



BIO-TREKS ITALY: SEA, SCIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

An immersive STEM journey through Italy's ecosystems, coastlines, and scientific heritage - designed for curious minds and future changemakers.

8-days / 7-nights total trip; arrive in Florence, depart from Milan

BIO-TREKS ITALY: SEA, SCIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY Pisa, Lucca, Cinque Terre & Genoa

Day	Meals	Morning		Afternoon		Evening	
1		Overnight International flight to Florence or Pisa, Italy					
2	D	Arrive Italy, clear Customs, meet your Tour Director and transfer to Pisa		Pisa's Piazza dei Miracoli & Leaning Tower of Pisa	Transfer to Lucca; Hotel Check-In	Welcome, Safety & Orientation Briefing	Italy Welcome Dinner
3	B, L, D	Livorno Aquarium & Sea Turtle Master Class: Rescue, Rehabilitation & Marine Conservation		San Rossore Migliarino Natural Park Guided Tour: Local Flora & Fauna / Diverse Ecological Habitats		Local Dinner & Free Time	
4	B, L, D	Hotel Check-out & Travel to Carrara	Carrara Marble Quarries 4x4 Tour / Marine Sedimentary Formatting & Structural Geology		Onward travel to Genoa; Hotel Check-In	Local Dinner & Free Time	
5	B, L, D	Train to Cinque Terre area	Guided Geomorphological Trek to the Medieval Village of Monterosso / UNESCO World Heritage Site		Scenic Coastal Boat Tour with a Naturalist	Return travel to hotel	Local Dinner
6	B, L, D	Marine Biology Lab: Plankton Analysis & Microplastics Environmental Impact Study		Pesto-Making Cooking Class		Local Dinner & Free Time	
7	B, L, D	The Genoa Aquarium & Biology Master Class: The World of Invertebrates		Marine Biology Master Class: The Mediterranean Sea - Biodiversity at Risk		Farewell Dinner & Trip Reflections	
8	B	Shopping & Free Time	Galata Museo del Mare / Maritime Museum	Transfer to Genoa or Milan Malpensa Airport; return flight home			



As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an "example" of a schedule and that the activities and hotels shown may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.



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Day 1: Outbound Journey

Dinner in flight

Travel on an overnight flight to Florence, Italy.

Day 2: Arrival & Scientific Heritage

Breakfast in flight, lunch on own, dinner included

Bio-Treks Italy: Sea, Science & Sustainability

Where Science Meets Story: Italy is more than a destination - it's a dynamic ecosystem where biology, geology, and cultural heritage intertwine across coastlines, villages, and centuries. From the medieval charm of Lucca to the rugged UNESCO landscapes of Cinque Terre, students explore living systems in action. Whether studying sea turtle rehabilitation in Livorno, examining marble formations in Carrara, or investigating Mediterranean biodiversity in Genoa, this itinerary transforms Italy into a hands-on classroom where ecology and environmental science come alive. With every piazza, trail, and research lab, students engage with the natural world through a distinctly Italian lens - one that celebrates both scientific inquiry and cultural depth.

A Journey That Inspires Discovery: This program is designed to ignite curiosity and deepen understanding. Students collaborate with Italian biologists, explore protected coastal habitats, and participate in marine research at national institutes. Alongside these academic experiences, they wander Lucca's medieval streets, marvel at Pisa's architectural icons, and reflect on sustainability while traveling through landscapes shaped by both nature and history. Through immersive fieldwork, expert-led tours, and meaningful cultural encounters, students gain more than knowledge - they gain perspective, purpose, and the tools to lead in a world shaped by science and stewardship.



After your arrival, we'll travel to Pisa and then on to Lucca, check into our hotel and have our Welcome, Safety & Orientation Briefing before our Italian Welcome Dinner! At our **Welcome, Safety & Orientation Briefing** our local team will explain details about your travel plans, give advice on how to adapt to the local culture and outline how you will stay safe during your travels. Please note that lunch is not included today to accommodate various arrival times. If you arrive early enough for lunch, we will happily get to the perfect spot to indulge, payable on own.

