

# 2005 HFNY Training Institute

What a fantastic HFNY Training Institute! Thank you to everyone involved for all that you did to make it a success and congratulations to all of the award winners for their outstanding achievement and for making work fun! It was wonderful to see everyone together and to realize what an important role we play in the lives of New York's families!

A special thank you to each of the committees who worked so hard to make this a fun and educational experience for all:

- Maria Rosado and the Exhibits Committee. Maria was also responsible for organizing the wonderful welcomes in different languages each day.
- Fatima Abdullahi and the Activities Committee for the basket giveaways, the baby pictures, the DJ and all of the fun activities. Thank you to each of the programs for those awesome baskets!
- Bernadette Johnson and Ellen Butowsky and the Awards Committee for all the effort to recognize outstanding individual and program efforts and those who make our work life fun.
- Rona White-Allen and Wendy Bender and the Workshop Committee for soliciting workshop proposals and organizing the workshop schedule.
- Tina Williams and the Registration Committee for coordinating the registration process and making sure that everything ran smoothly.

Thank you to all of the presenters for the work you did to make the workshops informative and enjoyable! Thank you to Wendy Bender and the training team for organizing the round table discussions. It was a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and challenges. Thank

you to the round table leaders for keeping the discussions focused and on track.

A special thank you to Jeff Luks for data-entering the training surveys that everyone completed before the Institute, the workshop registration forms and the evaluation forms. Thanks to John Heck and Jeff Luks for their technical support. And a special thank you to Christine Deyss and Prevent Child Abuse NY for hosting this Training Institute with OCFS. We hope that everyone came away with new tools for their toolboxes and a renewed commitment and energy to making HFNY the best that it can be in *supporting parents right from the start!*



*Ivette Rosario, Laura Gomez and Erline Ramirez of Best Beginnings at the recent Training Institute in Saratoga Springs. Photo by John Heck.*

**Joy Griffith, Bernadette Johnson, Maria Rosado, Rona White-Allen, Tina Williams**

## Winter 2006

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## HFNY Goals

- ♦ To systematically identify overburdened families in need of support
- ♦ To promote positive parent-child interaction
- ♦ To ensure optimal prenatal care and promote healthy childhood growth and development
- ♦ To enhance family functioning by building trusting relationships, problem-solving skills and support systems

**The Link** is published three times yearly as a joint venture of Prevent Child Abuse New York and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services

### Ann Pitkin

Editor, Director of Training  
& Staff Development  
Prevent Child Abuse New York

### Pam Balmer

Managing Editor  
Prevent Child Abuse New York

### Joy Griffith

Program Coordinator  
Office of Children and  
Family Services

### Christine Deyss

Executive Director  
Prevent Child Abuse New York

### Louise Henrie

Graphic Design, Editorial Support  
Prevent Child Abuse New York

### PCANY

134 South Swan St.,  
Albany, NY 12210  
518-445-1273 1-800-CHILDREN  
[cdeyss@preventchildabuseny.org](mailto:cdeyss@preventchildabuseny.org)

### NYS OCFS, DDPS

52 Washington St. 3N  
Rensselaer, NY 12144-2796  
518-474-3166

[Joy.Griffith@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Joy.Griffith@dfa.state.ny.us)

SEND SUBMISSIONS TO:  
[apitkin@preventchildabuseny.org](mailto:apitkin@preventchildabuseny.org)

## Awards given at the Healthy Families New York Training Institute in Saratoga Springs

**Best Team effort within a program:** Buffalo Home Visiting Program for their 10 year anniversary celebration, Healthy Kids for their fundraising golf tournament, and Building Healthy Families Otsego County for pulling together and making the program work during a time of short-staffing.

**Recognition of program fatherhood initiatives:** Dutchess County Healthy Families for initiating and igniting the community around a Fathers Day parade that has taken place for the past 3 years. Building Brighter Futures for Broome for successful efforts to integrate fathers into all aspects of service delivery.

**Best Home Visit Achievement Rate 2005:** Healthy Families Cattaraugus had the highest Home visit achievement rate in the state during 2005, and in the last two quarters, they maintained a rate of **87%**.

