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ODYSSEY ADVENTURERS
Dear 25-year-old self,

I am the 25-year-old version of you, but a lot of things have changed about you. You are not still the quiet person that tries to always hide from attention. You have become the someone that you have always wanted to be, but just didn’t know how to become. Now you work in an orphanage as a part time job and still study in your major of Psychology at UW. You still live with your parents and save money for your mom to travel to all of the countries she wants to. You have established the goals you have put up for yourself, but it wasn’t as easy as you expected.

You are more open and social now. You like what you’re doing and are happy in your life. But just some advice that you may not have noticed: just simply enjoy your life, and don’t waste your time on anything.

This is what I would expect my 25-year-old self to say. I hope you have become the person I have described in the letter.

Sincerely,
The 15-year-old Me
Safaa Mohammed Saed

Dear 23-year-old JS3,

Are you in the NBA yet? Are you married yet? What college did you go to? What are you spending your money on if you’re rich? If you’re in the NBA, do you play for the Cavs? Did you meet Kyrie? Did you win any rings? I hope you’re in the NBA, playing great and looking great. Are you wearing #23? Did you buy Avé a crib yet?

How many cars do you have? How much money do you spend on your little sisters? How many people have you broke off? I hope you have your own shoe. I hope Ky is still your favorite player. Are you, Ky, and Bron the Big 3?

Stay strong, and don’t get in trouble. Keep working hard. Do you have a big house? Do you have an indoor court in your house? I hope you’re still cute and can dress! Did you choose the NBA or NFL? Hopefully you chose the NBA because it is less dangerous.

Did you get a pet dog? And some sharks? I hope you work hard still and didn’t do ANYTHING stupid! I hope you really read this. Don’t get distracted or don’t follow the wrong crowd. Be legendary! I hope you follow your dreams. And be great. Don’t stop trying to go to the NBA no matter how old you are. Remember all of your high school friends? Dre, Silas, Christian, Isaiah? Are you all still cool? I hope so. I’m sure you don’t want to read anymore so…Much love, Js3

Jerry Sanders III
Dear 20-year-old self,

Hey, it is 2023. How are you? Are you still dating Jamal? If you are, how is he?

I really hope you’re on Broadway. If not, they have no heart. Do you love Hamilton? Have you seen Hamilton? If you have, YASSSS.

How is Kady? She is 11 now.

Are you going to get a tattoo?

Are you in college? If not, please go to college.

Olivia Partee

Dear 25-year-old Jaayd,

How are you? Is your favorite song still “Hate You Love You” by Gnash? Who is Dontay and Jalem and Icelan Trea? How is Dezi? Is Dad still alive? Do you have two kids yet, and are you married to Alex or Kiyen or Alvin? How is Mom? What are our dogs’ names? Do you have a dirt bike / motorcycle? Where do you live? How many dogs do you have? Well, are you a doctor or a singer or a surgeon?

Well, that’s all. I’ll probably write you in a year or two. Oh, and is it 2028? Well, I will know by then. . . . Remember Grey’s Anatomy? Well, bye for real this time. I hope you can read this. Go to college!!!

Love always,
13-year-old Jaayd
Jaayd Roquemore

Dear 25-year-old self,

So are you a singer? Are you a dancer? Oh, hey, look up the song “Selfish.” Our goal should be going to college! I don’t even know what I want to do with my life yet.

Oh, and go on Music.Allys and look up your name: it’s Ashzianna3.

My goal in life would have to be going to college for about four years. YOU BETTER HAVE YOUR OWN HOUSE! Are you still in touch with Jassaint, Tati, Taquayia, and others? Try and go and be a great leader! Keep that in mind.

Remember Mrs. Brazzel? She was the best teacher!
Fun Facts:
Don’t do stuff that pressures you in a bad way
NO DRUGS
Think of it this way—if you do drugs or drinks, how are you going to be healthy? (Don’t smoke because cancer sucks.)
You’re in 6th grade and you’re having fun
You have to work harder to get better and get better grades
Friends are Jay, Tati, Theanda, Taquayia, Iyani, Alejandra, Tay Tay, Sierra, Amoni, Kiarra, Anecia, Jellece, Jemoria, Leelee, Kyra, RJ, Josiah, Marim, Yveet, etc.

Ashzianna Alexander

Dear Abdul,

You are 26. You are a police officer with the Madison Police Department. Now you are buying your own house. It may sound weird at the moment because you are buying a house at only 26, but you believed in yourself and are doing it now.

You have a nice dog, K4. You like to have that dog. He always listens to you, and he supports you in your ups and downs. You go on a five mile run together every day. It does not matter how the weather is.