Pisa: A City of Precision and Possibility - Pisa offers students a dynamic blend of scientific heritage and architectural wonder. Beyond its iconic Leaning Tower, the city invites learners into a legacy of inquiry shaped by centuries of observation, measurement, and innovation. As students explore the Piazza dei Miracoli and encounter the mathematical and engineering marvels that define Pisa's identity, they connect with a tradition of curiosity that continues to influence modern scientific thinking.



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Leaning Tower of Pisa & Piazza dei Miracoli - At the heart of Pisa's architectural wonder lies the Piazza dei Miracoli, a UNESCO World Heritage site where science and symmetry meet spectacle. Students will explore the Leaning Tower's famous tilt through the lens of physics and engineering, while the surrounding cathedral, baptistery, and camposanto offer insight into medieval design and cultural expression. This visit invites learners to consider how observation, measurement, and innovation have shaped both the built environment and scientific thought across centuries.

Lucca: A Walled City of Wonder and Reflection - Nestled within its perfectly preserved Renaissance walls, Lucca offers students a quieter, contemplative lens through which to begin their Italian journey. This charming Tuscan town invites curiosity with its cobblestone streets, medieval towers, and welcoming piazzas that set the stage for orientation and cultural immersion. As students settle in, Lucca becomes a place of grounding — ideal for reflection, connection, and easing into the rhythms of Italian life. Its timeless beauty and walkable historic center provide a gentle introduction before the program's deeper scientific exploration, helping students feel rooted, present, and ready for discovery.



Day 3: Marine Conservation & Coastal Ecology

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Today's activities include:



Livorno Aquarium & Sea Turtle Master Class: Rescue, Rehabilitation & Marine Conservation - At the Livorno Aquarium, students step into the world of marine conservation through an in-depth Sea Turtle Master Class focused on rescue, rehabilitation, and long-term species protection. Guided by Italian biologists, they learn how injured turtles are treated, monitored, and prepared for release, gaining firsthand insight into the challenges facing Mediterranean populations. Through expert-led instruction, behind-the-scenes access, and close observation of active conservation work, students explore the science of rescue protocols, habitat pressures, and the environmental factors shaping marine survival today. This experience blends biology, stewardship, and real-world impact - showing students how scientific care can help safeguard ocean ecosystems.



San Rossore Migliarino Natural Park Guided Tour - This guided exploration of one of Tuscany's most diverse ecological reserves invites students into coastal forests, wetlands, and dune systems teeming with life. Led by local experts, the experience highlights native flora and fauna while introducing key concepts in habitat conservation, ecological adaptation, and biodiversity. It's a hands-on encounter with Italy's natural systems - an ideal early-program field experience that sparks curiosity and builds foundational scientific understanding.



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Day 4: Geological Forces & Mountain Landscapes

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Today's activities include:



Carrara Marble Quarries 4x4 Tour / Marine Sedimentary Formatting & Structural Geology - High in the Apuan Alps, the Carrara Marble Quarries offer students a dramatic window into Earth's geological history. Renowned worldwide for producing the luminous white marble used in masterpieces from Michelangelo's *David* to modern architecture, Carrara's cliffs reveal how ancient marine sediments were compressed, uplifted, and transformed over millions of years. During a thrilling 4x4 tour, students trace the story of these formations firsthand - examining stratification, fault lines, and the structural forces that shaped the region. Guided by experts, this

experience blends geology, environmental science, and cultural heritage, showing how natural processes and human craftsmanship intersect in one of Italy's most iconic landscape

Genoa: Italy's Maritime Gateway to Science and the Sea - Genoa offers students a vibrant blend of marine science, maritime history, and coastal culture. As one of Italy's most important port cities, Genoa has long been a hub for ocean exploration, biodiversity research, and scientific innovation - making it an ideal setting for the program's culminating academic experiences. Students dive into Mediterranean ecology through master classes at the Genoa Aquarium, explore the city's maritime legacy at the Galata Museo del Mare, and wander historic alleyways shaped by centuries of trade and discovery. In Genoa, the connection between people and the sea becomes unmistakable, giving students a deeper understanding of how marine environments influence culture, science, and sustainability across the region.



