

ODYSSEY ORACLE

ODYSSEY MOMENTS



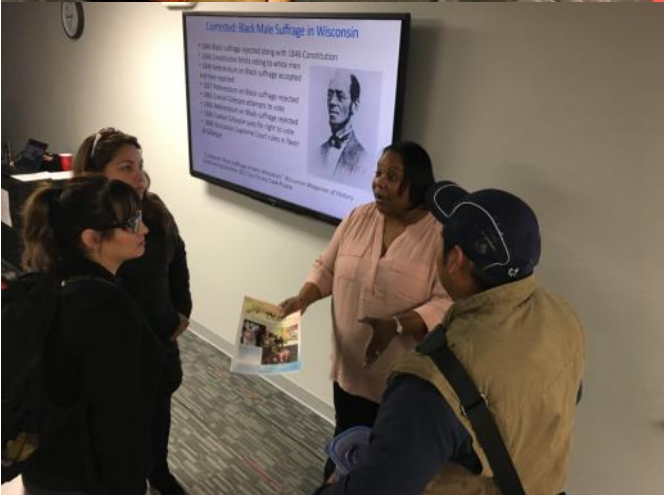
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Emily Auerbach, Project Director; Oracle Editor
Kevin Mullen, Associate Director; Oracle Editor
Emily Azad, Odyssey Coordinator
Colleen Johnson, Director of Development and Community Partnerships

emily.auerbach@wisc.edu
kevin.mullen@wisc.edu
emily.azad@wisc.edu

608-262-3733 or 608-712-6321
608-572-6730
608-262-3885
Beth McMahon, Oracle Designer



PROUD OF OURSELVES



I am very proud of myself. I can really say that for someone my age, I have done many good things in life. Taking full responsibility for my daughter, I consider myself to be a good mom, always working to provide

for my little princess. I'm always trying to find the good in the bad, be happy, and give a smile to those around me, even if sometimes I feel my world crumbling. I'm very proud of myself for having courage in everything I do. I believe that mistakes make you grow up. Life is all about learning. I am very proud of myself for everything I have overcome. I am proud of myself for making sacrifices for the people I love. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**)



. . . A desire has burned in me since youth: to have my own business and be my own boss. I officially started Ruthie's Food Cart and Catering along with a second business—"Fix Me a Plate."

This is the kicker: I have no startup capital, but I have the drive and determination to make my businesses a success. . . . I will use Wednesday's class to encourage and feed my soul. I have two part-time jobs that provide me with income and serve to fund my businesses, as well as provide me with insurance. . . . The true triumph is me finally taking that leap of faith that started by being chosen to be an Odyssey Scholar. (**Ruthie Allen**)

I love and am proud of my independence. I'm a single-minded woman and am proud of my own decision making. . . . I come from a strict



family growing up. I was always and still am a respectful person. But growing up I colored my hair any color I wanted. I cut my hair short and kept it that way for a long time. I dressed how I wanted because I

always knew who I was. My hair color and style and way I dressed didn't make me represent the "Bad Girl" stereotype that the Hmong people had created. I broke most rules in the house and took beatings for it, but it has made my younger siblings' teenage years easier. I turned out all right. Now that I am a woman and a mom, all my siblings look up to me. They seek advice and guidance from me. It truly shows what kind of a person you've become when your own parents seek advice from you, too. Sometimes it has to take one person to break all the rules to open the eyes of the ones who set all the rules. (**Bao Thao**)





I am an awesome father and grandfather.

My father was not kind to me as a child, and we never had a father/son relationship when I became an adult. Based on my feelings related to having a

negative and somewhat non-existent relationship with my father, I made a promise to myself that I would be a good father. I have four children: one son and three daughters. Three are adults and have children of their own, and one daughter is nine.