**Best Community Collaboration/Partnership Initiative:** To Best Beginnings for their collaboration with Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, allowing a major medical Institution to expand the walls of medicine into the community.

**Highest Prenatal Enrollment Rates:** The Buffalo Home Visiting Program, Healthy Families Niagara, and Successful Start with an average of 78% between them. Early prenatal enrollment is particularly important because of the finding that prenatal program participants have significantly fewer low birth weight babies.



*Elsa Inoa, Healthy Families Jamaica, and Anne Reiniger, Prevent Child Abuse America. Photo by John Heck.*

**Program Managers who do the most to advocate for and promote HFNY within their communities and the state:** David Andriene, Healthy Families Chemung, Sobeira Gullen, Best Beginnings, and Jennifer Tuck, Baby Steps.

**Self sufficiency at 1 year:** Programs with the highest self sufficiency rates, with an average of 98% between them: Dutchess County Healthy Families, Best Beginnings, Special Beginnings.

**Breastfeeding:** These programs had the highest breastfeeding rates with an average of 75% between them: Westchester County Healthy

Families, CAMBA Home Visiting Program, Best Beginnings.

**Healthy Families New York Leadership Awards** were presented to Mark Kissinger, Governor Pataki's Deputy Secretary for Health & Human Services, State Senator Raymond Meier of the 47<sup>th</sup> District and Assemblyman William Scarborough, who represents the 29<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Queens. The awards were presented by OCFS Commissioner John Johnson, Christine Deyss of Prevent Child Abuse New York & Richard Nells, Associate Commissioner, OCFS.



*Bud LePage, OCFS, photo by John Heck.*

**Most Embodies Spirit of Healthy Families New York:** "Spirit awards" are given to staff who demonstrate dedication and creativity as a natural part of their day's work. We honor them for consistently exemplifying the principles of HFNY as they engage and retain families, exhibit cultural sensitivity and respect for families and staff, and demonstrate a sense of team leadership and spirit.

**FSW Spirit:** Jill Beach, Healthy Beginnings of Sullivan, Mishell Cumberbatch, CAMBA Home Visiting Program, Maria Yupa, Healthy Families Staten Island.

**FAW Spirit:** Elsa Inoa, Healthy Families Jamaica.

**Supervisor Spirit:** Debbie Eley, Bright Beginnings, and Maggie LaBozzetti, Newburgh Healthy Families.

**Program Manager Spirit:** Lisa Galatio, Healthy Families of Steuben and the Finger Lakes; and Monica Dobson, Special Beginnings.

**Logistical Wizard Award:** To Louise Henrie who holds all the pieces together for each PCANY training event.

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*Louise Henrie, PCANY Training with Eduardo Pena-Paris of Baby Steps, photo by a friendly bystander*



*Fatima Abdullahi, PCANY Training, photo by John Heck*

**Special Leadership Awards:** presented to Commissioner John Johnson and Associate Commissioner Richard Nells of OCFS.

**Guardian Angel:** Sonya Sanchez, Ulster County Healthy Start

**Superlative Schmooser:** Pat Bennett, Healthy Beginnings of Sullivan

**Most likely to rearrange office furniture:** Krista Rodriguez, Healthy Beginnings of Sullivan

**Best dresser:** Ramone Abreu, Special Beginnings

**Most contagious laugh:** Erlene Ramirez, Best Beginnings and Barbara Beichman, Healthy Kids.

**Most likely to make you smile:** Sirenaika Rawlins, Bushwick Bright Start.

**The Coffee Lady:** Minerva Arias, Bushwick Bright Start.



*Award recipients, photo by John Heck*

**Staff person with most creative, innovative effective ideas around breastfeeding:** Charity Leslie, Healthy Families Oneida County and Lucy Soriano, Best Beginnings.

**Staff person with most creative, innovative, effective ideas around parenting education:** Lisa Palmiter, Building Brighter Futures for Broome and Ana Tapia, Healthy Families Schenectady.

**Staff person with the most creative, innovative effective ideas around promoting self-sufficiency education:** Fanny Otero, Iriana Rooks, Aida Ruiz, and Martha Quiroz from Bushwick Bright Start.

