

A young woman with long hair, wearing a dark plaid shirt, dark jeans with large rips at the knees, and a dark bucket hat, stands on a pebbly beach. She is looking off to the side. The background shows a coastline with houses and trees under a sunset sky. A purple banner is at the top left.

The 17th Annual  
*Heart Gallery*

An Exhibit of Rhode Island Children Waiting for Adoption  
2021-2022

# *Children First, and Always*

*Every child deserves a place to call home, a family to be there during the best and the worst of times and opportunities to flourish in adulthood.*

## **~ Welcome to the 17th Annual Heart Gallery ~**

A good night kiss and a bedtime story. A fan in the stands. Someone to wipe away tears or kiss away a hurt. To sign a permission slip or ask how the day went. A safe place to call home with family they know will be by their side forever.

For children in foster care, this is the childhood that they are missing. There are hundreds of children and teens in Rhode Island who, through no fault of their own are in foster care—waiting for the childhood they deserve and a place to call home—forever.

You will meet some of these beautiful children through their portraits and stories that so poignantly capture their strength, their resilience, and their hope.

Our children and teens are caring, creative, inquisitive and talented. They want and deserve the same opportunities any other child would have.

We hope these amazing young people in our Heart Gallery will move you to learn more about the difference you can make. **They inspire us** every day. Life has not been fair or easy for them, yet they still hold on to the hope of a better tomorrow.

**Are you the person to make their hopes and dreams a reality?**

*Thank you for caring.*

Adoption Rhode Island  
290 West Exchange St., Suite 100  
Providence, RI 02903  
401-865-6000 • AdoptionRI.org



**At Adoption Rhode Island, Children Come First, and Always.**

Putting children first and, always, means that no child should ever grow up alone—and no child should age out of foster care without someone by their side or a place to call home.

Children living in foster care have too much pain and suffering in their young lives - through no fault of their own.

You can help Adoption Rhode Island to change lives and give children in foster care the tomorrows they dream of.

While it is our hope that this Heart Gallery will find a home for every child that is looking for one, we realize that not everyone can adopt. But, everyone can help to fulfill a child's dream of a family, and a place to be safe and to call home by supporting Adoption Rhode Island's mission.

### **There are countless ways to get involved!**

Make a donation, volunteer, host a fundraiser, send a child to camp.

Organize a back to school drive, sponsor a dress-down day, host or attend a fundraising event, volunteer.

Tell a friend about Adoption Rhode Island, or bring a group of friends together for a meet and greet.

**However you choose to help will make a life-changing difference for a child.**

For information about getting involved to make a difference for children or teens in foster care contact us at 401-865-6000 or [AdoptionRI@AdoptionRI.org](mailto:AdoptionRI@AdoptionRI.org).

Visit our website to make an online donation and learn more about Adoption Rhode Island [AdoptionRI.org](http://AdoptionRI.org).

## *“I want to adopt all of them”!*

This is a sentiment we hear so many times as our talented and generous photographers try to capture the essence of our kids.

They know their job is an important one. You can read all about a child, but until you look into their eyes and feel the pain of their past and their hope for the future, you can't really know them.

As the photographers capture that elusive smile and that inner beauty, they know they are bringing them one step closer to becoming part of someone's family.

We are incredibly grateful to our devoted photographers, many of whom have been with us since the first Heart Gallery fifteen years ago. They share in our children's desire to find a forever family. We hope you love these photographs, and these children, as much as we do.

## *Heart Gallery Photographers*

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## *Heart Gallery Photographers*

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# Joubert

Photographed by  
Options Photography

Joubert would love “parents who will play basketball and go to the park with me, and older siblings to look up to.”

Joubert is an energetic, high-spirited and humorous young man...the busier he is the happier he is! He is quiet at first but can quickly open up and become the life of the party. He loves being outdoors, building Legos and playing sports. Engaging in physical activities helps him to work through difficult situations. His favorite sports include basketball and football, but he is also up to the challenge of trying new sports and activities.

Joubert enjoys time at the local YMCA where he hopes to learn karate. Swimming is also enjoyable for Joubert and it certainly puts a smile on his face! He recently had the opportunity to try horseback riding and was a natural! He cannot wait to continue riding! When not spending time outside he enjoys playing video games such as Madden Football, Roblox and Superhero games with Spiderman & Captain America.

