Summary: USYers will be living and viewing life through the eyes of a variety of different people. In groups of 12 the USYers will be each given a person (12 different people) whose lives they will live throughout the program. In each stage of life the USYers will be facing and dealing with one of the 4 major problems faced by people from all walks of life; nutrition, education, employment, and shelter/a home. As the 12 stories unravel the USYers will experience that people cannot always control what happens to them. Life is full of choices but at the same time it is full of chance. It is important to get to know and to understand someone before we are quick to judge them. Once we better understand them we can better understand the problems that they face and better understand how to solve those problems.

USYers will divided into 7 groups of 12
7 staff placed around the room (Leadership Center)

Intro: Hi and welcome to Seaboard USY’s game of life! In this game you will have the opportunity to walk around in someone else’s shoes and live someone else’s life for the next hour. But before we can start the game I would like to clarify one thing. This game is supposed to be fun but also educational. The activities we are doing are silly and funny, but at the same time they all have a purpose. So while you’re laughing with your friends, I’d like you to think about why I had you do the activity, how the activity was set up, the results of each activity, and most importantly how your person would have felt in that situation. Additionally, the stories and lives you will be hearing about and “living” are all based on true stories, so please take them seriously and really listen to them. (bringing the fun back in sato)
First you will be divided into groups of 12. On your name tag next to blah blah blah…
Okay, let’s start!

Round one: birth - chance
Me: When we are born we don’t really have a say who are parents are; or where we are born. Therefore to start our game of life, we will begin with a relay race, a game of chance. In your groups, you will each line up on the starting line and when your station leader says go you will have to crab walk to the wall or cone and then hop on one foot back. As you finish you will be handed a card with a number, the number in which you finished the race, a name, and a
summary. Once your whole group is done, sit down so I know when to continue on to the next round of life. Okay, good luck!

Set up: start/finish line; some kind of marker/item to signify when to turn around; “life cards”

Staff notes: Make sure the USYers receive the cards in the order in which they finish. This is very important. The cards are numbered 1-12 (or 13 if there are 13 people in your group).

“I would now like each group to rotate one station over and sit in the order of your cards; one behind the other with number one being in the front and number 12 or 13 in the back.”

Round two: ages 7-13 - nutrition

Me: Each of you has a card with a name and a summary on it. This name is your new name; the name of the person you will be for the rest of the game. I am going to share a little insight and background about each person before we begin round two of the game of life. When I read the name of your person, stand up.

1. Jake was born into a wealthy family. His father is a very successful business man.
2. Lisa’s mother is a world-renowned film director. She travels often.
3. Maria was born to a hardware store owner. She spends her time in her father’s store, playing in and running around the aisles.
4. Michael’s family was never wealthy but they lived comfortably. He has 2 younger sisters.
5. Emily was born to two successful parents, both lawyers. Her dream is to be just like them when she grows up.
6. Benji’s father passed away soon after he was born, leaving Benji’s mom to raise him and his brother as a single parent.
7. Jessica has an older brother and two working parents whom she loves very much.
8. Danny is the only child of the local grocers. He would rather run around outside with friends than stay in the store all day.
9. Sammi was born to an abusive father. The situation got very bad and she decided to leave a couple of weeks ago.
10. Tom lives with his aunt, uncle, and five cousins.
11. Kate lives with her mother in the city. She loves that it’s just the two of them but is concerned that her mother takes too many shifts.
12. Bobby and his parents live with another family in a small apartment. It sometimes gets a little too crowded for Bobby’s liking.

In elementary school and middle school it is very important to have a good nutritious meal three times a day. Growing minds and growing bones depend on it. Lisa receives her meals cooked especially for her by her personal chef. Unfortunately though not all of us are able to have the nutritious meal we need, especially three times a day. Sammi only eats when she manages to find food; seldom is it nutritious.

As we grow up though, sometimes our lives change, and when we once were barely able to have one nutritious meal, we now can have two. Bobby’s father has been working very hard and has been promoted to manager of an office supplies store. With the extra money, Bobby’s family was able to move out of the small apartment into a town home. His mom dropped one of her shifts and is now cooking a healthy dinner every night for the family. All Bobbys please
move from the back of the line to the 9th spot in line. Other times though situations can get worse. Business was bad and Maria’s father had to close the hardware store. Her family couldn’t provide both nutritious meals and pay the bills, so they began to live on food stamps. Maria now not only struggles to find a good meal, but she also struggles with her weight. All Marias please move to the back of the line.