But before all of this happened, a lot of stuff happened. You joined a lot of clubs to help you be better with English, and in the summer you worked, not for money, but for experience. Every summer you had a different job with more experience. So when you went to work for your main job, you knew what to do.

Abdul Mohammed Saed

Dear Gael Rodriguez,

Hello, how are you? How is my mom and dad and brother and sister? Have you seen them? How is my life? I am 20 right now. What is new? Is the iPhone 25 out yet? What car and what job do you have? How is my job? Do I have a beard yet? How long is it? I hope everything is good right now.

If you’re having a bad time, just forget about it and move on. I hope you like your job and that they pay you well. Who is President? Is he good? Do I still live in Madison, WI or somewhere else? If I did move, where did I go? Do I still play soccer? Did I make it on a professional team or did I break my leg or something?

Did the world change? What cool new things did they make? Do they still do the World Cup? Did I go to one of the FCB games? Did I meet Messi?

Gael Rodriguez
What is a Middle Schooler?

by Jaayd Roquemore

What is a middle schooler
I was asked one day
I knew what she was
But what should I say.

She is goofy and funny
She is fun and creative
All she wants is money
But spends every dime.

She is a fast thinker and smart
She is caring and a leader
And she has a big heart
She is pretty and cute.

She is sassy and sweet
She is loud and noisy
She loves to trick or treat
She is a good listener and open-minded.

She is wild and crazy
She is weird and unique
She is really lazy
She is mean but nice.

She is a cheerleader
But doesn’t like the work
She is the ring leader
And never gets hurt.

What is a middle schooler?
I was asked one day
A middle schooler can be all these things
But always breaks away.
Odyssey Explorers
Super Powers

If I were a superhero, I would have earth powers to put stone walls in front of bad guys. Francisco Uriostegui

My super power is going to be able to read my friends’ minds. Amari Diagne

Super Power!!!
If I could have any super power, it would be reading minds because reading minds is nice to have in case people are not telling the truth, or if they are having a hard time, you could tell what they are feeling and help them. Also, one more super power I would like to have is flight. First, because if I needed to have some fun and most definitely, if I needed some peace and quiet, I could just fly anywhere I wanted to be. Because of all these reasons why, I want these two particular super powers! Anna Uriostegui

If I had a super power, it would be super strength because I want to be able to beat up Donald Trump. Nyjua Daniel

I want to be Batman because he beat Superman. Ali Melendez

If I was a superhero, my super power will be having cool lightning to kill bad guys and help the people. Nasier Daniel

My super power is to fly to each planet. I would do that because I could find other planets with people. I could stop asteroids from crashing. I could fly through the Milky Way to find planets with people. Alan Mendoza

If I had a super power, I would want to be super strong. I would use my power to help people. Keenan Hayes

If I was a superhero, my super power would be electricity so I could shock the bad guys to keep them from doing bad stuff to people. Cadin Bent

I will have lasers because I will be Superman. If I had a super power, it would be lasers to kill the bad guys. Rae’Jon Shaw
If I was a super hero, I would like to have super speed and be invisible. I would like to have super speed so if I forgot something, I can go and get it fast. I would like to have invisibility because it looks cool. **Yarianie Rodriguez Tapia**

Super Girl

I would be Super Girl because she can fly and because I can shoot lasers out of her eyes. **Sheari Evans-Miller**

My name is Kimari and my super power will be to show kids how to read, and also I will show kids how to write good notes to family and friends. After that, I will go home and go to bed for the next day. **Kimari Christian**

If I were a super hero, my super powers would be night vision, super speed, flying power, super sound, having a laser eye, and being a very, very smart genius. **Don’ye Spivey**

If I were a super hero, I would have the power of mind control, and I would use it by saving people from making bad decisions and from being disrespectful. **Don’ielle Spivey**

If I had a super power, my super power would be a singing super power, and I would help people learn how to sing and to love to sing. **Alleanah Hancock-Jammeh**

If I were a superhero, I would fly and save the people. **Isa Melendez**

I would have lava eyes and hands so I can keep bullies away. **Mario Drone, Jr.**
**Favorite Animals**

My favorite animal is a shark. They swim in salt water. They swim fast.  
*Mario Drone, Jr.*

My favorite animal is a tiger. I like the way it moves – the way it stalks.  
*Ali Melendez*

My favorite animal is a koala. I like the way koalas climb.  
*Amari Diagne*

One of my favorite animals is an aye-aye. I like the way they tap on trees and listen for bugs to eat. I also like that they have very long fingers.  
*Don’ielle Spivey*

My favorite animal is a snake. I like the way snakes glide. I like the way snakes slither slowly to hunt their prey.  
*Nyjua Daniel*

My favorite animal is a cheetah because it moves slowly when it’s hunting its prey. I like the way a cheetah pounces and runs very, very, very fast.  
*Don’ye Spivey*