**Best Community Liaison:** Dorothy Gordon, Healthy Families Staten Island

**Most innovative use of data management system:** Kim Kappler, Building Brighter Futures for Broome.

**Most Creative Outreach ideas:** Grisel Figueroa, FAW, Special Beginnings

**Program that most embraces the "Nature of Nurturing":** Starting Together, Madison County.



*Award recipients, photo by John Heck*

**C e n t r a l Administration awards:** Maria Rosado of OCFS, John Heck of SUNY Albany, and Ann Pitkin of PCANY.



*Christine Deyss & Ann Pitkin, photo by Louise Henrie*

**Recognition of FSW/FAW efforts to engage and work with fathers:** Ruth Revilla, Ulster County Healthy Start, and Maxine Miller, CAMBA.

**Outstanding efforts in field of data entry:** Chinelle Brown, Special Beginnings, Gina Lapointe, Early Advantages.

**Longest Tenure for a Data Manager:** Tonya Ryan, Ulster County Healthy Start.

**Most forms entered:** As of June 2005, Karen Michaud, of Bright Beginnings, had entered **87,077 forms.**

**The person mostly likely to engage teen parents:** Dorothy Willoughby, Healthy Families Staten Island

**The best chef:** Raka Gulati/Ulster County Healthy Start, Laura Dominique/CAMBA Home Visiting Program.

**Most creative hairstyle:** Maxine Miller, CAMBA Home Visiting Program. *(Sorry we don't have a picture!)*

**Person most likely to get everyone out of a bad mood:** Alejandra Malave, Best Beginnings, JoEllen Shackett, Healthy Kids, Diane Delaney, Healthy Kids, Joan Gould, Healthy Schenectady Families, Kim Lockridge-Hetko, Healthy Kids.

*Editorial note: It would appear that Healthy Kids staff must be really happy!*

**Healthy Families New York Resiliency award:** In recognition of significant organizational changes both programs have experienced over the past year, and for how they've maintained their commitment to the ideals of HFNY during the transition: Healthy Families of Steuben and the Finger Lakes, and Successful Start.

**Retention at 1 year:** These programs had the highest retention at 1 year and an average between them of 68%: Best Beginnings, Healthy Families of Steuben and the Finger Lakes and South Bronx Healthy Families

**Most participant graduates:** Marci Whalen, Healthy Families Chemung has graduated **27** participants!

**Most Kempes July 2004 to June 2005:** Joan DeLaney, Healthy Families Chemung, administered **144** Kempes this year.

**Most Kempe assessments from the beginning of HFNY:** Since 1995, Rita Babie, Healthy Kids, has administered **1,035** Kempes.

**Most likely to assist a participant during labor:** Ana Diaz, Best Beginnings!

**Most likely to be a jack of all trades:** Linda Holman, Healthy Families Staten Island

**Most likely to have her own show on HGTV for meticulous design:** Paula Fanning, Healthy Kids

**Most home visits July 2004 to June 2005:** Maria Yupa, Healthy Families Staten Island has made **538** home visits!

**Most home visits from the beginning of HFNY:** Since 1995, Marlene Shiloh, Healthy Families of Steuben and the Finger Lakes has made **3,373** home visits!



*Maria Rosado, OCFS (center) with South Bronx HF staff Emilie Zemde & Matilda Seshie, photo by John Heck*



*Monica Dobson, Special Beginnings PM and Lisa Galatio, HF Steuben & Finger Lakes PM, photo by John Heck*



## About Niagara Falls

**Ann Pitkin**  
PCANY Training & Staff Development

Niagara Falls, NY—not to be confused with its twin city on the other side of the Niagara river, Niagara Falls, Ontario—has a population of about 54,000. Of these, about 75% identify as White, non-Hispanic, 19% as Black, 2.4% as Native American, 2% as Hispanic, and 1.6% as multi-racial.

**Jobs, Jobs, Jobs** In the past 40 years the area has lost two-thirds of its once plentiful industrial jobs. Heavy manufacturing, especially in the steel and chemical industries, once dominated the area, but international competition and technological advances led to the closing of many facilities. The unemployment rate now is around 10%, which is well above the national average. During the 1990's, the city of Niagara Falls lost slightly more than 10% of its population.