Day 5: Coastal Geology & UNESCO Fieldwork

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Today's activities include:

Cinque Terre: Coastal Science and Cultural Color - Cinque Terre's five cliffside villages create one of Italy's most striking coastal landscapes, where human history and natural forces meet in vivid color. Terraced hillsides, steep ridgelines, and centuries-old footpaths reveal how communities have adapted to the region's dramatic terrain. For students, Cinque Terre offers a living laboratory of geology, ecology, and cultural resilience - an immersive environment where the Ligurian Sea, UNESCO-protected cliffs, and traditional coastal life come together in a way that sparks curiosity and wonder.



Guided Geomorphological Trek to Monterosso - This guided tour through Cinque Terre's dramatic coastline introduces students to the region's key geological formations and ecological habitats. From stratified cliffs and terraced hillsides to marine coves and forested slopes, learners explore how natural forces have shaped both landscape and livelihood. The experience culminates in Monterosso, the largest and oldest of the five villages, where medieval architecture and coastal culture offer a living contrast to the ancient geology beneath their feet.



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Scenic Coastal Boat Tour with a Naturalist - From the water, Cinque Terre reveals an entirely different perspective. A naturalist guide leads students along the coastline, highlighting marine ecosystems, cliff formations, and the environmental pressures shaping the Ligurian Sea. As the boat moves between villages, students examine erosion, sediment transport, and the interplay between land and sea that defines this UNESCO site. The experience deepens their understanding of coastal processes while offering unforgettable views of one of Italy's most iconic shorelines.

Day 6: Marine Biology Research & Ligurian Culture

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Today's activities include:



Genoa Marine Biology Lab: Plankton Analysis & Microplastics Environmental Impact Study - In this hands-on marine biology lab, students investigate the microscopic life that drives Mediterranean ecosystems. Guided by marine scientists, they collect and analyze plankton samples to observe species diversity, feeding behaviors, and ecological roles within the food web. The session deepens as students examine microplastics under magnification, assessing how pollutants move through marine environments and impact biological systems. By connecting plankton health to broader environmental challenges, this lab offers a powerful,

science-forward look at ocean stewardship - giving students real research experience and a clearer understanding of human influence on marine habitats.



Pesto-Making Class: Culture, Tradition & Taste of Liguria - In the heart of Liguria, students step into one of Italy's most beloved culinary traditions: authentic pesto-making. Using fresh basil, pine nuts, Parmigiano-Reggiano, and a traditional marble mortar and pestle, they learn how regional ingredients and centuries-old techniques shape the flavors of this iconic sauce. As they grind, mix, and taste, students discover how food reflects geography, agriculture, and cultural identity across the region. It's a warm, sensory break from scientific study - an experience that blends history, craftsmanship, and the joy of sharing a meal together.

Day 7: Mediterranean Biodiversity & Sustainability

Breakfast, lunch and dinner included

Today's activities include:



The Genoa Aquarium & Biology Master Class: The World of Invertebrates - In this immersive master class, students dive into the extraordinary world of marine invertebrates - creatures that form the backbone of Mediterranean biodiversity. Guided by aquarium biologists, they observe live specimens up close, exploring anatomical adaptations, feeding strategies, and ecological roles within coastal ecosystems. From cephalopods to crustaceans, students gain a deeper understanding of how these organisms support food webs, respond to environmental pressures, and contribute to the overall health of the sea. It's a

hands-on scientific experience that brings marine biology to life through direct observation and expert insight.



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Marine Biology Master Class: The Mediterranean Sea, Biodiversity at Risk - This advanced session focuses on the environmental challenges facing the Mediterranean Sea, one of the world's most vulnerable marine regions. Students examine real case studies of habitat loss, climate-driven change, invasive species, and human impacts on coastal ecosystems. Through guided discussions and interactive demonstrations, they learn how scientists monitor biodiversity, assess threats, and develop conservation strategies to protect marine life. The master class empowers students to think critically about stewardship and sustainability, connecting scientific knowledge with the urgent need to safeguard ocean environments.