My favorite animal is a cheetah. It runs very fast and is yellow with black spots. It runs faster than a lion or a tiger, 68-75 mph.  
*Nasier Daniel*
My favorite animal is an alligator. I like how they move fast in the sand.  
**Keenan Hayes**

My favorite animal is a Megalodon. It swims very slowly because it’s huge.  
**Alan Mendoza**

My favorite animal is an octopus because it flows when it moves from one object to another with its really cool suction cups. I also think the octopus is cool because it can camouflage into different colors. Next, I’d like to tell you about how octopuses can open up their food with their beaks under their tentacles. Lastly, I want to tell you that octopuses have three hearts! That’s super cool! P.S. They can grow back an arm if it breaks off. There are so many more reasons why octopuses are so cool, but it would take up the whole page.  
**Anna Uriostegui**

My favorite animal is a giraffe. His name is JoJo, and he walks gracefully across his home.  
**Rae’Jon Shaw**

My favorite animal is a puppy! I like puppies because when they run and play together, it is so, so cute. If you have a girl puppy, you can have another puppy. Also, if you have a boy puppy, you and your brother can play with it!  
**Kimari Christian**

My favorite animal is an elephant because I like the way it moves its trunk. The bad thing is that elephants are going extinct. The reason elephants are going extinct is because people want their tusks.  
**Yarianie Rodriguez Tapia**

My favorite animal is a zebra. I love how they walk and how they run.  
**Isa Melendez**

My favorite animal is a snake because they are very scaly, weird feeling and cool in my opinion. I also held a big yellow python.  
**Francisco Uriostegui**
ODYSSEY JUMPSTART
**OVERHEARD IN JUMPSTART**

I like to color with my friends and play with them every day at the park. **Kimauriah Thompson**

I like to make Christmas trees, and make cotton candy, and draw with my friends. **Nakylah Norton**

I like to play with my friends. **Rasaki Emmanuel, Jr.**

I like to splash in the pool with my friends. **Johnathan Taylor**

I like to go to the pool. **Choho Ako IV**

I like to play on the monkey bars, and swim in the pool, and go in the bouncy house with my friends. **Jameson Taylor David**

I like to play school. **Erick Mendoza**

I like to play soccer. **Alex Rojas Gonzales**

My blocks. I like my blocks. **Johnathan Taylor**

Who wants more pizza? ME! **Aria Wright**

I have 8 dollars and 55 cents! Look! **JT David**

I ate my pico de gallo! **Mane Talley**
I counted 5 dollars!!
Kas’myr Emmanuel

My grandma and my grandpa call me ladybug! Nakylah Norton

Mom’s in Odyssey class. We’re here too. Alex Rojas Gonzalez

Look at my shoes! Kaydence Partee

I have a doll. Aa’laisa Batchelor

Mom used to eat these same crackers when she was three! JT David

My favorite food is spaghetti. Kaydence Partee

I would have my robot help me clean up! JT David

Clean my hallway, robot!
Mane Talley

Woah! This is so cool. My robot is spinning around and around. Kaydence Partee

Don’t color on my face, robot! Jamyla Davis
My name is Dauntrea Vance. I am the second eldest of 10 siblings. I attend University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am currently undecided but interested in majoring in legal studies.

I aspire to be a defense lawyer. I am excited to utilize experiences gained from my life at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My goal is to work for the Department of Justice to enforce the law and implement federal leadership. I want to combat the racial inequality in the system and to help bring justice in America.
At the beginning of my freshman year in high school I was not thinking about college nor my future. When I was recommended for PEOPLE program towards the end of my first year, I waited until the last minute to fill out my application. At first I thought that it was too late to fill it out and do the essay portion, so I told my multicultural student director that I decided not to do it. She encouraged me to fill it out anyways and told me to just give it to her the following day. I finished the application and turned it in and shortly got a letter in the mail saying that I got into the program. Once I got in, I begin to think about college and worry about what I wanted to do in my future. I stuck with it, and now I am going to one of the top ten public universities in the world. If any of you feel like you are not college material or just don’t know what you want to do in your life right now, I strongly encourage you to at least look into college programs so that you can get a glimpse of the college experience and decide if college is for you. I think you will realize that college will give you opportunities that you cannot even imagine. Furthering your education in the long run may be the best decision that you ever make.

Dauntrea “Trea” Vance has several family members who graduated from the UW Odyssey Project: her grandmother Annette Bland ’06, uncle Dwayne Bland ’07, and mother Tineisha Bland ’15. Dauntrea attended Odyssey Junior 2015-2016 and was accepted into both Edgewood College and UW-Madison. She began her freshman year at UW-Madison this fall.