



# Maybelle Center



## 2025 Annual Impact Report





**Maybelle  
Center**

# About Us

Maybelle Center is the **Community Health Organization** working together with neighbors in downtown Portland to reverse the root causes of social isolation. We promote social health by helping create a sense of belonging with adults facing the stigmas of mental health and financial poverty.

## FAQ

**Q:** Who is a Member?

**A:** In some circles, "membership" suggests exclusivity. Here, it means belonging. Our Neighborhood Programs create welcoming spaces tailored to the unique needs of our neighbors facing mental health or financial stigma. We call participants "**Members**" because they're not just part of a program—they're part of the Maybelle Center Community.

## Social Health Outreach

**Neighborhood Programs** bridge social health gaps by building spaces and opportunities for belonging that prioritize neighbors facing stigmas of mental health and financial poverty. Our partnerships with residents in 35+ affordable housing buildings are a key part of wrap-around services that improve well-being and housing stability.

## Assisted Living

**Macdonald Residence** is our 54-unit assisted living facility exclusively serving Medicaid-eligible adults. We offer high-quality care that cultivates a sense of belonging while meeting complex behavioral health and assisted living needs.

## Affordable Apartments

**Macdonald West** offers 42 affordable studio apartments in Old Town. Our on-site Resident Services Team promotes housing stability and well-being by preventing eviction, connecting residents to community resources, and fostering social health through Maybelle Center programs.

**Building a Portland  
where everyone belongs.**

# Letter from the Executive Director

## Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We're nearly three-quarters through what has been an incredibly turbulent year for nonprofits. Yet because of you, 2025 has been a year of resilience and lasting impact.

Maybelle Center is increasingly being recognized for our innovative approaches to care. This year, we were one of only two nonprofits selected by county and state leaders to host a delegation from Taiwan's Ministry of Health and Welfare. And during a housing provider meeting this summer with Mayor Keith Wilson, participants lifted up Macdonald Residence Assisted Living as exactly the kind of solution Portland needs more of.

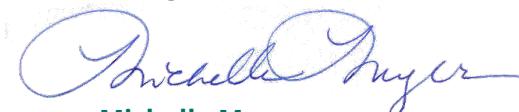
One of the biggest projects of the year has been adding a second elevator at Macdonald Residence. Most Residents rely on mobility devices, but older elevators weren't built to handle the weight of today's powerchairs and the rising number of users. Breakdowns became all too common—leaving Residents stranded, staff using emergency evacuation chairs to assist Residents up and down stairs, and dignity lost. At one point, a Resident even shared with the media that it left them feeling 'like a prisoner.' Not the kind of publicity we want!

Thanks to you, we're just weeks away from solving this. With less than 10% left to raise on the \$5.5 million project, our second elevator is about to open—restoring independence, reducing wait times, and providing consistent access to every floor. I hope you'll join me at our **Ribbon-Cutting Celebration on January 22, 2026.**

Of course, challenges remain. Operating a 100% Medicaid assisted living facility grows more complex each year, especially as more Residents arrive with acute health needs after experiencing chronic homelessness, mental health challenges, or substance use. Starting in November, an increased State contract will help address rising care costs, but your partnership remains essential to bridge the gap between funding and the true cost of care.

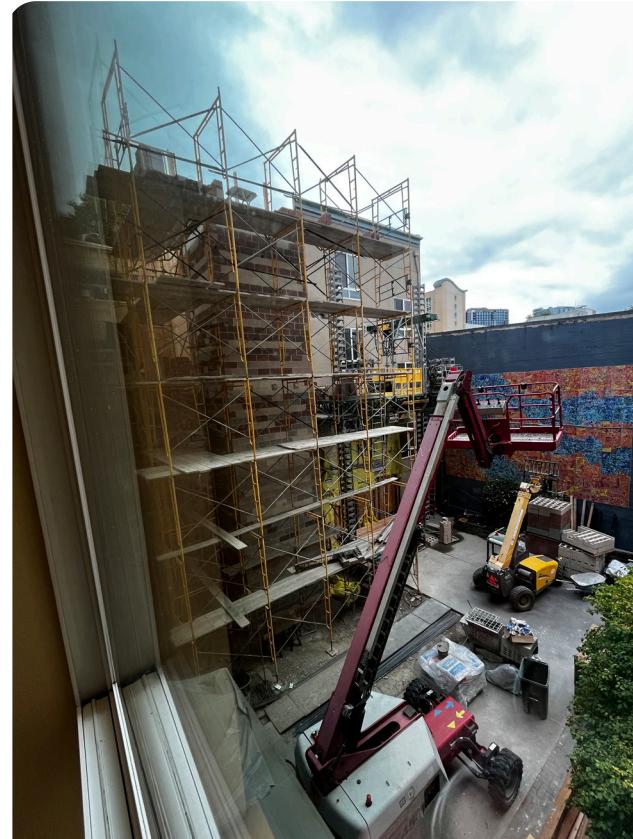
As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, the need for safe, affordable housing and true belonging in Portland is only increasing. Together—with resilience—we can meet it.