Joubert would love a family who will commit to spending individualized time with him and loves to stay active. He would do best in an active family who would be able to provide regular supervision, attention and predictable routines. He would also love to someday have a pet to call his own --- preferably a dog to play with.

It is especially important that Joubert’s forever family are strong advocates for him so that he can receive all of the educational supports needed to help him be successful.

Joubert would like a family who is willing to support him in building and strengthening skills while also exploring his heritage and maintaining birth family connections. Could you be the family that will love and support Joubert to reach his full potential?





## *Hector*

Photographed by  
Diane Miller Photography

12- year-old Hector can be described as the kid who loves it all! He enjoys fishing, hiking, video games, water sports, board games, sports, or anything else you might throw his way. If it's not something he has done before, he will give it a try! After fishing, he likes to cool off with an ice cream from his local ice cream shop.

Hector shines in the classroom. He loves to learn and is a science buff! He gets a thrill out of learning new facts, reading, and hands on activities. At the end of a long day, Hector will be there to make you smile, laugh, and remember to stay positive. He loves to smile and laugh and puts a smile on the faces of those around him. Even on the cloudiest of days, he will bring sunshine!

Hector has siblings who are very important to him. Although they are unable to be placed together, he cares deeply about their well-being and happiness. Hector stays connected to them as much as he can and this is something that a family would need to support moving forward. He also has some mentors who inspire Hector to do his best every day. This positive connection is one that can – and should - last a lifetime.

Hector would do best in a family where he can be the only child or the youngest, somewhere that he can stay active and continue finding new adventures!



## *Giselle*

Photographed by Sabrina Scolari Photography

Meet Giselle, a 15-year-old young woman who is learning and growing into her own person. Giselle is sometimes quiet and reserved when you first meet her, but once you get her to smile the room will light up!

She is involved with ROTC while working towards her high school diploma. Giselle has many goals and dreams and would benefit from the consistent love and support that a family could provide.

Between school and her extracurricular activities, Giselle enjoys having down time to relax at home watching TV and chatting with friends. Maintaining her relationships and being closely connected to her friends is important to Giselle. Having a family who can guide her in relationships and help her set appropriate boundaries would be very beneficial as she continues through high school. She needs a family who can give her praise and positive attention to help her build her self-confidence.

Giselle has experienced a lot of loss in her life. Having time to build meaningful relationships that will last FOREVER is important.

13-year-old Christian likes being outside kayaking, swimming, and interacting with animals. He likes building, fixing, and taking things apart. He builds forts, cardboard creations and fixes bikes and RC racing cars. He needs an adult who is handy or likes to build and fix things with him and can teach him these skills by letting him use his hands.

## *Christian*

Photographed by  
Oggi Photography, Julie Brigidi

Christian is easy going, quiet, and enjoys being active and busy. He has the best laugh! Christian likes animals, pets, and especially loves dogs. Having a dog helps him feel more comfortable during transition to a new home. The dog he lived with at his past foster placement slept on his bed, and that unconditional friendship brought him comfort.

Those who know Christian will say that Christian needs a relaxed home. He does well with adults who have the patience to talk things through, teach new skills, have a gentle way about them and are a low-key family. He thrives on the coaching approach of setting limits and consequences in a respectful and caring way. He needs caring adults who will see his strengths, encourage, and support him so he can be confident in his abilities.

Christian is open to all family types. He says he knows that he would be comfortable in all family settings but would do best in a home surrounded by nature and places to explore. Christian has strong attachments to his sister and father, and it's very important to Christian that he stays in contact with them.

If you think your family would be what Christian is looking for, please give us a call.



## *Dianyelis*

Photographed by Joan Corey Photography

Dianyelis, is an 11-year-old girl with natural charm! Dianyelis is always up for fun and is the life of the party. Do you like to stay busy? She has lots of energy and likes to stay active. Whether it is gymnastics, dancing, arts and crafts, or playing games as long as she is busy, she will be happy.

