

"With what shall I come before the Lord?...He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

—Micah 6:6-8

## SOCKS, SANDWICHES AND SOUL CARE

Annunciation Roman Catholic Church is one of more than 85 faith communities involved in offering the ICPM Sunday Lunch Program at the Bissell Centre. Flo is their contact person. She connects with the Catholic Women's League, the Parish and friends to muster the many volunteers needed to prepare and serve a hearty, nutritious lunch. About seeking volunteers, Flo says, "There's no end to the help; all sorts of support." The Catholic Women's League makes a financial contribution as well: "A fairly big budget," says Flo.

Recently, Flo was instrumental in arranging for the Knights of Columbus of the Parish to participate in the Sunday Lunch Program. On a trip to the Passion Play in Drumheller, Sunday Lunch volunteers talked up the Program with members of the Knights of Columbus on the bus. Later, Flo followed up: "We really need your help. Will you join us?" She arranged for Pastor Rick to make a presentation at a meeting of the Knights, and for members to come to Bissell Centre one Sunday to "look and see." Flo says, "They are an amazing group of men. Soon they were working like the blazes!" The Knights offered to share in the preparation of a Sunday Lunch, and were present in force to serve. Their tradition of serving amongst the poor in the inner city makes them a welcome addition to the ICPM Sunday Lunch family.

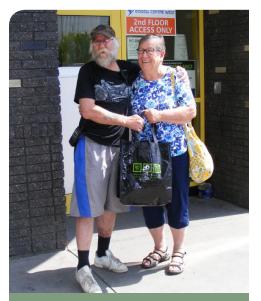
benefits ICPM. She is known as the "sock lady" because she set up a sock drop box in the foyer of the Church of the Annunciation. Weekly notices in the bulletin urge people to purchase socks for the inner city community. Socks are an important commodity on the streets, as damp or snowy weather makes for wet socks and wet feet. A dry pair of socks is a godsend! It's impossible to calculate how many pairs of socks have been offered through the ICPM office and the Sunday services; estimates are in the thousands. Others will say, "What else do you need besides socks, Flo?" She answers, "Underwear, bus tickets, toiletries, if you are able." And in come the supplies!

As if this caring offering of sandwiches and socks were not enough, Flo encourages the Church of the Annunciation to contribute to the annual Emmanuel Christmas Sack appeal. "That's my big one," says Flo. She arranges for the gift sacks and the Emmanuel Christmas Sack flyer to be made available at the back of the church. Soon her house fills with returned Christmas Sacks. Flo inspects each gift sack to ensure that it includes a good pair of gloves, a scarf and a toque, drawing on donations from the Catholic Women's League and friends.

When asked, "Why do you do this ministry?" Flo responds, "Are the people of the inner city not our brothers and sisters? And does not our call as Christians lead us to care for our brothers and sisters? My mission in life is to see each of my brothers and sisters in the inner city, to look them in the eye and acknowledge the face of Jesus in each and every one."

Thank you Annunciation Roman Catholic Church! Thank you Knights of Columbus! Thank you Catholic Women's League! And thank you Flo! Thank you for ministering together in love, to care for the people of the inner city of Edmonton!

> Rick Chapman+ Pastor, ICPM



Flo delivering socks to inner city

Flo organizes another ministry that

## **PASTOR RICK'S REFLECTION**



For several years, I've had the opportunity to work with the Capital **Region Interfaith Initiative on** Homelessness and Affordable Housing, both attending the plenary meetings and serving on the Steering Committee. Central to the role of the Interfaith Initiative is a desire to encourage faith communities to unite across the city and in their neighbourhoods, to advocate for housing builds in their area. Nimbyism (Not in My Back Yard) must be transformed into Yimbyism (Yes in My Back Yard). I believe that a united faith community advocating for supported housing can make a difference—a big difference!

I look forward to making a presentation about the Interfaith Initiative at the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, which will convene in Salt Lake City October 15 through 19. The mission of this organization is to "cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities, and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions, in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world." The first Parliament was held in Chicago in 1893, during the World's Columbian Exposition. The modern series of Parliaments began in 1993, again in Chicago, with a gathering marking the one hundredth anniversary of that first meeting. Subsequent Parliaments took place in 1999 in Cape Town, in 2004 in Barcelona, and in 2009 in Melbourne, the last of these attracting over 10,000 participants from around the world.