In various locations throughout the state, New York has created Empire Zones to support economic development and job creation. NFEZ (Niagara Falls Empire Zone) is one such project. The state grants sales tax exemptions, property tax exemptions, and other tax abatements as incentives for development.

With the spectacular Falls located right in the city, the tourism industry is thriving and there are well over one hundred hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast accommodations.

One recent piece of good news for area employment is that the BRAC Commission (Base Realignment and Closure Commission of the U. S. Department of Defense) reversed its recommendation to close the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. This base is the last U.S. Air Force Installation in New York and the largest federal facility in the region.

**The Falls** Niagara Falls is actually made up of 3 large waterfalls: Horseshoe Falls, American Falls, and Bridal Veil Falls. The falls exist along the Niagara River, which connects Lake Erie with Lake Ontario. The drop in elevation between the lakes is 326 feet, and half of this drop happens right at the falls. They are probably the most famous waterfalls in the world, and with good reason. More than 6 million cubic feet of water spill over the falls each minute

**The Power of the Falls** The Adams Power Plant, sometime in the 1950's (below). Built in 1895, for many years this was the largest hydroelectric power plant in the world. This plant was the first one in the nation to supply long-distance commercial electrical transmission. Today only the center building, the Transformer House, remains standing. It is a National Historic Landmark, and was designed by the brilliant architect, Stanford White.



## Spotlight on Healthy Families Niagara

**Connie Ignatowski**  
Program Manager

Healthy Families Niagara was initiated through a community effort that recognized the presence of numerous risk factors in the Niagara Falls area. These factors include high rates of infant mortality, low birth weight, single parenthood, teen pregnancy and a lack of prenatal care, all factors that research has shown to be related to potential child abuse. Healthy Families Niagara opened its doors in December 2001, under the auspices of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center as a subcontractor to the Niagara County Department of Social Services.

The office was located in the city of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls is in the northwestern part of New York State and is proud to have one of the greatest wonders of the world, Niagara Falls, as its main tourist attraction. When it opened, the program served families in only three zip codes within the city and had six staff members.

The program did not remain that size for long. Due to the proven need for additional services, the target area was expanded to two additional zip codes in 2003. The program then effectively covered the entire city and town of Niagara Falls and increased the staffing ratio to adequately serve the families. In April of 2003, the program was transferred to its current home within Family & Children's Service of Niagara, Inc.

Family & Children's Service of Niagara has been at work in the Niagara community since 1895, providing strength, support and assistance to individuals and families. In addition to the Healthy Families Niagara program, Family & Children's Service has specialized programs and services to address issues such as family conflict, domestic violence, teens in crisis, and mental illness.

We here at Healthy Families Niagara continue to impress the local and countywide community with the quality of the services provided and were able to expand once more in the spring of 2005 to the city of Lockport at the eastern end of Niagara County.

Currently, Healthy Families Niagara serves 200 families a year. We have 11 FSWs, 2 FAWs, 3 Supervisors, 1 Program Assistant/Data Entry, and 1 Director/Program Manager.

True to the model, our staff consists of many people from our community who are either parents themselves or have extensive experience in working with children and families. We are a close-knit group who enjoy each other's company virtually all the time. We have made quite a name for ourselves with our presentations at the Victor Bernstein trainings and our performance of the "We Are Family" song with its accompanying dance.

Enough of my editorial, here's what some families had to say on a recent Family Satisfaction Survey...

*"If it wasn't for the support from my worker I don't think I would be where I am now because there are times I don't think I am being a good mother. But hearing what a good job I am doing helps me... and I don't think my daughter would be where she is now without the extra help from the program."*

*"I think the activities are great. I especially liked the activities that were for the moms only. It showed that someone out there understood that moms deserve more credit and that we do need a break sometimes."*

At our **"Recognition Rally"** family picnic in August, the families presented us with an award. The Certificate of Award recognized Healthy Families of Niagara for "the hard work and dedication to all the families in the program" and was signed, "All the Families, 2002-2005."

The challenges to our families and therefore our program are many. Both Niagara Falls and Lockport have high rates of unemployment and levels of poverty. The depressed economic conditions affect virtually all realms of our families' lives. A majority of our families struggle with issues of domestic violence, substance abuse or mental illness.