Me: This next game we are going to play is a hunt for food, nutritious food. In front of the start line are three targets, each with a picture of the food pyramid. One by one each of you will take a shot at hitting one of the targets. If you don’t get it on the first try, don’t worry you have unlimited throws; keep throwing until you hit one of the targets. Now this isn’t your ordinary target game. The goal is to hit the target that will take you the least amount of effort; you want to hit the closest target. The catch is only two people can hit the first target, only six people (or 7 if there are 13 people in your group) can hit the middle target and only four people can hit the last target. You must stay in line order. Once everyone in your group has completed the activity please sit down. Alright, good luck!

Set up: three targets with food pyramid pictures; 7 hacky sacks; start line; the closest target is placed right in front of the line; the middle target is placed a foot or two back; the last target is about twice the distance as the first two.

Staff notes: Remember only 2 can hit the first target, 6 can hit the middle (or 7 if there are 13 people in your group), and 4 can hit the last; because the goal is to use the least amount of effort (ie; hit the closest target). What should happen is that the first two people in line should hit the first target, the middle 6 people should hit the middle target, and the last 4 should aim for the last target. While I said publicly that everyone gets unlimited tries, when you get to the last four people, announce that the rules have changed and they only get one shot. Before they begin to throw tell them “oh sorry you only get one shot”.

“I would now like each group to rotate one station over. Please sit in your current order.”

Round three: 16-18 - education
Me: When we are 16 our main focuses are school, school, and more school. High school is a pretty rough four years academically. There is tons of homework and tons of pressure to not only receive good grades, but to get into a good college. Just like every teenage boy, Danny, tries to balance sports and studies. He wants to earn a scholarship to play soccer at university.

We are constantly bombarded with questions about our future. Where do we want to go to school? What do we plan to major in? What do we want to be when we grow up? Surprisingly, some people wish they were asked these questions. Imagine not knowing if any of these things were possible. Imagine struggling in school but no one caring. Imagine worrying about someone else’s future so much that you have no time to worry about your own. This is exactly what’s happening to Michael. At the beginning of senior year, his parents pass away. He decides to drop out of school and get a job in order to provide for his two sisters. Michael is currently working as a mechanic in the local auto-shop. All Michaels please move to the back of the line. Kate has no time for school. She tries to focus on her studies but is too concerned about her mother overworking. For her, college is not an option. Therefore she is counting down the days till she can go get a job. Jake is also not having the best high school years. His father made a very bad business deal and lost the company. Luckily though, his family had some
inheritance to live off of, but they still needed to cut their spending. Jake leaves his prestigious private school and begins to attend public school. **All Jakes please move to the 7th spot in line.**

**Me:** This next game we are going to play is a writing exercise. In front of the first person in line is a sheet of paper and a pen. You will have one minute for the entire group to write their first name on the sheet of paper. You must stay in order and go one at a time. Additionally you are required to use you non-dominant hand to write you name. Meaning if you are right-handed use your left hand and vice versa. All names must be legible because if they are not you are going to have to re-write your name. During the minute no one can talk; the room must be completely silent. No hurrying up the people in front of you; worry about yourself. When I say go you all will begin. Ready set GO!

**Set up:** a sheet of paper and pen for each group (7 total)

**Staff notes:** Please be sure they are using their non-dominant hand; regardless of how well they write their name, **tell the last 5 people they have to rewrite it.**

“I would now like each group to rotate one station over. Please sit in your current order.”