Several months ago, I was asked by the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action to submit a proposal for a workshop at the 2015 Parliament. Some 1,600 such proposals were received, and I was delighted to learn that ours, explaining the work of the Capital Region Interfaith Initiative on Homelessness and Affordable Housing, was amongst those accepted by the Program Committee of the Parliament. Sponsored by the Edmonton Interfaith Centre for Education and Action, a team of three panelists will travel to Salt Lake City to attend the Parliament and present the workshop. The group includes Rachael Putt, from the Bissell Centre, Michelle Nieviadomy, ICPM's Oskapew, and myself. We are excited to have this opportunity to talk about the response of Edmonton

faith communities to the issues of homelessness and affordable housing, and to encourage conversation regarding the global need for proper housing for marginalized populations.

How will our workshop relate to the 2015 Parliament theme and subthemes? The Interfaith Housing Initiative offers an opportunity for religious leaders to understand ways of collaborating to address the very present poverty issues facing disenfranchised and marginalized peoples globally. In particular, consideration will be given to indigenous communities, youth, and women as they seek safe and appropriate housing solutions. The issues of homelessness, and of affordable and supported housing point directly to the global phenomenon of the widening wealth gap.

Who will be our primary audience? Individuals and leaders from all religious communities, and from the government, business, community, indigenous, and social service sectors, if they engage in human care and the transformation of unjust structures within the local and global community, will be interested in this workshop.

> Rick Chapman+ Pastor, ICPM

## WELCOME HOME! WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY!

Homelessness is an issue that anyone involved with Edmonton's inner city cannot escape. In 2007, during a particularly severe housing shortage, a camp of homeless people spontaneously formed on a vacant lot behind Bissell Centre. Because of this incident and the resulting publicity, the City of Edmonton launched its 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in January of 2009. The City turned to Edmonton's faith communities for help in carrying out the plan's objective.

In March 2011, a group of 23 faith leaders, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Aboriginal elders, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Zoroastrians, signed a declaration committing themselves to support the 10 Year Plan. This declaration, which was renewed in November 2014, led to the establishment of the Capital Region Interfaith Initiative on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. ICPM Pastor Rick Chapman is a member of the Steering Committee that coordinates the Initiative.

# Here are some of the Initiative's accomplishments to date:

• organizing Habitat for Humanity's annual Interfaith Works Project, in which nearly 400 volunteers from 12 denominations help construct affordable housing;

• publishing a Congregational Housing Action Guide;

• presenting workshops for congregations and community groups;

• promoting the Welcome Home program, which recruits volunteers to accompany and support formerly homeless people;

assisting individual faith communities

to undertake affordable housing developments and community outreach projects.

Until recently the Initiative was entirely volunteer-run. However, funding has now been obtained from the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Community Foundation to hire staff. John Gee of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton has been hired on an interim basis as Housing Coordinator, and a search is underway for a full-time Housing Ambassador, who will educate communities about the need for social housing. These resources will help the Interfaith Initiative renew its efforts, with less than five years left until the end of the 10 Year Plan.

> John Gee, Vocational Deacon Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

## A MESSAGE FROM THE "CHAIR"

Housing and poverty are two issues that confront many residents of Edmonton's inner city on a daily basis. These two preoccupations consume much of their time and energy. Things that many of us take for granted become part of their daily struggle to maintain a lifestyle that allows at least for the basic necessities of life. Unfortunately, for many of the people with whom ICPM walks in its ministry, this struggle seems to grind on year after year. Yet these are our brothers and sisters. These are our neighbours. Our natural impulse, and God's call, is to seek ways to help them. But the daunting question-Where do we start?—often sidetracks us into inaction. So, where can we start?

I have a suggestion for all of us to try. City Council is currently studying a proposal that would make a monthly transit pass available to low-income individuals at a reduced rate. Edmonton Transit currently charges \$89.00 for an adult monthly pass. Under the proposed plan, the pass would cost roughly half that much.