Dianyelis loves painting nails and doing hair. She spends lots of time doing her dolls hair and would love to practice her skills with a loving family. Doing her dolls hair takes time because she has many baby dolls! She takes care of each one of them, showing them the love that she believes a mother should give. She has said she is practicing because she hopes to show love and attention and be the best mother she can be one day.

Having a family to give clear and consistent boundaries and expectations would help support Dianyelis in growing into the beautiful person she is. Being separated from her siblings, it is important that their connection remain intact, and she be supported in navigating this dynamic.

Dianyelis is open to all family types but is excited by the idea of being the only child in a family. She looks forward to spending endless one on one time together!







## *Dilan*

**Photographed by  
Joan Corey Photography**

Dilan is full of energy and spontaneity. At 13, he loves to have a good time indoors or out! Outside you can often find him fishing. Whether you want to join in on the fishing or relax by the lake watching him reel in the fish, he will be happy to have your company.

Inside, he likes to hang out playing video games. He particularly likes Mario Kart and the Nintendo Switch. This is one of the activities he enjoys while spending time with his big brother.

Dilan is separated from his siblings in care and enjoys being able to visit with them and spend time playing.

It is important that a potential family know how important this is to him and be able to support him in maintaining his connections.

As you can see, Dilan loves fun and games! He would benefit from a family who can teach him boundaries, show him love, and help him gain confidence to see just how awesome he is. If you like to be on the go, are up for an adventure, and have a strong belief in keeping siblings connected you be just what this young man needs.....a FOREVER family.

# Alexus

Photographed by  
Oggi Photography, Julie Brigidi

Meet 12-year-old Lexie. She is so creative! She loves arts and crafts, painting, drawing, writing and more. She utilizes these activities to remain focused on the positive things in life and have fun.

Lexie is kind and thoughtful. She wants to feel safe, accepted, loved and appreciated for who she is.

Here is a note to you, from Lexie...

“Hi, I’m Lexie, I love to eat chicken alfredo and I like to swim in the pool. I lllllloooovvvee art. I have a hard time styling and brushing my hair but hopefully you can teach me.

I love pets. And dance classes. I love the YMCA and it makes me happy. I also enjoy movie nights, I really love shopping for clothes and toys. I like being in a hispanic family.”

Lexie also loves to play outside, climb around on the playground, pretend with her friends and her dolls, snuggle a stuffed animal and dance to Just Dance games. She enjoys Friday night movies, puzzles and getting her hair and nails done.

If you like to build Legos for hours, make beaded bracelets or play Minecraft, you would be in good company with Lexie! And if you have never tried any of these hands-on activities, I bet she will teach you.

Lexie has a sibling and other existing connections that are important to her and would like to stay connected to. This kiddo needs and deserves lots of love, someone to stick by her and an adult who will always make her feel safe, protected and cared for. Could this be you?





## *Madison*

Photographed by  
Sabrina Scolari Photography

Madison, is a sweet, kindhearted, funny young teen. She is thoughtful and takes the time to listen to others. Madison likes to engage others in conversations and is very outgoing once you get to know her.

In her free time, she likes to play with Legos, play outside, and listen to music. She likes all different genres of music but she especially loves rap and country! If you like to cook, Madison would love to help! She enjoys being able to cook and bake for and with others, and has even won a culinary award for her delicious food and culinary skills!

Madison has a big, heartwarming smile that lights up any room she is in. She has a special way to make others laugh and smile when they need it most. A forever family is what Madison has been waiting for. She receives extra supports at school and in the home to help her thrive. Madison is ready for the love and support that a family could provide for her.

Her relationship with her siblings is a very important to her and she would love a family that is able to support this connection. Madison would do best in a two-parent household where she is an only child or will have older or younger siblings. Madison is open to LGBTQ families. Madison has expressed that she wouldn't mind a home that had pets! Especially dogs and cats!



## *Yandel*

Photographed by

Oggi Photography, Julie Brigidi

Do you like to be competitive on and off the court? If so, you may get along with this 13-year-old rather well! Yandel is super active and thoroughly enjoys playing basketball and soccer. If you can't find him shooting a jump shot or kicking a corner kick, you may want to look in front of a screen checking out the latest Battle Pass in Fortnite and connecting with friends. He may even be able to teach you the latest Fortnite dance. He is sure to keep you on your toes and smiling. Yandel is truly a kind soul who is helpful and genuine to the core. He is quite the charmer. He wants nothing more than a family to call his own.