**Round four: 20s-30s – employment**

**Me:** In our 20s and 30s we are just beginning to live by ourselves and support ourselves. We need to find a place to live; buy food to eat; and in general care for ourselves. Therefore finding a job out of college is our number one priority. Some of us get very lucky, like **Emily.** She graduates top of her class in law school. Following her parents footsteps, she joins their law-firm. She is an incredible lawyer. Her boss notices her talent and decides to give her a promotion. This promotion comes with a bigger paycheck and allows her to live a much more luxurious lifestyle. **All Emilys please move to the front of the line.** **Jessica’s** degree in education helps her land a job as a history teacher at the local high school. She is very happy. **Benji** also found himself to be very successful. He studies extremely hard in school and obtains a full-scholarship to a top private school. In college he meets Rob and together they invent the holographic computer. They start up a company and make millions of dollars. **All Benjis please move to the front of the line.** Sometimes it is not only luck but hard work that pays off. **Maria** manages to pay her way through community college, and she is hired as a guidance counselor in the local public school. **All Marias please move to the 8th spot in line.** **Tom** on the other hand, is fired from his job at the convenience store because of his constant tardiness. He never received a high school diploma and is spending more and more time at the bar.

**Me:** Seaboard USY is hiring a spokesperson and each of you will have the opportunity to be interviewed for this prestigious position. Each of you has 30 seconds to explain your favorite part of USY. The staff will ask each of you starting from the first person “why do you love USY?” You will answer “I love USY because…” Now the catch is you cannot repeat what anybody else in your group has said. So listen carefully! Remember you only have 30 seconds to answer and you cannot repeat. Once everyone has completed the activity please sit down. Good luck on your interview!

**Set up:** none

**Staff notes:** try your best to be sure no one in the group repeats an answer; keep track of the 30 seconds in your head, you may use a timer if you would like.
“I would now like each group to rotate one station over. Please sit in your current order.”

Round five: 40s-50s – a place to live
Me: Homelessness is one of the leading problems many people face today. This problem goes beyond not having a literal home, whether it’s being evicted or barely making a payment for rent each month. At middle-age we struggle to make ends meet. With utility costs and families, bills become more and more expensive. Sometimes we even have to make the decision to sell our house for a smaller less expensive one. Emily’s law firm undergoes financial struggles and is forced to lay people off. Emily manages to find another job, but it does not pay as well. She and her three adopted kids sell their mansion and move to a townhouse in the suburbs. All Emlys please move to the 3rd spot in line.
Me: It turns out we are all going to be buying new houses. We are going to be fishing for houses. In front of the start line there are 12 or 13 houses based on your group size; gold, white, and gray. Staff, if there are only 12 USYers in the group, please remove one of the white houses so that there are only 6 of them. If there are 13 USYers in the group, then there should be 7 white houses. One at a time and standing at the start line you will each use the fishing rod to hook a house and take it. You want the best house you can get. The gold houses are mansions, the white houses are suburban, and the gray houses are rundown small apartments. You must fish in order. Remember to sit so I know when your group has all taken their houses. Happy fishing!
Set up: 2 gold pieces of paper at each station (14 total); 7 pieces of white paper at each station (49 total); 4 pieces of gray paper at each station (28 total); ALL PIECES OF PAPER MUST HAVE A HOOK; a fishing rod at each station (7 total); fishing rod: ruler with string tied to the end and paper clip hook.
Staff notes: Theoretically the first two people should take the gold, the next six or seven people should take the white, and the remaining 4 take the gray.

DO NOT SWITCH STATIONS but come together as one group.

Closing/Debrief:
Raise your hand if you completed these activities fairly easily.
You represent the Unites States upper class.
Raise your hand if you struggled a bit but nothing was too hard. You most of the time managed to complete the games.
You represent the United States growing middle class. (1 in 2)
And raise your hand if you felt some of the activities were hard or you couldn’t complete them.
You represent the United States lower class; those living close to, on, and below the poverty line.

33% of people in the US are living in poverty. That is 1 out of every 3 people in this room. But poverty shouldn’t just be a number. It isn’t just a number. Living in poverty means living with every day worries of putting food on the table, of finding and keeping a job, of making ends meet just to pay the bills. Poverty means facing the necessities we take for granted as life decisions.

In life we face 4 ongoing struggles, malnutrition and hunger, education, employment, and homelessness. Even though we may not realize it, each one of us faces these problems every day; they are intertwined in our daily lives. Each of these problems has a wide spectrum and somewhere we each fall in. For instance: We eat meals three times a day; this satisfies our
hunger. We go to school, completing our education. Some of us go to work, employment. And every night we come home and sleep in our own beds. But some people cannot find a decent meal three times a day. Some of us aren’t able to complete their education. Some struggle to find a job. And some of us do not know if we have a bed to go to every night.