Farewell Reflection - End your adventure on a meaningful note with a guided Farewell Reflection. This isn't just a goodbye — it's a chance for students, faculty, and our team to come together and process the journey they've shared. Through thoughtful prompts, listening exercises, and group discussion, students revisit the moments that challenged them, inspired them, and expanded their understanding of the world. It's a warm, intentional close to the program that helps students carry their discoveries forward with confidence and purpose.

Day 8: Maritime Heritage & Departure

Breakfast included (dependent upon flight time), lunch on own, dinner in flight



Optional Visit: Galata Museo del Mare (time permitting) - If flight schedules allow, students will have time for final exploration in Genoa before departure. Those remaining hours may include a visit to the Galata Museo del Mare - Italy's premier maritime museum - where students can dive deeper into the region's seafaring history, navigation technologies, and the human stories that shaped Mediterranean exploration. This optional experience offers a meaningful final connection to the themes of ocean science and cultural heritage explored throughout the program.

Students may also enjoy free time for last-minute shopping and souvenirs before transferring to the airport.

After your final moments in Genoa - whether exploring the Galata Museo del Mare or enjoying some last-minute shopping - it's time to say goodbye to Italy and begin the journey home. As our team's mission is to expand minds through transformative travel experiences, we hope that as you settle into your seat for the flight, the moments you've explored, learned, and shared throughout this program leave you with a deeper sense of confidence, knowledge, and curiosity - and a spark for your next adventure.

Depending on flight schedules, we'll enjoy breakfast at the hotel before transferring to the airport, carrying forward the discoveries and connections made along the way.

Arrivederci!



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Weather in Italy

Spring (March–May): Fresh, Green, and Ideal for Exploration

- › **Temperature:** 55–70°F (13–21°C)
- › **Conditions:** Mild, increasingly sunny days with fresh breezes and occasional rain showers.
- › **Highlights:** Coastal trails come alive with wildflowers, and the Mediterranean begins to warm. Spring offers ideal conditions for hiking, guided outdoor science activities, and hands-on fieldwork throughout Cinque Terre and Genoa.
- › **Packing Tips:** Light layers, a breathable waterproof jacket, and comfortable walking shoes suitable for varied terrain.

Summer (June–August): Warm, Busy, and Vibrant

- › **Temperature:** 75–90°F (24–32°C)
- › **Conditions:** Warm to hot, with long sunny days and vibrant coastal activity.
- › **Highlights:** Ideal for boat-based exploration, marine biology sessions, and extended time outdoors. Coastal breezes help balance the heat, and the Mediterranean is at its warmest - perfect for observing marine life and coastal processes.
- › **Packing Tips:** Lightweight clothing, sun protection, refillable water bottle, and comfortable walking shoes.

Fall (September–November): Golden Light and Fewer Crowds

- › **Temperature:** 60–75°F (16–24°C)
- › **Conditions:** Pleasant, cooler days with a mix of sunshine and occasional showers.
- › **Highlights:** Coastal paths are quieter, temperatures are ideal for hiking and fieldwork, and the sea remains warm from summer. Fall offers excellent conditions for geology treks, biodiversity studies, and cultural exploration.
- › **Packing Tips:** Layers for shifting temperatures, a light waterproof jacket, and sturdy walking shoes.

Winter (December–February): Quiet, Cool, and Reflective

- › **Temperature:** 40–55°F (4–13°C)
- › **Conditions:** Cool and crisp with a mix of clear days and periodic rain. Coastal areas remain milder than inland regions.
- › **Highlights:** Fewer crowds, atmospheric coastal villages, and excellent opportunities for indoor labs, museum visits, and cultural immersion. Some outdoor activities may be adjusted based on weather.
- › **Packing Tips:** Warm layers, a medium-weight jacket, waterproof footwear, and an umbrella.

Cultural & Courtesy in Italy

Language & Courtesy

Use polite greetings (Buongiorno, Per favore, Grazie, Arrivederci) and say goodbye when leaving shops or museums.