Although Yandel can tend to be a picky eater, he is always up for trying new foods. Some of his favorite foods are Spanish rice and beans and pizza. Make sure there are plenty of snacks on hand as he packs a hefty appetite.

Academically, Yandel works really hard to be successful in school. Science and STEM are where he excels the most, as he likes that they are more interactive and hands-on. He's unsure of what he would like to do when he grows up but is thinking about being a police officer. He's been reassured that he has plenty of time to finalize those plans.

Yandel would benefit from a two-parent family, who can provide him consistent structure and routine. Having another sibling could benefit Yandel. Additionally, any family considering providing permanency to Yandel must also be open to maintaining sibling connections. Yandel does have biological siblings that mean the world to him and visiting them regularly is part of his routine. These sibling bonds are unbreakable and all that remains as a constant for them.

## *Robert*

Photographed by Options Photography

Robert just started high school. Just talking about it brings a smile to his face! He says he is excited to make new friends and maybe even start dating.

He is looking to continue his sports career during his high school years. Robert enjoys running track and playing basketball. He is a smooth basketball player, but where he really puts on a show is the dance floor. Robert is part of a dance team in his town. He performs at recitals and is always looking forward to challenging choreography and dancing to one of his favorite artists, Michael Jackson. Robert had to perform online for one recital this past year as classes were being conducted remotely for a while. Robert did not let this slow him down, he kept practicing at home and he was ready to perform when his name was called.

Robert is looking for a family that will share in all these events and memories with him. He is a supportive and loyal friend, and he continues to have relationships with his siblings and wants them in his life as he reaches different milestones despite not living with them.

Robert brings a smile to every person he interacts with, and his quick wit always comes in handy when playing sports or doing anything else that is competitive. He has a resilience that is an inspiration to all that know him. Robert is looking for a loving family that brings joy, excitement, and can challenge him to grow and continue to pursue his dreams.





## *Marquis*

Photographed by ABG Photo Art

Marquies, is a 13-year-old young man looking for a family to help him grow and thrive in life. Marquies is described as lovable, funny, helpful and curious. He enjoys such things as bike riding, building Lego sets, playing Uno and swimming.

Marquies has an interest in taking fencing classes and to travel outside of Rhode Island someday. This young man has learned to utilize some Reiki techniques in order to help find his inner calm when needed.

Marquies enjoys learning about various things, especially topics of all things animals. He hopes to have a career as a veterinarian (specializing in reptiles) or to be a medical doctor. Marquies has a kind and generous heart, a heart he is eager to share with a family that can provide patience, support and encouragement.

Marquies enjoys school. Math is his favorite subject. During his down time, Marquies passes the time away listening to music, reading a good book, watching a movie or playing video games. He has a growing boy's appetite! His favorites foods are bacon, pizza and broccoli. He admits enjoying some sweet treats from time to time and with that you will get your own treat – his big smile!

Trusting adults is not always easy for Marquies as he has endured much disappointment in his young life. A family would need to show consistency, structure, and reasonable expectations along with love and patience. It is important for Marquies to remain connected to birth family, specifically his sister and Grandmother.

Marquies has much to offer and share with a family – could you be that forever family for Marquies?

# Marianna

Photographed by Options Photography

Marianna can be described as a bright, fun-loving, sassy 15-year-old with an inner beauty. One of her more endearing qualities is her heart of gold. She loves to be helpful to others and to be kept busy.

She is a young lady who likes to stay on top of the fashion world. She can envision her older self as a primary fashionista with a wardrobe of white and black along with accessories to make her stand out. If you need fashion tips, Marianna is happy to help.

Don't let this girly girl fool you! Marianna is not afraid of getting some dirt under her nails. She enjoys staying activate as much as possible. She likes playing sports, specifically soccer. Her interest of outdoor activities includes biking, hiking, and fishing. She would also like to engage in gymnastics and ballet. All these activities help Marianna escape (even if for only a little while) the many hardships endured in her young life.