Calgary has had such a plan in place for a couple of years now. It allows low-income

earners to purchase a monthly pass for \$44.00 instead of the standard Calgary rate of \$96.00. But in Edmonton, the operative word is "proposal." The concept was initially brought before City Council last year, and was referred to the City administration for review and development. A draft plan was placed before the Transportation Committee of City Council this past spring, but was referred back to the administration for further review. The proposal will possibly return to City Council at some point this fall. Possibly.

Implementing this program in Edmonton seems to be the proverbial "no brainer." For someone on a limited income, the opportunity to save \$600.00 or more a year in transit costs is very significant. Someone who must choose amongst groceries, rent and transit may be forced to choose groceries or rent, and forego the transit pass. But someone without the means to use public transit may not be able to keep medical appointments, or go to job interviews, or look for places to live, or access a food bank, or ...; the list of missed opportunities could be endless. We can all play a part in making this proposal become a reality. Take the time to write a letter both to your City Councillor and to the Mayor. Ask them to move this matter ahead as soon as possible to a vote by City Council. Ask them to vote in favour of the proposal when it does come to Council. Let's help to make sure that no one has to sacrifice an opportunity to use Edmonton's transit system over the lack of \$50.00 in their monthly budget. (After all, who wants to see Calgary achieve something that Edmonton hasn't!) When you send your letter, please feel free to send a copy to the ICPM office by mail or email: 10527 96 St NW, Edmonton AB T5H 2H6; info@icpmedmonton.ca.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who responded to our "midsummer" letter by sending a financial donation. Your support has been wonderful and heart warming! Thank you for responding to God's call as together we continue to walk with the residents of the inner city.

> John Campbell Chair of the Board of Directors of ICPM

## **ABORIGINAL RELATIONS - THE WORK OF ICPM'S OSKAPEW**

The Inner City Pastoral Ministry's Oskapew role provides both an inner city presence, and an opportunity for the wider church and community to deepen their experience of Indigenous Relations.

In her role as Oskapew in the inner city, Michelle Nieviadomy sees herself as a helper to Pastor Rick during the Sunday morning worship service of the Community of Emmanuel. Once a month she leads that Community in the Standing Stones liturgy, in which a gathering of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people explores God in a Cree context. As well, Michelle believes that her role includes helping in the community in any way she can, and she brings to the ICPM team versatility in community engagement. She has the ability to facilitate culturally relevant programming, focusing on spiritual and leadership development. She brings the community together through sharing circles. She provides support for women, hoping to engage, empower and educate them towards living a healthier lifestyle. She is also available for oneon-one support and home visits where appropriate.

In the wider interfaith community, Michelle facilitates workshops and training, in the hope of building bridges of reconciliation. One of the tools she uses is the Blanket Exercise, which is an interactive way of learning the history of the Indigenous people in Canada. She provides consultation and cross-cultural teaching around Indigenous culture, issues and protocol. Since many church groups volunteer at the Sunday morning service and the lunch that follows, she is fortunate on a weekly basis to have a chance to promote dialogue around the Indigenous way of life and perspective. As a result, she has received invitations for speaking engagements from the various faith communities that volunteer at the Community of Emmanuel.

In creating the role of Oskapew, the Inner City Pastoral Ministry has provided an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to take a step towards walking in reconciliation. ICPM has created a space in which the Indigenous voice and gifts are honoured, within both the inner city community and the wider church community. As the Oskapew, Michelle makes sure this is expressed in a life-giving and authentic way, always honouring the triune God first and foremost.

Michelle can be contacted at the ICPM Office, phone 780-934-7144.

Michelle Nieviadomy Oskapew, ICPM



**Michelle Nieviadomy** 

## **POVERTY IN EDMONTON**

Mayor Don Iveson's Task Force for the Elimination of Poverty in Edmonton was organized in March 2014. While the Task Force is expected to release a 10-Year Action Plan this fall, a study it commissioned from the Edmonton Social Planning Council, *A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton*, was issued in January 2015.