With gratitude,



Michelle Meyer

Executive Director, Maybelle Center



*A fourth-floor view of the new elevator construction in Macdonald Residence Assisted Living.*



# Maybelle Center's Blueprint for Belonging

With your support, we're building a Portland where everyone belongs—guided by the science of belonging.



## Plumbing & Power Bringing belonging to life

Behind the scenes, proven practices keep belonging flowing:

- ① **Targeted Universalism**—one goal, tailored approaches
- ② **Bridging** across difference
- ③ **Lifting Member Voices** to reshape who belongs
- ④ **Arts and Culture** to foster identity and meaning
- ⑤ **Always Practicing** trauma-informed care



## "Proving" our Programs make a difference

We measure impact using the *Belonging Barometer* assessment, which helps us understand how Members experience belonging

Early results show 65% of Members now feel true belonging at Maybelle Center—compared to new Members who begin in the “ambiguity” range when describing belonging in their local community.



## Prospective Members Portlanders who:

- Seek greater belonging
- Are low-income
- Live in downtown affordable housing (or can access the Center)
- Often face exclusion from social spaces due to stigmas around mental health, substance use, chronic illness, or trauma

## At Maybelle Center, belonging isn't left out.

Our evidence-based model focuses our Neighborhood Programs on neighbors facing financial hardship or mental health challenges.



## Situation-Crafting for belonging

Experiences that activate the blocks

Every class, group, and event is designed to activate at least two building blocks—tailored to neighbors living with mental illness or financial hardship. Together, our Neighborhood Programs engage all nine, nurturing every aspect of belonging.

