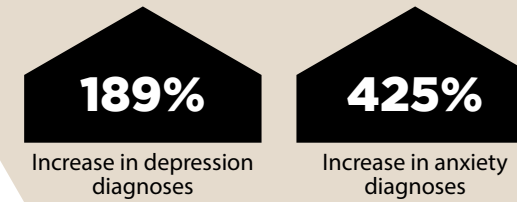
Hear from our staff as they share their experiences in how this challenging time has affected the mental health services landscape:

“The pandemic hit youth hard. There is a lot of anxiety and stress, due to their lack of choice of what happens. Parents, school systems, and institutions make decisions that impact youth regarding vaccines, masks, and closures. Some youth differ in opinions than their parents on whether to be vaccinated or not. **The silver lining of this pandemic is that mental health has become more of a conversation within the home as well as how it affects policies. For example, effective January 1, 2022, students in Illinois schools will be able to take up to five excused mental or behavioral health days (Senate Bill 1577, passed into law on August 6, 2021).**”

“Mental health is often not seen as a real thing in the Latinx community. Some parents initially have mistaken views of what therapy is and what it entails. During this heightened and stressful time, parents are just as overwhelmed as youth are. While we talk through a child’s presenting problems, we also educate parents on what their role is in making positive life changes for the best interest of their family. Family counseling sessions are highly encouraged, where parents attend and participate in the therapy and goal-setting. **It is always helpful for family members to be open to the idea that they may not only a part of a problem, but also a part of the solution.**”

90% of YOS counseling clients, despite the pandemic, who are attending school regularly
70% state-wide average of youths’ school attendance in non-YOS programs

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

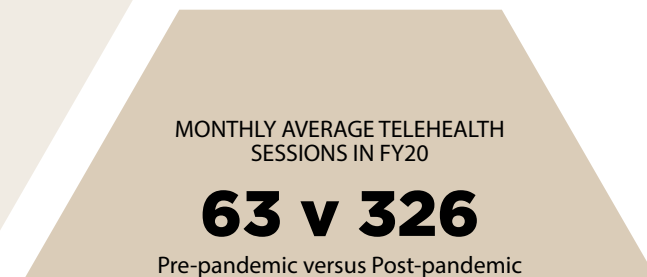
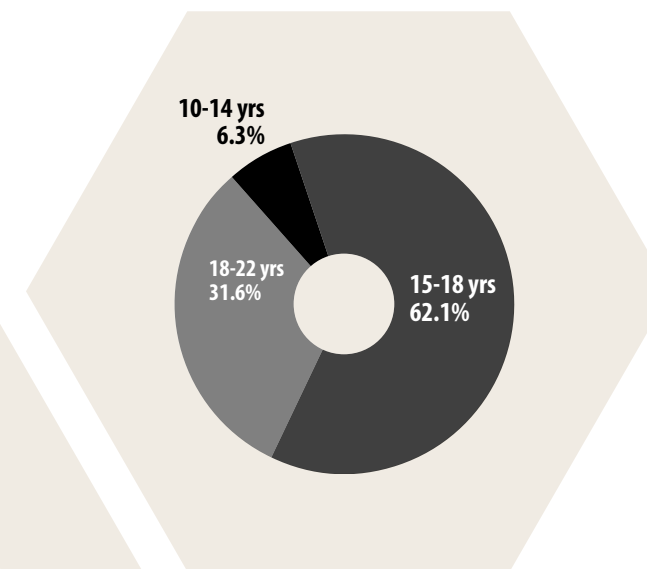
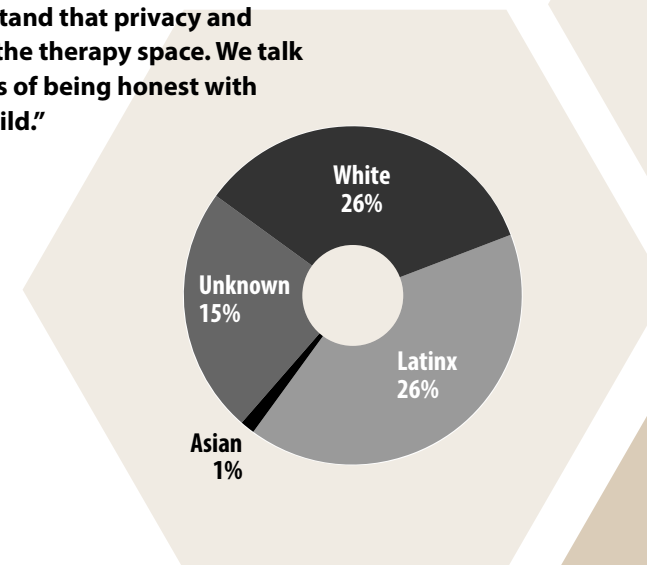
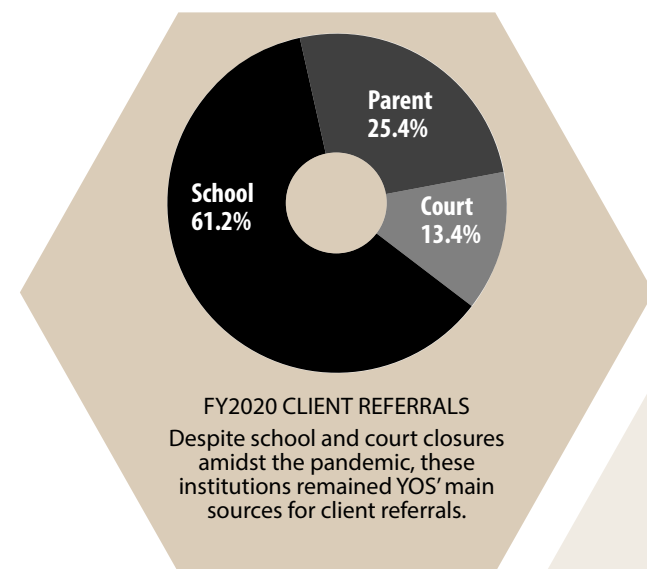