**DISCUSSION:** I’d now like to hear from you. What was your experience during this game? Did your person have it easy or was life hard for them? What was it like being towards the front of the line versus being towards the back of the line? Is there anything you’d like to share with the room generally about something you learned or thought about during this activity? *(Allow time for group discussion)*

What’s important is to turn your knowledge into action.

What can you do to help the hungry in your community?  
What can you do to motivate and excite kids about school?  
What can you do to aid those looking for jobs?  
What can you do to help the homeless?

As you leave, the staff and I will be handing out sheets with each of the 4 issues we discussed along with lists of organizations and ideas to help those in the United States and those in your own community who struggle with these topics. If you have any questions at all about anything that went on during this program, I’d be happy to answer them, so please come find me after.

Thank you guys so much.
What Can YOU Do?

1) Hunger and Malnutrition: Hunger is not having enough to eat to meet energy requirements. Hunger can lead to malnutrition. Malnutrition is a condition resulting when a person’s diet does not provide adequate nutrients for growth and maintenance, including undernutrition (too thin, too short) and ‘overnutrition’ (overweight and obesity).

http://www.feedingamerica.org/: Our mission is to feed America’s hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger.

http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/: Aimed at ending Senior Hunger, Meals on Wheels delivers meals to individuals at home who are unable to purchase or prepare their own meals.

http://www.nokidhungry.org/: The goal of SOS is for no child in America to grow up hungry. "Share Our Strength (SOS) is a national organization that works hard to make sure no kid in America grows up hungry.

Easy things you can do:
- collect canned and boxed food at you school or synagogue and deliver them to a loval food bank
- organize an event to go to a soup kitchen

2) Education: Receiving an education is a fundamental right we all have.

Visit http://www.ed.gov/esea to learn about the No Child Left Behind Act passed in 2001 to reauthorize the government’s aid program to disadvantaged students.

Easy things you can do:
- tutor kids at your local elementary/middle school
- organize/participate in school fairs, dances, or spring flings to raise money for the school in your community
- write to your county and see what they are doing to lower student dropout rates
3) Employment: Unemployment is defined as people who do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and are currently available for work.

Easy things you can do: Visit your state’s employment website and learn about unemployment in your state and ways you can help!
DC: http://does.dc.gov/
MD: http://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/
VA: http://www.vec.virginia.gov/
NC: https://desncc.com/deshome
or visit the national site: http://www.dol.gov/

4) Homelessness: Homelessness is a temporary condition that people fall into when they cannot afford to pay for a place to live, or when their current home is unsafe or unstable.

http://www.endhomelessness.org/: The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonprofit, non-partisan, organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. By improving policy, building capacity, and educating opinion leaders, the Alliance has become a leading voice on this issue.

http://nationalhomeless.org/: The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission: To prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights protected.

Easy things you can do: 
- volunteer at a local shelter
- raise money at your school or synagogue for a local shelter
People:

1. **Jake** – Jake began his life as the son of a wealthy businessman. He always had access to a nutritious meal. Unfortunately, at the age of 16, his father made a very bad business deal and lost the company. Luckily, the family had some inheritance money to live off of, but Jake had to move from his prestigious private school to a mediocre public school. He went to a public university and got a mid-level accounting job. He got married, had children, and lived comfortably in a three-bedroom house for the rest of his life. He died of old age at 85.

2. **Lisa** – Lisa was the daughter of a world-renowned film director. Growing up, she always got whatever she needed, and much more. Her meals were always farm fresh and cooked for her by her personal chef, “Only the best for daddy’s little girl”. Her days were spent shopping, while her nights were spent partying. After graduating from the top private school in the country, she entered Princeton University as a legacy. Because of her father’s wealth, she never needed to work and ended up marrying a star from one of her father’s films. She lived in a mansion in Beverly Hills until she tragically passed away at the age of 55 from a drug overdose.