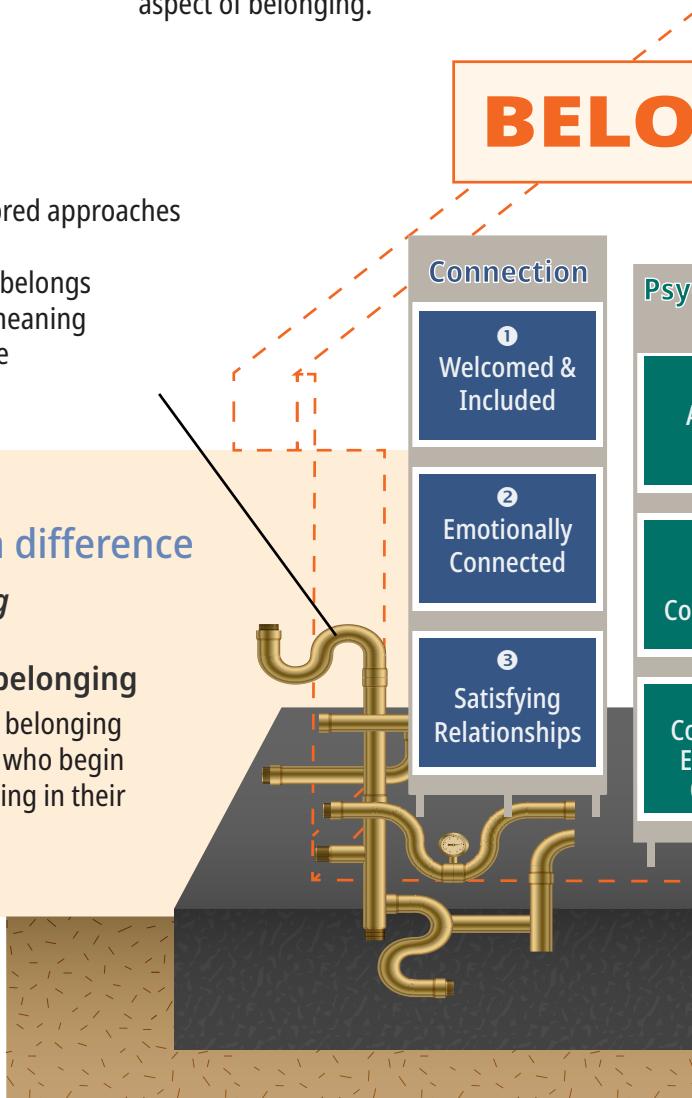
**BELO**

### Connection

- ① Welcomed & Included

- ② Emotionally Connected

- ③ Satisfying Relationships



# ft to chance—it's built into everything we do.

ighborhood Programs where it will have the greatest impact, ensuring mental health stigma find welcoming spaces where they feel seen, heard, and valued.

ng



## NGING

chological Safety

④ Authentic Self

⑤ Valued contributions

⑥ Comfortable expressing Opinions

### Co-Creation

⑦ Equal Treatment

⑧ Insider Knowledge

⑨ Influence Decision-Making



## Building Blocks of belonging

Belonging is built brick by brick

Each support column is made up of three building blocks—essential elements people need to truly belong.



## Columns | Core belonging supports

Belonging takes more than good intentions

Three core columns provide structure and stability for environments where belonging can grow.



## A Proven Framework for belonging

Built on the *Belonging Barometer*, the most comprehensive study of belonging to date

Maybelle Center was the first in Portland, and among the first nationally, to put this research into action—earning recognition as “ahead of the curve.”



## Our Foundation The science of belonging

Belonging isn't just a feeling—it's as vital to health as food and shelter

It's the foundation of social health, fueling both mental and physical health, and strengthening our communities.

## The Groundwork Our history

For 30+ years, Maybelle Center has been a leader in social health, developing proven ways to reduce isolation

What began in 1991 with one-to-one visits has grown into a nationally recognized model of assisted living and affordable housing outreach—ensuring people feel seen, heard, and valued.



Maybelle Center



Av, longtime Member and avid singer, leads a sing-along during a summer picnic in the North Park Blocks.

# “Our Community Living Room”

## Belonging Through a Member’s Eyes

**Q: Can you tell me about a time when you felt you belonged?**

**AV (Maybelle Center Member):** “Jeez, every time I come in to Maybelle Center. I share different aspects of my life, little by little. A lot of us don’t have living rooms. The single room occupancies and studios don’t have a living room, so it’s powerful when you have a community living room. Because we don’t really have the space to conduct what we normally would. Like, planning on what we’re gonna do for each other’s birthdays, going to movies, and you know, of course, having tea and coffee and whatnot.”

That Maybelle Center has been here so long, I think that really helps us. ‘Cause it is stressful when so many other programs don’t last, and that makes it even more critical to have. The safety and security of the foundation that Maybelle Center is still here, that we can depend on it, helps our psyche in having that trust.”

## How We Know Our Programs Are Making a Difference

Maybelle Center is the first organization in Oregon—and among the first in the nation—to use the *Belonging Barometer*, a leading tool for measuring belonging in a community setting. This 10-question survey helps us understand how Members experience connection and belonging at Maybelle Center. Scores fall into three categories:

**1-2.3: Exclusion**

**2.3-3.7: Ambiguity**

**3.7-5: Belonging**

Early results are promising: **65% of Members reported experiencing true belonging at Maybelle Center, with an average score of 4.1**—evidence that Neighborhood Programs are creating spaces where belonging can take root and grow.



Belonging is more than a feeling—it’s the foundation of social health and a key driver of mental and physical well-being. When belonging grows, so do the conditions for individual and community health. In contrast, during the first five months of assessing new Members’ initial sense of belonging in their local communities, all scored within the ambiguity range.

These early results reflect responses from our most engaged Members and serve as an initial snapshot. In January, we’ll expand the survey to include all active Members for a fuller picture of belonging at Maybelle Center.