Yet, these families are hopeful of breaking this cycle. They consistently reach out to our workers and our program because many other family members and providers have either given up on them or don't believe they can succeed. With our focus on recognizing a family's strengths, supporting them in achieving their goals and dreams, and linking them with the appropriate resources, we truly *"help parents be the best they can be."*

If you're ever in the area, give us a call! We'd love to show you around our neck of the woods.



An original program family: *"I think the activities are great and it shows that you care about the families you come into contact with. We really enjoy the little things like that."*

Healthy Families Niagara staff on Wellness Day... Jarmell Plummer, Kevanne Dobbs, Ann Reynolds, Diane Humphrey (standing), Linda Smith, Olivia Smith



Some of the language sharers, photo by John Heck

Each session of the Training Institute was opened by several HFNY staff who spoke to the group in some of the 65 languages used by staff across the state:

- Sobeira Guillen, Best Beginnings Spanish
- Maria Acevedo, Best Beginnings Nauat (indigenous Mexican language)
- Liz Anisfeld, Best Beginnings Hebrew
- Laura Domingue, CAMBA HomeVisiting Creole
- Manouska Archer, Newburgh Healthy Families French
- Susan Achieng, Dutchess County Healthy Families Swahili
- Raka Gulati, Ulster Healthy County Healthy Start Urdu & Hindi
- Rose Nkundinfura, Buffalo HV Kinyarwanda(African Language)
- Claribel Batista, Buffalo Home Visiting American Sign Language
- Jasmina Hodici, Healthy Families Oneida Bosnian
- Fatou Diop, Baby Steps Ouolof (African Language)
- Leah Wolff-Pellingra, Healthy Kids German
- Matilda Seshie, South Bronx HF Twi (African Language)
- Emelie Zemele, South Bronx HF Beti (African Language)
- Bernadette Johnson, OCFS American Sign Language



Raka Gulati, photo by John Heck



Liz Anisfeld, photo by John Heck



Maria Acevedo, photo by John Heck



Susan Achieng, photo by John Heck

# More Photos from the Training Institute



50/50 Raffle benefited Healthy Families of Louisiana. Photo by Louise Henrie.



Special moments together... photo by Louise Henrie



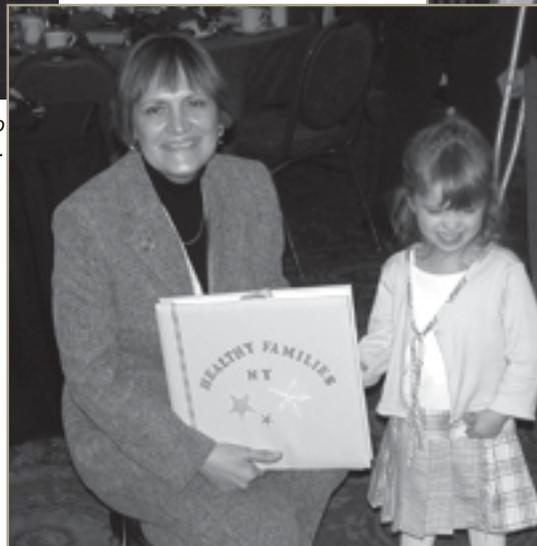
OCFS managers applaud Dick Nells, photo by Louise Henrie.



Wendy Bender, Organizational Wizard, welcomed participants with goodie bags. Photo by John Heck.



Gena LaPointe and Vanessa Van Der Loop of Early Advantages. Photo by John Heck.



Alyssa, age 3 1/2, presents Joy Griffith with a scrapbook from all the HFNY sites. Alyssa's mom, Carla, began to participate in the Healthy Kids program when she was expecting, with Leslie Robinson as her FSW. Photo by John Heck.



One Star at a Time is still a lot of stars! Photo by John Heck.



Kimberlee Van Burch of Healthy Families Staten Island. Photo by Louise Henrie



Donnamarie Martocci of Healthy Kids and Ellen Butowsky of Prevent Child Abuse NY. Photo by Louise Henrie.