Pace of Life

Expect slower rhythms - meals linger, schedules flex, and some small towns close midday.

Food & Dining

Enjoy regional specialties (pesto, focaccia, seafood); dining is social, so wait to be seated and avoid rushing or substitutions.

Respect for Nature & Heritage

Stay on marked trails, keep noise low, and be mindful in historic areas with respectful behavior and photography.

Student Engagement

Curiosity is welcomed; dress modestly for formal visits like churches or research centers.

Faith & Tradition

Catholic heritage is visible in daily life, and Sundays often slow down with reduced business hours.



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Taste of Italy – The Top 10 to Try

Italy's culinary heritage is a mosaic of regional flavors, time-honored techniques, and deep cultural pride. From Liguria's fragrant basil pesto and golden focaccia to Tuscany's earthy olive oils and Umbria's truffle-laced dishes, every bite tells a story of land and legacy. Meals are more than nourishment - they're rituals of connection, crafted with seasonal ingredients and shared around tables that echo with laughter and lineage. Whether savoring handmade pasta in a family-run trattoria or sampling local cheeses at a hillside farm, travelers discover that Italian cuisine is rooted in simplicity, authenticity, and reverence for nature.

Flavors That Teach and Inspire

For students and curious travelers, tasting Italy becomes a sensory classroom. Each region offers lessons in biodiversity, sustainability, and cultural adaptation - from the salt-preserving traditions of coastal villages to the alpine herbs of mountain kitchens. Culinary workshops, vineyard visits, and market strolls reveal how food reflects geography, history, and community values. As travelers dip bread into fresh-pressed olive oil or sip lemon-infused water overlooking the Ligurian Sea, they're not just enjoying a meal, they're participating in a centuries-old dialogue between people and place.

1. **Pesto alla Genovese** - A Ligurian specialty made from fresh basil, pine nuts, garlic, Parmesan, and olive oil, traditionally crushed in a mortar. Often served with trofie pasta or spread on focaccia.
2. **Focaccia** - This golden, olive oil-rich flatbread varies by region; Liguria's version is soft, salty, and sometimes topped with rosemary or onions. Perfect as a snack or alongside meals.
3. **Risotto alla Milanese** - Creamy rice infused with saffron and often finished with butter and Parmesan. A northern classic that showcases Italy's love for rich, comforting textures.
4. **Tagliatelle al Ragù (Bolognese)** - Long, flat pasta ribbons paired with a slow-cooked meat sauce from Bologna. It's hearty, savory, and far more nuanced than American-style spaghetti.
5. **Pizza Napoletana** - Born in Naples, this wood-fired pizza features a soft, chewy crust, San Marzano tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, and basil. Simple, authentic, and unforgettable.
6. **Arancini** - Crispy, golden rice balls filled with ragù, peas, and cheese, especially popular in Sicily. A perfect street food that's both crunchy and comforting.
7. **Polenta** - A northern staple made from cornmeal, served creamy or grilled. Often paired with mushrooms, cheese, or hearty meat sauces.
8. **Caprese Salad** - A fresh combination of tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, and olive oil originating from Capri. It's a celebration of simplicity and balance.
9. **Gelato** - Italy's artisanal ice cream is smoother and denser than its American counterpart, with intense flavors like pistachio, stracciatella, and lemon.
10. **Tiramisu** - A layered dessert of espresso-soaked ladyfingers, mascarpone cream, and cocoa. Born in Veneto, it's a sweet finish to any Italian meal.



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Entry Requirements

Travel Entry Requirements for Italy & the Schengen Area

Entry requirements for Italy and other Schengen Area countries can change, and all travelers are responsible for checking the most current information during planning and before departure. The guidelines below are accurate at the time of writing and are **subject to change without notice**. Always verify requirements through your government's travel authority and the official Schengen/ETIAS websites prior to travel.