# Please read highlights of that research below.



#### Overall Picture of Poverty in Edmonton

The city of Edmonton has experienced population and employment growth significantly above the national average almost continuously since the arrival of the new millennium. Today, Edmonton is the youngest major city in Canada, with an increasingly diverse population. Yet many Edmontonians have not shared in this prosperity. The most recent data, from 2012, finds that one in eight Edmontonians experience poverty as a daily reality.

#### Housing

Over the past two years, Edmonton was second only to Calgary in having the lowest rental vacancy rate in the nation, and trailed only Vancouver, Toronto, and Calgary in having the highest monthly rents. Unaffordable rents and lack of affordable housing together threaten to overwhelm efforts to end homelessness in the city. While most of the funding for additional affordable housing units will need to come from other orders of government, the City can do its part by ensuring that suitable building sites can be secured when funding does become available. Some of the surplus school sites should be designated for nonmarket housing. Land for affordable housing needs to be reserved in all new neighbourhoods in the city and region. Suitable locations must be found for the type of permanent housing that incorporates onsite supports. Such sites are the most difficult to identify, due to lack of neighbourhood acceptance.

#### **Children and Youth**

The younger you are, the more likely you are to live in poverty. Just under one in five Edmonton children under 18 years of age live in a poor family. In 2012, 32,830 children aged 0 to 17 years lived in low-income families in the city of Edmonton, a poverty rate of 18.4%. Of this total, 14,470 lived in couple families and 18,376 lived in lone-parent families.

#### **Ethnic Origin**

At 28.6%, people from African countries have the highest prevalence of low income (poverty), followed by those of West Asian and Middle Eastern origin at 21.2%. Unlike poverty rates, the employment and unemployment rates of all ethnic groups are close to the overall metro average.

#### **Immigrant Population**

Reflecting Edmonton's strong economy, immigrants who have settled here in the last five years have employment rates almost as high as non-immigrants (Canadian born). Yet they earn significantly lower incomes. Finding a job is less of a problem for recent immigrants than finding a job that pays well and matches their qualifications and abilities.

#### **Solutions**

The City of Edmonton's ability to make significant progress on ending poverty is limited, because most of the required investment must be made by other orders of government. Yet there are three specific measures that can be taken in the short term as a demonstration of leadership in ending poverty. These are:

• Implementing a living wage for services contracted by the City, to ensure that someone working full time for the entire year does not live in poverty.

• Implementing a discounted transit pass, priced at the same level as the existing Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) transit pass, for all low-income Edmontonians regardless of their source of income.

• Ensuring that there is sufficient land for affordable housing at suitable locations. Strategies include designating some surplus school sites for this purpose, and reserving land in all new neighbourhoods.

#### **Aboriginal Population**

The city of Edmonton has Canada's second largest First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Aboriginal) population. With a median age of 26.3 years, the Aboriginal population is almost a full decade younger than the city's overall median age. Despite rising median incomes, Aboriginal people living in Edmonton experience poverty at about twice the rate of non-Aboriginals, and experience significantly higher rates of unemployment. Moreover, the younger an Aboriginal person is, the more likely they are to live in poverty: 43.7% of young Aboriginal children aged 0 to 5 lived in poverty in 2011, more than twice the poverty rate of young Edmonton children overall (18.1%). Adult and senior Aboriginal women have a significantly higher poverty rate than Aboriginal men, and double the poverty rate of women in the overall Edmonton population.

#### Living Wage

Many people work full time but still live below the poverty line. Working poverty occurs because, while jobs in Edmonton are abundant, a significant proportion are low paying. Such jobs are often precarious, lacking job security and fixed hours of work. Low-paying jobs also disproportionately lack benefits like employer-paid pensions and prescription drug and dental coverage. In 2013, over three-quarters (75.2%) of jobs in metro Edmonton were in the generally low paying services sectors, rather than in the better-paying goods-producing and construction sectors.