Our Maybelle Center theatre troupe and choir gave rousing performances during our first annual Arts Festival in August, taking over the stage in our neighboring Star Theater!

## Our First Annual Arts Festival

### Belonging Through Creativity

Thanks to your support, dozens of Members proudly shared their creativity at Maybelle Center's first-ever Arts Festival this summer. Armed with their festival passports, guests journeyed through each stop: laughing with our theatre troupe, soaking in uplifting choral music, listening to heartfelt open-mic performances, and admiring a gallery filled with original artwork.

But the impact went far beyond the performances and gallery walls. Members dressed up for the occasion, proudly stood beside their work, and even sold pieces—sometimes to fellow Members who chose to spend their limited resources supporting each other. Conversations sparked as Members complimented one another's talents, deepening relationships and strengthening community.

For many, it was especially powerful to be seen not only inside Maybelle Center but also by the wider community. As one staff member, Siggy, reflected:

**"I think a lot of times our Members feel really marginalized, and this was a chance to showcase their talents and have them feel seen in a way they usually don't."**



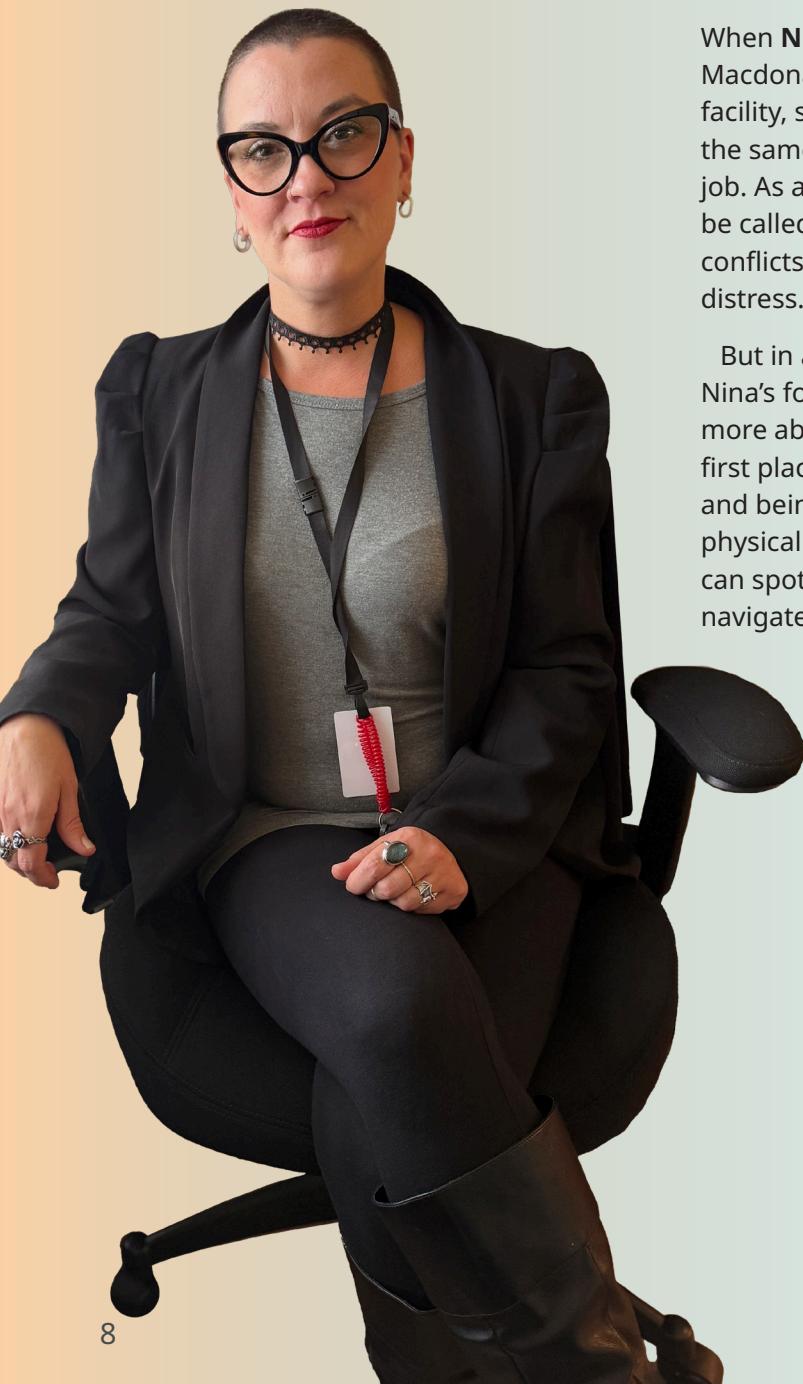
John G., a Member and Zentangle artist, stands proudly beside his work during Maybelle Center's first annual Arts Festival in August. After a stroke in 2012, John discovered Zentangle as a therapeutic art practice that helped him regain fine motor skills. Today, he is even studying to become a certified Zentangle teacher.