General Requirements (All Travelers)

- ✓ A valid travel document (passport or national ID for eligible EU/EEA/Swiss citizens)
- ✓ Proof of sufficient funds for your stay
- ✓ Proof of accommodation (hotel, program lodging, or invitation)
- ✓ Proof of onward or return travel
- ✓ No active alert in the Schengen Information System (SIS)

Non-EU Travelers (Including U.S., U.K., Canadian, Australian, and others)

- ✓ **Passport Validity:** Must be valid for at least **three months beyond your intended departure date** from the Schengen Area.
- ✓ **Purpose of Stay:** You may be asked to show documentation of your travel purpose and accommodation.
- ✓ **Return/Onward Travel:** You must demonstrate intent to return home or continue travel.
- ✓ **EES (Entry/Exit System):** The EU is implementing a new biometric entry/exit system. Once active, non-EU travelers will provide fingerprints, a facial image, and passport details upon entry for short stays (up to 90 days in any 180-day period).
- ✓ **ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorization System):** The EU is also introducing a pre-travel authorization system. Once active, non-EU travelers will need to obtain ETIAS approval online before visiting any Schengen country.

EU/EEA/Swiss Citizens

- ✓ *Travel Document: A valid passport or national identity card is sufficient for entry.*

(Note: EES and ETIAS are upcoming systems. Their launch dates may shift, so travelers must check for updates before departure.)



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BIO-TREKS ITALY: SEA, SCIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Minimum Booking Numbers:

20 students

What's Included:

- ✓ Roundtrip international flights into Florence or Pisa, Italy; return from Milan or Genoa, Italy
- ✓ 6-nights' accommodation in Italy: students accommodated in shared rooms with single beds; teaching staff in single occupancy rooms
- ✓ Breakfasts, lunches & dinners in destination starting with dinner on arrival and ending with breakfast on departure (dependent upon flight times)
- ✓ Transportation to activities shown in Itinerary
- ✓ Leaning Tower of Pisa & Piazza dei Miracoli
- ✓ Livorno Aquarium Sea Turtle Master Class: Rescue, Rehabilitation & Marine Conservation
- ✓ San Rossore Migliarino Natural Park Guided Tour: Discover Local Flora & Fauna; Exploration of Diverse Ecological Habitats
- ✓ Carrara Marble Quarries 4x4 Tour / Marine Sedimentary Formatting & Structural Geology
- ✓ Guided Tour of Cinque Terre's Main Geological Formations & Habitats with the Medieval Village of Monterosso
- ✓ Scenic Boat Tour of the Cinque Terre with a Naturalist
- ✓ Genoa Marine Biology Lab: Plankton Analysis & Microplastics Environmental Impact Study
- ✓ Pesto-making Cooking Class
- ✓ The Genoa Aquarium & Biology Master Class - The Mediterranean Sea: Biodiversity at Risk
- ✓ The World of Invertebrates Laboratory Project: Marine Invertebrate Diversity & Ecological Adaptations
- ✓ Galata Museo del Mare (Maritime Museum) – *time permitting*
- ✓ Personal Tour Director
- ✓ 24-hour emergency cover

What's Not Included:

- ⊗ Fully comprehensive insurance (**mandatory**)
- ⊗ Baggage costs, pay directly to airline if required (if traveling from abroad, generally one bag is included per person)
- ⊗ Baggage handling - everyone should be able to pull / load their own bag
- ⊗ Transportation to/from your local airport
- ⊗ Transportation for activities not shown in the itinerary
- ⊗ Tourist tax, payable upon hotel check-in direct to local hotel property (budget \$20 pp but determined based on participant age and location)
- ⊗ Meal selections other than ones provided for the entire group (we are generally able to cater for allergy conditions and vegetarians/vegans)
- ⊗ Cost of personal passports, visas or visa waiver fees
- ⊗ Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
- ⊗ Sightseeing / Entertainment not shown in Itinerary
- ⊗ Hotel incidental deposits & bills – mini-bar items, recreation, purchases billed to room, etc.
- ⊗ Personal expenditures
- ⊗ **Gratuities for your Driver, Tour Director & Local Guides**
- ⊗ Additional taxes, fuel surcharges or service charges levied by the governments or our suppliers
- ⊗ Credit card fees if individuals wish to pay via credit card instead of ACH (online check)

As always, our staff are available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming.
If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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