3. **Maria** – Maria was born to a hardware store owner. She grew up in her father’s store, always playing in and running around the aisles. At 10 years old, business was bad, and her father had to close the store. Her family lived on food stamps, which made a nutritious meal hard to come-by, and her weight hard to manage. She had to balance her studies while waitressing in high school. Maria managed to pay her way through community college and got a job as a guidance counselor in the local public school. She was a foster parent to pay for her two-bedroom apartment. Because of the lack of fruits and vegetable as a child, she never enjoyed a healthy diet, and died at the age of 73 from obesity.

4. **Michael** – Michael’s family was never wealthy, but they lived comfortably. His parents had passed away when he was very young, so he and his sisters were raised by their grandparents. As a child, he enjoyed delicious home-cooked meals from his grandmother. When he was a sophomore in high school, his grandfather passed away. Michael dropped out of school and got a job as a mechanic at the local auto-shop. This job allowed him to provide for his grandmother and his two little sisters. He never went to college, but he made sure his little sisters got every opportunity for success. He lived in his grandparent’s house until he died at the age of 68. He was pleased to see his sisters succeed in life.

5. **Emily** – Emily loved living at home with her lawyer parents. She enjoyed her suburban neighborhood, great school, and healthy lunches. She graduated at the top of her class from a public university and went on to law school. Following her parents footsteps, she joined the law-firm they had just retired from. She was an incredible lawyer and quickly gets promoted. She bought a mansion in a nicer neighborhood and adopted three children. Unfortunately, the law-firm undergoes some financial struggles and is forced to lay people off. Emily manages to find another job but it does not pay as well, and she sells her mansion for a moderately sized townhouse in the suburbs. She
lived to the age of 88 and died happy in a retirement home surrounded by her children and grandchildren.

6. Benji – Benji’s mom was a single parent raising two sons. She did the best she could and always made sure the boys had a healthy meal. Benji worked extremely hard in school and obtained a full-scholarship to a top private university. Whilst in college, Benji roomed with Rob. Together, Benji and Rob invented the holographic computer. They developed a company and made millions of dollars. Benji married the quiet girl from his high school physics class, moved to a mansion, and had three wonderful children. After retiring, Benji and his wife started a scholarship fund to send public school kids to top private colleges. He died at 90 years old from old age.

7. Jessica – Jessica grew up with a brother and two working parents. She always had enough to eat, and snacks too. Unlike some of her friends, she had to work in high school to earn money to do the fun things she liked. She went to a state school and got a degree in secondary education, with a focus on history. She became a high school history teacher and worked at the same school for 45 years before retiring. She lived in a 3 bedroom house with her wonderful husband and two children. She passed away of breast cancer at the age of 67.

8. Danny – Danny was the only child of the local grocers, so he always had access to a good meal. Just like every teenage boy, he balanced sports with studies, sometimes focusing a bit too much on sports. He played division 2 soccer in college before returning home to run his parents grocery store. He married his high school sweetheart Jessica, the history teacher, and had 2 wonderful children. He lived in the suburbs with family until his wife passed away from breast cancer. He died one year later, at the age of 68 from a broken heart.

9. Sammi – Sammi grew up with a bunch of other children on the streets on New York City. She ate about one meal a day, and they were far from nutritious. She had run away at 8 years old from her abusive father and lived on her own after that. She only had a second grade education and was unable to ever gain employment. Sammi frequently went to the homeless shelter on cold nights to get a warm blanket. Sadly, she died of pneumonia at 43.

10. Tom – Tom lived with his Aunt and five cousins in a small apartment. He constantly fought with his cousins over who got to eat a second slice of pizza. Because his neighborhood was not the nicest, he was exposed to alcohol and drugs at a young age. He became an alcoholic in high school and never earned his high school diploma. He worked at a convenience store until he was fired for always being late. He lived with 3 roommates and girlfriend in a 2 bedroom apartment until he tragically died from alcohol poisoning at 52.

11. Kate – Kate grew up with her mother in a small house in the city. Her mom sometimes worked triple shifts just to put food on the table. Kate, although she was very smart, could never focus on school because she constantly worried about her mother overworking. She worried so much that after high school, she decided to become a
waitress to help out her mom. However, her mother became ill and Kate had to quit her job and they both relied on welfare. Kate could no longer afford the small house and they moved to a one bedroom apartment. After her mother passed away, Kate became a waitress, married the fry cook at her diner, and had one child. She died of natural causes at the age of 70.