Music, by far, is where Marianna finds the most solace. She mostly enjoys rap but is open to other genres as well. Along with music, Marianna enjoys using her hands in a creative way. She enjoys creating origami animals using her book of origami. Marianna has the hopes and dreams of every teenager and wants to be in family that will support those desires. She wants a family that will see her challenges as an opportunity to provide guidance, show patience, and share love.

She regularly visits and contacts her siblings and has other strong, positive relationships within her birth family that mean a great deal to her. The relationships with her siblings would need to remain intact. Any family that is open to these relationships is a family Marianna wants to be apart of.





## *Rickie*

Photographed by ABG Photo Art

Do you enjoy nature and learning about science? Rickie sure does!

Rickie is a sweet and inquisitive 10-year-old boy who is up for adventure. He especially enjoys learning about different types of insects and trees you can find in nature. Rickie has an infectious smile and a silly sense of humor, so get ready to laugh away! He enjoys talking to others, especially random facts about the outdoors. Rickie likes going to school and enjoys learning and you guessed it, his favorite subject is science!

Rickie likes to stay active and does well when provided with all different kinds of activities. Whether it's playing outside and riding his skateboard or getting cozy inside and playing with his favorite action figures. Rickie's wish is a for a family that loves animals as much he does. He would like a home that has a cat or dog, or other little creatures such as a hamster or bearded dragon!

Rickie has a few favorite foods and is hesitant when trying new things. Some of his favorite foods are cheese sticks, apples, and chocolate ice cream.

It is important for a family to maintain the important connections he has in his life. This kiddo deserves lots of love and attention and understanding of his past experiences. A family who is willing to support Rickie with expressing himself and his feelings is a must.

Rickie does best with structure and routine and would thrive with a family who is able to provide this. Are you this family for Rickie?



## Ryan

Photographed by ABG Photo Art

Ryan is a funny and energetic 12-year-old boy in hopes of finding a family to share his sense of humor with. When not making others laugh, Ryan enjoys reading a comic book or two. He hopes a family would share similar passions of liking comic books, and discussing their favorite superhero, or villain! If you're up to taking a trip to a comic bookstore,

Ryan is a kiddo you want by your side! Ryan has recently picked up playing the trombone. He would love to show you his newfound musical skills. He has even joined the school's jazz club to continue this new passion for music.

Ryan has enjoyed being able to participate in after-school programs and hopes for family to support his interests.

Ryan takes some time to warm up and trust others. He hopes a family is understanding of his experiences and will always support him. He would do best with a family that likes to stay active and do activities together, such as playing sports or hiking.

Ryan would love a home with furry friends, two dogs and cat to be exact! It is important for a family to support Ryan and the connections in his life, especially with his sibling. A family that will support and maintain this relationship is a must.



# The Hogarth Family

Photographed by  
Gene Hutnak Photography

We come from two countries and many places. If you added up the number of times each of us has moved, you truly wouldn't believe the number! Now, we are so grateful and so glad to be together, in one place, a family of five.

If you asked us what makes us a family, we might say our shared love of our three rascal pups & one very unappreciated independent cat. We might say our love of long walks, family meetings full of games, singing, dancing and improv, taco nights and ice cream - we steadfastly love ice cream!

We'd say one or most of us are hams, two or few of us are superb athletes, and three or more can really dance. Most of us like playing games and telling stories and two or three of us are deep listeners. We all absolutely love each other, social justice, lending a hand, and adventuring near and far.

If you are looking for us, we are likely by some water, in the woods or at the beach, seeing or making art, fixing or building something, or finding a way to support anti-racism and queer families full of love.

We believe in actions that are loving, saying we're sorry (adults and kids), understanding and healing trauma, supporting birth family connections and celebrating the race and ethnic stories of all of us. We like church (some of us more than others) and some of us like holidays very much. We celebrate PRIDE year around. Mostly, we like the times we are together being ourselves talking, laughing eating, and holding each other up.

If you are thinking of growing a family through adoption, we say "DO IT!" and if you want to talk to any of us about adoption, we'd love to talk to you.



## *Are you ready to learn more?*

The children featured in the Heart Gallery are just some of the hundreds of children in foster care in Rhode Island right now waiting to be adopted—waiting for someone like you. There are children of all ages, coming from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds—each an individual with likes and dislikes, interests and talents, hopes and dreams. They are resilient and courageous and share a need and longing for love, guidance, security and the sense of belonging.