FROM FISCAL YEAR 2019 TO 2020

“Some immigrant families struggle with cultural change. Parents believe that once their child is a teenager, they should be able to take on more adult responsibilities without making any mistakes. Many family members are essential workers and cannot afford to not go to work. **YOS offers a parent support group that educates and guides parents to improve communication and parenting skills, so to better handle troubling situations or poor behaviors.**”

“A huge barrier when engaging clients and families is trust. YOS received a lot of referrals from formal institutions (DCFS, court, probation, schools) and clients are often mandated to attend our services. This is the immediate barrier that we have to tackle with a youth. Many families have a history of not trusting formal institutions, and they feel like the best way that they can protect their child is to keep quiet and not reveal anything. **Our staff works hard to differentiate themselves from the systems that are referring the client, and help them understand that privacy and confidentiality exists within the therapy space. We talk to families about the benefits of being honest with themselves and with their child.**”

“We’ve seen some differing viewpoints in what youth and their parents think about mental health services. YOS always allows youth to confidentially self-refer themselves for services, even if a parent is hesitant about it. There is a stigma in some communities that seeking help is a sign of weakness. In high crime areas especially, showing weakness can be life-threatening. Our staff are flexible in where they meet our clients, sometimes traveling off-site to an undisclosed location so that they are not seen receiving services. **Our staff are also working to break down this stigma by offering community events to talk with residents about our services.**”



How We and Our Community Partners Are Keeping Adolescent Mental Health at the Forefront

YOS knows that mental health and emotional well-being are vital to our communities' health, so we continuously work within schools and the community to provide critical services.