The Arts Festival became more than an event. It was an invitation into belonging. Members' contributions were honored, we deepened connections throughout Old Town, and staff and volunteers joined as equals in the celebration.

# Preventing Emotional “Fires” Before They Start

Thanks to your support, Behavioral Support Specialist Nina (and her ten-pound sidekick, Stevie Lix) help Residents at Macdonald Residence find stability and calm long before crisis hits.

From easing transitions out of houselessness to supporting folks living with trauma, mental health, or substance use challenges, Nina’s work helps make Macdonald Residence more than an assisted living facility—it’s a place where belonging can grow.



When **Nina McPherson** (*she/they*) walks into Macdonald Residence, our 54-unit assisted living facility, she knows no day will ever be exactly the same—and that’s one reason she loves her job. As a Behavioral Support Specialist, she can be called at a moment’s notice to de-escalate conflicts and support Residents in emotional distress.

But in a building where emotions can run high, Nina’s focus is less about “putting out fires” and more about keeping sparks from catching in the first place. By building consistent relationships and being aware of how each Resident is doing physically, emotionally, and psychologically, she can spot early signs of stress and help Residents navigate challenges before they become crises.



Nina helped build a vital partnership with Cascadia Behavioral Health. Thanks to her leadership, Macdonald Residents now receive regular on-site support from counselors, a skills trainer, and a peer specialist—ensuring mental health care is accessible right where they live.

"The goal," Nina shares, "is to keep people safe, healthy, happy, and well. And to do that, you have to really know them."

It's the quiet, steady work to build relationships with Residents that prevents escalation. Nina does this one-on-one, but also by leading groups such as *Seeking Safety*, a program addressing co-occurring substance use and PTSD, and a lighter-hearted gathering, *Teatime with Nina* where connection itself becomes prevention.

It's these relationships and attention to small details that can really make a meaningful impact. For example, during a regular one-on-one check-in, a Resident explained he wasn't joining group activities, not because he didn't want to, but because he couldn't read the printed calendar. The fix was small but transformative. Staff began sharing the day's schedule verbally, and the Resident started engaging more. His mood improved, his substance use decreased, and his overall quality of life grew dramatically.

Moments like this show how prevention happens in real time through compassion, awareness, and small, intentional adjustments. "It can be challenging," Nina admits, "but it's worth it. I love that we provide quality of life to people who likely wouldn't have it otherwise."

After three years, Nina sees clearly how this proactive, person-centered care makes a difference—not just for individual Residents, but for the whole community.

**“Macdonald Residence is doing good work. It’s important work,” affirms Nina. “It’s necessary work for people to have a quality of life, and there needs to be more places like this.”**

**Nina McPherson, Behavioral Support Specialist**

Stevie Lix, the ten-pound Pomeranian-Chihuahua, is a valued member of the Behavioral Health Support Team. Her pup-ortunities to shine come often. "When someone's really dysregulated and upset, I'll bring Stevie out," says Nina. "She calms their nervous system and helps them connect. She works hard—she actually needs a raise."



Macdonald Resident Anne smiles as she samples the new tea of the week during Monday's *Teatime with Nina*—one of several groups Nina leads to build relationships with Residents in our assisted living.