12. Bobby – Bobby and his parents lived in a 2 bedroom apartment with another family. His father was a very hard worker and eventually became a manager of an office supply store. When Bobby was 11, his family was able to move to a small house and have nutritious meals every day. Bobby was an average student who enjoyed goofing off with his friends. He went to state college and got a job as a banker. He married a family friend and moved into a nice apartment where he raised 2 children. He died at 84 from old age.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Jake</th>
<th>Lisa</th>
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| 3 | Parents: hardware store owner  
Struggled with: weight  
College: yes-community  
Job: waitress while in school; guidance counselor in public school after graduated  
Family: foster parent to pay the bills  
House: apartment  
Because of the lack of fruits and vegetable as a child, she never enjoyed a healthy diet and died at the age of 73 from obesity. |
| 1 | Parents: wealthy businessman  
High School: public county school  
College: yes-public  
Job: mid-level accounting job after graduated  
Family: wife and kids  
House: three-bedroom house  
He died from natural causes at the age of 85. |
| 2 | Parents: mother is world-renowned film director  
Food: personal chef who cooked her organic and farm fresh food  
Hobbies: shopping and partying  
College: yes-Princeton University legacy  
Job: NA  
Family: husband (star from father’s film)  
House: mansion in Beverly Hills  
She tragically passed away at the age of 55 from a drug overdose. |
Michael

Parents: passed away in high school
Lives with: two younger sisters
Job: dropped out of school and became a mechanic to provide for sisters
College: NA
Family: never married
House: small apartment
He died at the age of 68 pleased to see his sisters succeed in life.

Emily

Parents: lawyers
College: yes-graduated top of her class from a public university; went to law school
Job: lawyer at parents’ law firm
Family: adopted three kids
House: mansion; then townhouse in the suburbs
She lived to the age of 88 and died happy in a retirement home surrounded by her children and grandchildren

Benji

Parents: single mother
College: yes-obtained a full scholarship to a top private school; roomed with Rob
He and Rob invented the holographic computer
Job: started his own company-made millions of dollars
Family: wife and three kids
House: mansion
He and his wife started a scholarship fund to send public school kids to top private colleges. He died at 90 years old from natural causes.
7

Jessica

MC MC MC MC MC

Parents: working
Loves to eat: snacks - popcorn, pretzels
College: state school and received secondary education degree
Job: worked in high school to pay for extra-curricular activities; high school history teacher after graduation
Family: married her high school sweetheart, Danny, and had two children
House: 3 bedroom house
She passed away of breast cancer when she was 67.

9

Sammi

LC LC LC LC LC

Parents: abusive father (ran away at age 8)
Lives with: other kids on the streets of NYC
Ate: one non-nutritious meal once a day
College: NA; only has a second grade education
Job: NA
House: homeless shelters during the winter
Sadly, she died of pneumonia at the age of 43.

8

Danny

MC MC MC MC MC

Parents: grocery store owners
College: played division 2 soccer at state school
Job: parents’ grocery store after graduation
Family: married his high school sweetheart, Jessica, and had two children
House: Lived in the suburbs with his wife until she died of breast cancer
Unfortunately, one year after his wife passed, he passed away from a broken heart.
Parents: her mom worked triple shifts to put food on the table; Kate worries mom is overworking
Job: waitress after graduates high school (no college)
Eventually quit job in order to take care of ill mother who soon passes away.
Welfare: yes
House: one bedroom apartment
Family: married the fry cook at the diner and had one child
She dies at the age of 70 due to natural causes.

Parents: deceased
Lives with: his aunt and 5 cousins
Food: constantly fought with his cousins over who got food
Struggled with: alcohol as a teen and never received a high school diploma
Job: a convenience store until fired for tardiness
House: lived with three roommates and girlfriend in two bedroom apartment
Because of his alcohol addiction, he sadly passed away from alcohol poisoning at 52.

Parents: father and mother
Father: works at office supplies store
Mother: works many shifts as a waitress
College: state school
Job: banker after graduated
Family: married a family friend and had 2 kids
House: apartment
At the age of 84, Bobby died of old age.
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