Leyden Township Supervisor, Rocco D. Biscaglio, weighs in that "even before the pandemic, many children and adolescents were living with mental health disorders. During the COVID-19 pandemic, children and adolescents have experienced major disruptions as a result of school closings, social isolation, financial hardships, and gaps in health care access. In these times we need to emphasize the importance of outreach and intervention and support of our youth. We must continue to advocate for and to provide the mental health support that our children and families need to cope emotionally in these tough times."

YOS collaborates with partners to offer a multi-disciplinary approach to protect children by connecting families to mental health services.

YOS is a member of The Chicago Children's Advocacy Center's Providing Access Toward Hope and Healing (PATHH) Collaborative, a group of mental health providers committed to improving the mental health system in Chicago. Through these efforts, YOS provides services for those who may have been abused, including its Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, as well as its treatment for youth exhibiting problematic sexual behavior (PSB). Despite the challenges of COVID-19, YOS had a 69% increase in PSB families served compared to 2019. With very few dropouts, we saw that 98% of families enrolled remained engaged in our program in 2020 despite the shift to virtual services. YOS continues to lead educational forums by offering professional trainings and community dialogues around PSB.

YOS cares strongly about offering accessible services to families and programming that is personalized to their own experiences.

A mother of a family receiving our PSB services shares that "the YOS team has become more than just a support system for our family. They are friends. From the beginning, they have been committed to teaching us how to cope and rebuild our family dynamic while showing genuine love and concern throughout the process. I know that I am free to be vulnerable and honest when I am in group therapy. My family and I know for a fact that we are accepted and never judged. We were on the brink of watching our family dissolve, but this program has given us hope again. Trusting other people is hard, but I am glad I found YOS."

YOS is a part of the conversation, learning from others and responding to the needs of youth.

LiveFree 999 was founded by Carmela Wallace to honor her son, Jarad "Juice WRLD" Higgins. Through his struggles with mental health challenges and substance dependency and his passing in 2019, Live Free 999 was formed to continue the conversation around mental health and addiction. LiveFree 999 is sharing resources on social media, hosting art contests, and funding organizations, including YOS, to provide mental health treatments and alternatives to drug use. When asked what is the most important aspect of mental health today, Ms. Wallace emphasized the need to remove stigma by continuing to talk about mental health openly. "You do not have to suffer alone. You do not have to be ashamed of your mental health struggles," says Carmela.

Connecting Generous People to a Worthy Cause

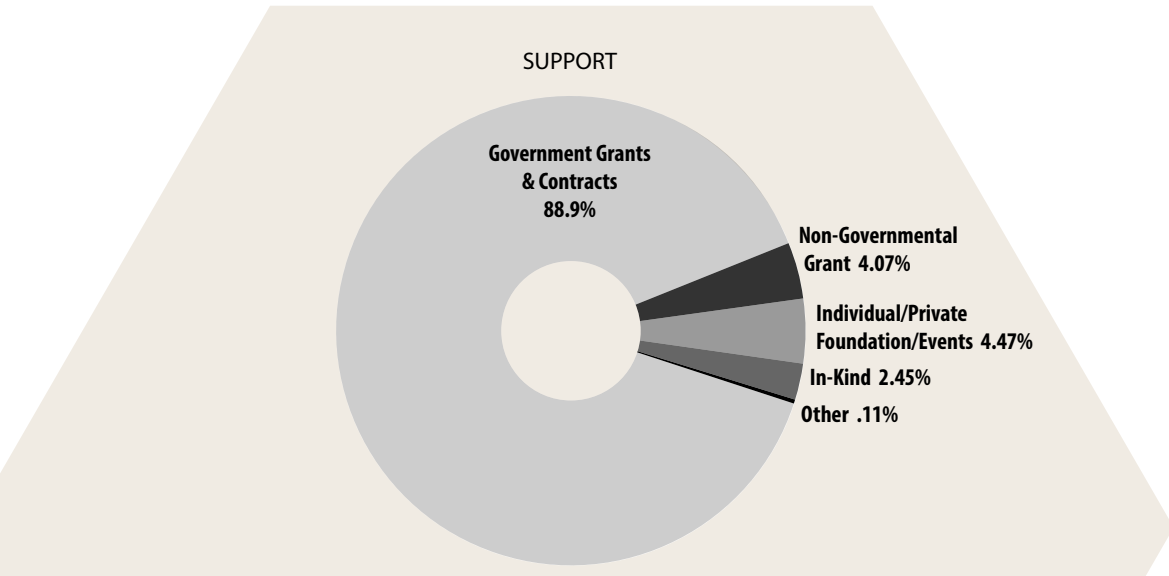
Amongst YOS's various volunteer opportunities is something we like to call Adopt-A-Room. This type of engagement allows for a group of people to make a long-lasting physical impact on our office space. Most of our offices are buildings that we've occupied for years, if not decades. A bit of sprucing up, with some new paint and furniture, goes a long way. This transformation gives our clients a proper space to feel comfortable and safe in, when speaking with their counselor or other staff members. It's a home away from home where youth come to better themselves and to be heard.