## Our Impact

### Neighborhood Programs

### Social Health Outreach

**292**  
Members

connected through  
Neighborhood Programs

**977**  
hours of group programming

from lively Bingo to art classes  
and outdoor excursions

Nearly  
**6,000**  
total interactions

**65%**  
of Members experience belonging  
in our initial belonging assessment

### Macdonald Residence Assisted Living

**63%**  
of Residents

admitted in the past 24 months  
had a history of being unhoused

**38%**  
of Residents

were unhoused at the time of  
admission (last 24 months)

**89%**  
remained housed  
after 6 months

**78%**  
remained housed  
after 12 months

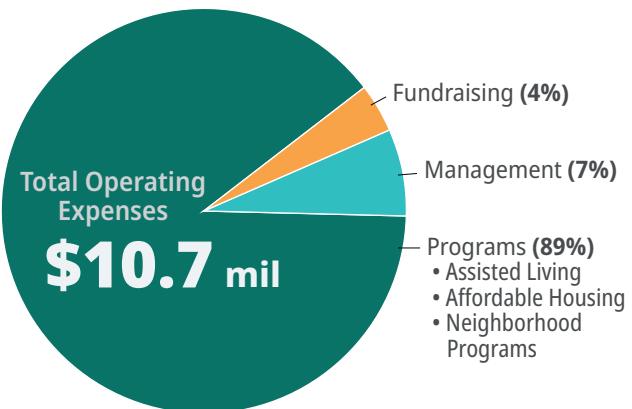
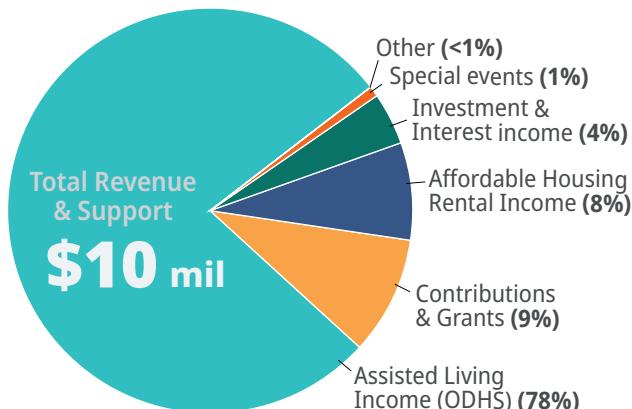
### Macdonald West Affordable Apartments

**86%**  
of Residents  
engaged in our on-site  
resident services

**1,473**  
interactions  
that promote housing  
stability & well-being

## Financial Snapshot

In 2024, Maybelle Center cared for Residents with increasingly complex behavioral health needs, requiring more intensive assisted living staffing and support. With a state contract rate increase taking effect in November 2025, and the steadfast generosity of our donors, we're strengthening our long-term financial stability and ensuring high-quality care into the future.



**Balance Sheet** (as of 12/31/24)  
Assets: \$15.8 mil  
Liabilities: \$1.1 mil  
**Net Assets:** \$14.7 mil

## How We Invest Your Money

## Board of Directors

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Fr. John Donato, C.S.C.

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Wendy Shumway

Michelle Meyer,  
*Executive Director*  
*(ex-officio)*

## Supporters

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of Portland

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 Wheeler  
Foundation

Baby Ketten Club

Knot Springs

Portland Timbers

Straightaway  
Cocktails

Cascade Wine &  
Spirits

Marigold Coffee

Roste Chocolate  
House

Trappist Monks

Deadstock Coffee

McMenamins

Society Hotel Bingen

of Our Lady of  
Guadalupe Abbey

Division Winemaking

Oregon Symphony

St Cecilia Catholic  
Church

Urban Spirituality  
Center

Hopscotch

Pendleton Woolen  
Mills

Stoller Wine Group

**"Belonging means you're part of something. Belonging means people know your name and treat you like you matter."**

Member at Maybelle Center Member Forum



# Maybelle Center

121 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97209  
[maybellecenter.org](http://maybellecenter.org)  
503-241-7374



## SAVE THE DATE!

Maybelle Center Family Reunion Fundraiser

**Thurs | May 7, 2026 | 5:30 PM**

The Avenue (631 NE Grand Ave, Portland, OR)

Mark your calendars for the one night each year when Members, staff, and supporters like you gather to laugh, reconnect, and move us closer to a Portland where everyone belongs.

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