Doing the Electric Slide at Saratoga Springs, photos by John Heck

# Reaching Out to More Dads!

**Vanessa Vanderloop**  
Coordinator, Fathers 4 Families  
Early Advantages, Clinton County

Fathers 4 Families, a component of the Early Advantages program of Clinton County, has been available since September of 2004. This small fatherhood initiative consists of a Fatherhood Coordinator, Vanessa Vanderloop, and a Father Specialist, Patrick Hicks, under the guidance of Program Supervisor, Sandy Peryer and Program Manager, Judy Russell.

Fathers 4 Families has been reaching out to Early Advantages families in which male caregivers are actively involved in the lives of children. The focus is currently on home visits to engage dads during the outreach period between the assessment and assignment to an FSW. Partnering with assigned FSWs has played a key role in scheduling home visits with dads, facilitating intakes, and providing creative outreach and recruitment of fathers.

After establishing a core group of male caregivers, participants are encouraged to attend small group meetings where men are free to discuss any issues, ask questions and get feedback from not only the Father Specialist, but other dads as well. In our experience, it takes several home visits with fathers to build the rapport that will get them to venture out to a group setting.

Fathers 4 Families has also contacted male caregivers in the community by partnering with the local Child Care Council and Head Start programs. These fathers are encouraged to attend our quarterly Fathers 4 Families large group meetings. The large groups are activity-based and, as attendance grows, will become monthly.

Fathers 4 Families has had a lot of trial and error in its grassroots effort to get the fatherhood initiative up and running. However, we have been diligent in our efforts and continue to think "outside the box" to come up with new ways to help dads be more actively involved in the lives of their children.



*Drawing by Hunter  
Photo by Paul Deyss Photography*

**Bill Perry**  
Fatherhood Advocate  
Building Brighter Futures for Broome

The Lourdes Fatherhood Program started in August of 2003. Since then the Fatherhood Advocate has been involved with over fifty dads. Many factors have contributed to our success. We started by teaching our own staff how men and women parent differently. When the staff started to understand the differences, they were able to explain to families that it is good for the development of a child to experience both the male and female styles of parenting.

Female FSW's and the Fatherhood Advocate often do joint home visits, meeting with both parents. This approach makes it very clear that the dads are part of the program. Some dads, however, cannot be at daytime visits due to work schedules. The Fatherhood Advocate is able to do late visits, thus accommodating as many fathers as possible.



*Jimmer and daughter Sierra with Bill Perry.  
Photo courtesy of Building Brighter Futures for  
Broome County.*

As we all know, losing staff is inevitable. When an FSW leaves the program, families working with the Fatherhood Advocate often choose to retain him as the FSW, rather than have a new FSW assigned. The family is informed that at any time they have the right to request a new worker; to date this has never happened.

We have been able to overcome a significant challenge by dispelling the myth that men can't talk to women about labor and delivery, family planning, and breastfeeding. As a father of two breastfed children, I can draw on my own experience to talk about the birth process and breastfeeding. I can empathize with fathers feeling left out at feeding time, and talk about lots of ways to stay really involved with a breastfed baby. We also have two staff members that are Breast Feeding Peer Counselors that I refer fathers to if needed.

Another success story is our Fathers Group. In the beginning, we were very focused on topics and information, and the men seemed to like facts and numbers. Over the past two years, trust between the members of the group has grown, and we now discuss feelings, frustrations, and fulfillment. I think this is because I, as the facilitator, have followed the lead of the group and let them decide what topics and what direction they want to take. They plan outings for each month, such as the local Discovery Center, the zoo, and other family-friendly places. They bring their families and even friends and grandparents to promote the importance of the extended family.

There has been a substantial increase in father involvement since the initiation of the fatherhood program. For example, periodically we have dinners for our families, and when I attended the first dinner I was the only male present. Now the turnout is almost 50% men! However, my biggest reward is knowing that many men are truly finding the meaning of being a "dad," and I am a small part in that process.





*Dr. Terrie Rose, "Maternal Ambivalence, From Threat to Well Being." Photo by John Heck.*



*Dr. Harvey Karp, "The Happiest Toddler." Photo by Louise Henrie.*



*Dr. Monica Sweeney, "Building Families, One Star at a Time," here signing copies of her book, "Condom Sense." Photo by John Heck*

**Keynote Speakers:  
HFNY Training  
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*Prevent Child Abuse  
New York, Inc.  
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Albany, NY 12210-1715*

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