In mid-2019, the First Congregational Church of La Grange's confirmation class connected with YOS for their service project after in-depth discussions with their youth about social issues that they felt connected to and that they could make an impact on. Helping at-risk teens was the consensus. Led by Rev. Carly Stucklen Sather and fundraised by the youth and the congregation members, they brought in over \$3,000 to renovate our Melrose Park office's two therapy rooms. Over the summer, members of the class, along with their mentors and parents, came in over a weekend to give our rooms a face lift. Following that wonderful experience, YOS also worked with Mazars USA LLP on a similar project, which has allowed YOS to upgrade five therapy rooms at its Dunning and Pilsen neighborhood offices. Since COVID restricted the Mazars employees from coming into our space in person, YOS staff were integral in the decisions for these enhancements, ensuring the improvements would aid both client and staff satisfaction. YOS is always seeking new corporate partnerships that align with our mission.

Find out more about other ways to get involved with YOS here: www.yos.org/get-involved/volunteer.



Financials



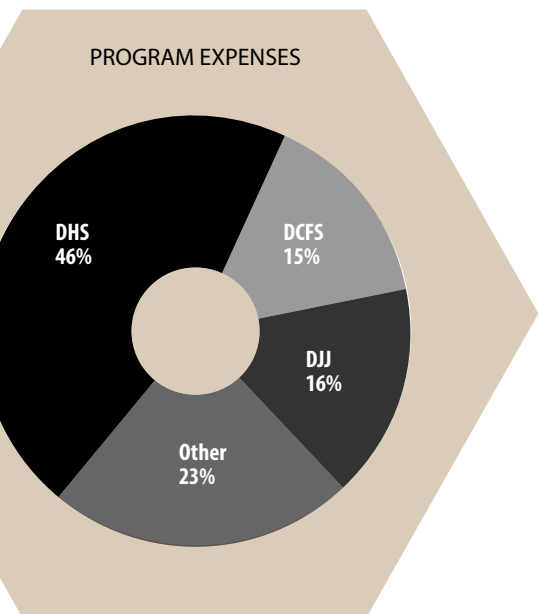
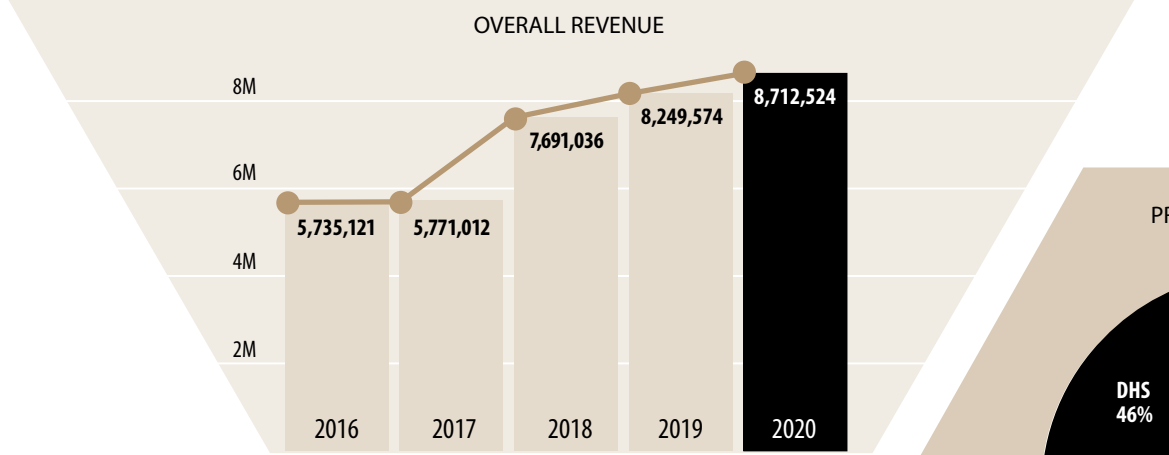
Govt. Grant & Contracts (DHS, DCFS, DJJ, etc.) : **\$7,745,374**