## **POVERTY IN EDMONTON - MORE INFORMATION**

• Go online to read the full report (Edmonton Social Planning Council. A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton; a report for "End Poverty Edmonton," the Mayor's Task Force to Eliminate Poverty. January, 2015):

#### http://www.edmonton.ca/city\_government/documents/PovertyProfileJanuary2015.pdf

• Watch for the 10-year Action Plan, which the Task Force is expected to release late in 2015. It will contain information on the nature, extent and causes of poverty within the Edmonton Region, a concrete plan for eliminating poverty in Edmonton within a generation, and recommendations to City Council on how to implement the plan.

Rick Chapman+ Pastor, ICPM

## **COMING EVENTS**

## **Hymn Festival**

Sunday, September 20 (2:30 - 3:30 pm) Social Time to Follow, with Dessert and Coffee

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church (13 Brower Dr., Sherwood Park)

The Inner City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM) is holding its 3rd annual Hymn Festival to celebrate the community and ministry of ICPM. It's a great opportunity to learn more about the work of ICPM, and to lift up your voice and heart in praise for the ministry that is made possible by the dedicated staff, over 80 congregations and hundreds of volunteers from Edmonton and area who offer Sunday Lunch each week.

The Hymn Festival program is being designed by Dr. Joy Berg, a Professor of Music at Concordia University, and member of the Board of Directors of ICPM. A free-will offering will be received to help support the financial needs of the ongoing ministry of ICPM.



If you have questions or would like further information, please contact the ICPM office:

#### Phone: 780-424-7652 or Email: info@ icpmedmonton.ca

And if you need a ride, feel free to contact the ICPM Board Chair, John Campbell:

Phone: 780-434-8777 or Email: bluedev1@hotmail.com



# 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions

October 15 - 19, 2015

Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Pastor Rick Chapman will travel to Salt Lake City to attend the Parliament. As part of the program, he and two colleagues will present a workshop and training session on Edmonton's Capital Region Interfaith Initiative on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. For details of the presentation, see Pastor Rick's Reflection on page 2 in this issue of the Newsletter.

Information about the Parliament is available on the organization's web site:

#### www.parliamentofreligions.org/

Links at the top of the page lead to details about the 2015 event. For information about the organization and its history, click "Our History and Future" (in the banner at the top of the page) or "About" (left side at the bottom of the page).

## After the Lunch is Over

Saturday, October 24 (9:30am - 12:30pm)

#### Bissell Centre East, 10527 - 96 Street

An invitation to attend the annual "After the Lunch Is Over" is extended to all Sunday Lunch Church/Synagogue Contacts and all Sunday Lunch Volunteers.

Let's engage in conversation regarding the ICPM Sunday Lunch at the Bissell Centre. The Sunday Lunch Coordinator, the Food Coordinators, the Ministry Team, and the ICPM Volunteers find the comments and suggestions of the Church/Synagogue Volunteers most helpful in planning and delivering this meal.

Sunday Lunch is offered 52 Sundays of the year by over 80 Churches and Synagogues. Without Church and Synagogue presence, prayer and support, a very important meal in the week of the inner city would be lost.

Please plan to attend. Church/Synagogue Contacts, please encourage your Volunteers to attend.

A light lunch will be served.



## **EMMANUEL CHRISTMAS SACKS APPEAL**

#### "No one gets gifts around here, I look forward to getting one. They're a real surprise!" - Rose

Looking ahead, we are thinking about the 2015 Christmas celebrations in the inner city. Once again, ICPM anticipates distributing the Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sacks to the homeless and those in need. As you may be aware, many churches and caring individuals support the annual Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sack appeal, and we are very grateful to all those who have contributed in previous years.

The Sacks are stuffed with useful and festively seasonal items. The gift bags that have proved most satisfactory in the past are Ziploc 2 Gallon / XL freezer or storage bags, 33 cm x 38.1 cm (13 x 15 5/8 in.). The Sacks can be filled with:

#### **Standard:**

- Waterproof ski gloves (Med. for women, Lg. for men)
- toque and scarf
- cotton socks
- comb and/or brush
- shampoo (small)
- hand lotion (small)
- Kleenex (small)
- deodorant
- toothbrush/toothpaste (small)
- washcloth (white in color, as color bleaches into clothing upon washing)

**Delivery:** 

We welcome donations of filled bags, and of items to be included in the bags. All donations should be marked for ICPM, and delivered during the week of December 14 - 18 (Monday to Friday) to:

#### **Bissell Centre East**

10527 – 96 Street NW

during the hours of the Bissell Centre Reception Desk, 8 am – 5 pm **Distribution** will take place on Sunday December 20 and Sunday December 27, during the Community of Emmanuel Worship Service and the lunch that follows.