### **Who can adopt?**

In RI you may adopt a child if you are over 21 years of age—there is no upper age limit. We believe that there is a family for every child and understand that families come in many different forms. Single people and couples of any sexual orientation or gender identity are welcomed as adoptive parents.

### **What is the cost to adopt? What kind of income does an adoptive parent need?**

There is no fee to adopt a child in state care. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is a public agency and offers its adoption services free of charge. Furthermore, some children in DCYF care are eligible to receive subsidies until they are 18 or 21, depending on their needs. There are no income requirements for adoptive families and no requirement for adoptive parents to be homeowners.

### **How do I begin?**

We suggest coming to an Information Meeting. These meetings are held once a month and feature presenters from Adoption Rhode Island and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. You will learn the steps of the adoption process, about the children waiting to be adopted and the rewards and challenges involved. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions. Attending a meeting does not obligate you to adopt or even take any further steps. Applications to start the adoption process are available at the meeting if you decide you are interested. Other routes to take to become involved in the lives of waiting children are discussed at the meetings.

### **What is a homestudy?**

The homestudy will be explained fully at an Information Meeting. The simple answer—it is a mutual learning process. The process includes a series of group and individual meetings between prospective adoptive parents, family members, and a social worker, along with screening and reference requirements. The social worker will learn about you and your lifestyle in order to make the best match between you and the child or children eventually placed with you.

### **What should I know about the children who are waiting for a family?**

Like all children, these children and teenagers will make you laugh and make you cry; they will bring you joy and bring you challenges. They have experienced loss and trauma in their lives that the permanency of a forever family can help to heal. Some have had multiple foster care and group home placements. Our older children who have been waiting too long urgently need a family to help navigate the milestones of becoming a young adult. Some children are waiting with siblings, we try whenever possible to keep siblings together, honoring the importance of these relationships. 23

## *These children have touched your heart. How can you help?*

We understand that adoption is not an option for everyone who cares about our children. There are many ways to join in ensuring that children in state care are nurtured and protected while waiting for their forever family. We need you; our children need you.

**Please call us to learn more.**

### **Partner with Adoption Rhode Island to make a difference.**

Partner with Adoption Rhode Island to give children in foster care back some of the joys of childhood they are missing—and the chance at the future they deserve.

When you make a donation, volunteer, share your talents, host a fundraiser or attend a fundraising event you make a difference for a child who is waiting for the better, brighter future you make possible.

### **We need you; our children need you.**

#### **Become a mentor.**

Developing trusting relationships with adults is critical to the well-being of a child in foster care awaiting adoption. As a mentor, you can play an important role by being a constant presence—to share experiences, to listen, to have fun, to encourage, to nurture hope, and to expand a child's view what is possible.

#### **Become a foster parent.**

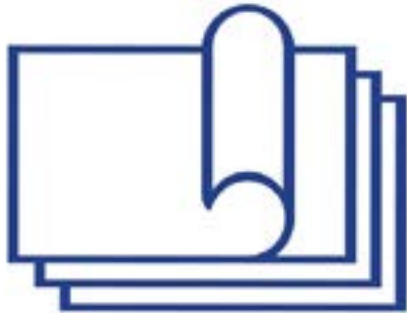
The future is brighter for our children when they are cared for in a safe and loving home while on the journey to permanency. It takes a special kind of love to offer a temporary, home and the love of a family to a child or children awaiting reunification with birth parents, or adoption into a forever family.

#### **Share your talent with a child.**

Help children express themselves through art or music. Support success in school as a tutor, or teach computer skills. Offer coaching or skill development to a budding athlete. We can help you to share your skills and talents through Adoption Rhode Island programs or our connections with agencies serving children in state care

## *Heart Gallery Supporters*

*Special thanks to Printmakers, Inc. for producing the Heart Gallery Portraits and for their continued support of the Heart Gallery*



**PRINTMAKERS.**

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*Thank you to Al & Gerrie Verrecchia for donating the easels for our Heart Gallery display*

*In Memory of  
Edward and Agnes Macari*



**Children First,  
and Always.**



**Adoption Rhode Island**  
Children First, and Always.



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth & Families

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