Nongovernmental Grants and MCO Income: **\$354,241**

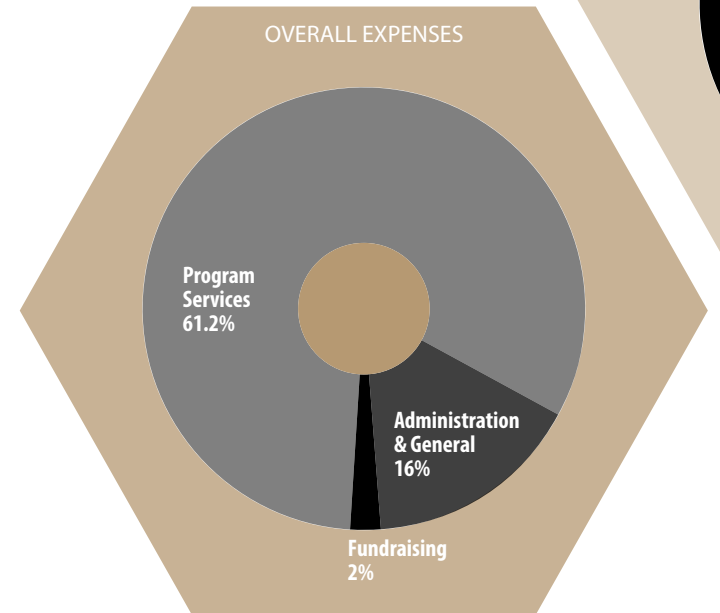
Private Foundations, Individual Donors, and Special Events: **\$389,378**

In-Kind Contributions: **\$213,491**

Other (Other Income, Rental Income, Interest and Investment Income): **\$10,040**



DHS: **\$3,113,116**
 DCFS: **\$1,015,690**
 DJJ: **\$1,074,29**
 Other: **\$1,538,312**



Program Services: **\$6,741,414**
 Admin & Gen: **\$1,311,015**
 Fundraising: **\$125,862**

Thank You Partners and Friends

Your Support Means the World to Us

- \$10,000 +**
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 Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Foundation
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 Charles Krugel
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 Douglas Geiger
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 Melissa Caballero
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 Rachanee Srisavasdi
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 Rosie Hoyer
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 United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey
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 Sky High Sports
 Sleek Beauty
 Target (Melrose Park)
 Target (Norridge)
 Target (State St)
 The Cut by Maurice
 The Lifeway Kefir Shop
 Thrivent
 Youth Act Chicago

Youth Outreach Services partners with corporate groups, organizations, and individuals who are passionate about supporting the success of Chicagoland youth and families. We offer several opportunities for companies and their employees to engage in our impactful work.



Making our communities **STRONGER**



Learn more here:
[www.yos.org/get-involved/
corporate-engagement](http://www.yos.org/get-involved/corporate-engagement)



Committed to caring. **Inspiring change.**

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