#### **Contacts:**

Pastor Rick Chapman+ (780) 424-7652 (780) 934-7144 Sue – Christmas Sack Coordinator

(780) 417-3906

Also...Christmas treats and small gifts such as...

- candy cane and/or chocolate bar
- crossword or Sudoku booklet
- little Bible and/or card of hope

#### **Optional:**

- dental floss
- Halls cough drops
- animal treat, chew toy for pets
- nail clippers and/or nail file
- lip balm
- make up (for women)
- note pad and pencil
- hot shots (hand warmers)
- package of hot chocolate or cup of soup

#### Other items needed for the Community Cupboard (not included in the Gift Sacks):

- underwear and long johns (male M & L; female S, M, & L)
- bus tickets
- hoodies

## **STEWARDSHIP**



## **PLEASE PARK HERE!**

We live in a world of no parking signs, a world of restrictions on what we can do. Have you ever seen a parking sign that says, "Feel Free to Park Here! Have a Great Stay!"?

We place no parking signs on our money as well. We say, "This is ours, not yours." We worry about money, so we guard it with lots of no entry signs. While much of our thinking about money is rational and legitimate, we nevertheless believe the myth of scarcity, that there is not enough to go around. The rich stay rich; the poor stay poor. It's just the way it is. Right? Yet we know that there really *is* enough to go around, that the appearance of scarcity exists only because the vast majority of the world's resources belongs to an ever decreasing percentage of the world's population. Maybe as Christians we need to recall that abundance is the way God has always operated, that all of creation mirrors God's capacity for generosity, for giving, for sharing. Do our rules limit how generous we can become? Are we ready to reconsider whose we are and where our money fits into the picture? Are we ready to change the no parking signs?

ICPM's main work is a work of love. Often we don't think of it in this way, but it's true. The weekly worship services, the meals afterwards, the acts of being present when everything is going downhill, the pastoral conversations and the listening, the involvement in our city's social justice issues, particularly housing the homeless, all of these are acts of love. They are outward manifestations of Jesus' second commandment: *You must love your neighbour as yourself.* Jesus declares this to be one of the essential ways to enter God's kingdom. It is not in regulations or tortured rationalizations that we find God. It is in loving generously.

Please consider your contributions to ICPM as acts of love. You may also consider including ICPM in your will as a beneficiary.

> David Barnum ICPM Board Member



You can donate to ICPM quickly and easily online! Go to www.CanadaHelps.org Search for "Inner City Pastoral Ministry". All who donate \$10 or more receive a tax receipt.

Name		-
Address		
City/Town	Prov Postal	Code
Ph	Email	
	Gift Amount \$	



**ICPM Board Members 2015** 

John Campbell	Lutheran - Board Chair
David Barnum	Anglican - Past Board Chair
Nancy Kerr	United - Past Board Chair
	Anglican - Treasurer
	United - Secretary
	Lutheran - Emmanuel Christmas Gift Sacks
	Anglican - Lunch Coordinator

#### Members at Large:

Joy Berg	Lutheran
Linda Boire	
Rev. Nancy Steeves	
Coby Veeken	
Rev. Linda Whittle	
Doreen Bloos	Roman Catholic

### **Ministry Team:**

Rev. Rick Chapman	Pastor
Michelle Nieviadomy	
Linda Heywood	
Annie Johnson	
Tanya Eckenswiller	
Nicole Wiebe	

ICPM Mission Statement

Inner City Pastoral Ministry is an interdenominational Christian Ministry of Presence. In partnership with the community, and guided by the spirit of God, we walk with the people of the Inner City of Edmonton. INNER CITY PASTORAL MINISTRY c/o Bissell Centre

10527 96 St. NW Edmonton, AB T5H 2H6

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