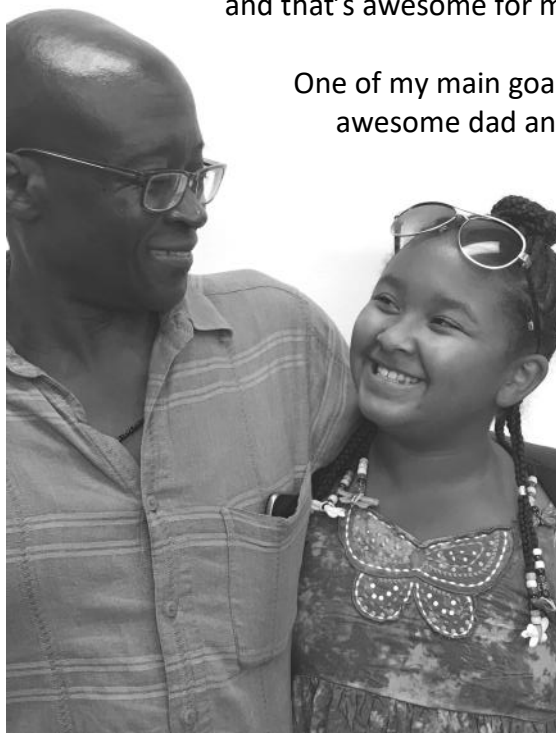
When my older children were young, I almost always worked overtime and would come home, make dinner, and fall asleep on the floor in the evenings. They would put a pillow under my head and a blanket over me.

I was a strict father but also kind. Our home was the place where most of my children's friends would hang out because it was safe and nurturing. Now my older children thank me for being that hard and crazy dad that most of their friends wished they had growing up in a bad area in Hammond, Indiana. They said they now realize that I had to be that kind of dad to protect them from the bad environment that we lived in. There were gangs, drugs, drive-bys, girls having children at 13 because they wanted someone to love them, and rampant child abuse and discrimination. I told them I don't mind being the "bad guy dad" because it shows that I really care and love them enough to make the easy and hard sacrifices for them as children and adults.

My children say they do not know how I keep going and doing for them, their children, and Sidney. They say they don't understand how I continue to work so much, sleep so little, and survive. They say I motivate them and set an example of what a real dad should be like, and they love me.

Besides having all of my grandchildren and Montessori preschool, I have them all of them in a sport. I do this because athletics, also teach life skills. Learning to focus, having discipline, understanding consistency/repetition, being comfortable with communication skills, and having the ability to work as a team member are valuable skills that are essential in education, careers, and life.

Sidney is also enrolled in Kumon Reading and Best Brains Math on Wednesdays to increase the probability of her being able to be whatever she wants to be. I truly do not want her to struggle like I did. It's funny that for her so far education is fun and easy. Sometimes we struggle with the afterschool work at home, but in class she shines, and that's awesome for me to watch.



One of my main goals in life was to be an awesome dad and granddad and be able to have opportunities to share some experiences with my children and grandchildren that I didn't have growing up or even as an adult. I did the work to make those things happen. I am an awesome dad through good, bad, and awesome times. I love being a dad!
(Bruce Moore)



I'm proud that I don't dwell on break-ups like I used to. I'm proud that along the line of being mistreated and taken for granted, I learned my worth. Not having my dad in my life since a young age or any positive male

guidance or role models really makes me vulnerable to men in general. I've learned and still am trying to teach myself to be the strong, independent woman that I can be. I could never let a man determine that for me. Break-ups used to have me feeling broken and empty for weeks. Now I have the strength to get through it. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**



I feel very proud of taking care of my family during a very difficult time financially and physically. When I had my first son seven years ago, the housing market went under and my mother lost her home.

Although we don't get along very well, I moved her in and took care of her for six years. I also had my first newborn baby at the time, post-partum depression, and two jobs. Eventually, since my mother couldn't find a job, she helped watch my two sons. I always kept a roof over all our heads, paid the bills, and made sure we had everything we needed. It was a big change for me to go from only having to look out for myself to taking care of my whole family, but I kept it together in the end. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

Well, the fact that I'm alive at 38 is absolutely astonishing. I don't recall a period in the past 15 years where the folks I was around were not dying of drunk driving, overdoses, robberies, and drug stuff, or, in the more likely



cases, serving time. The miracle is in my life as a father who is uplifted and on a mission to give back to the city I live in.

I'll never forget the last time I couldn't open my eyes

(overdoses, seizures), when the deputies called "Molitor" in my segregation cell. I went from dying in cells and lying to the world on a regular basis to becoming an educated man in the community. I have a 3.2 GPA after two years of college. I had never in my life written in an academic setting, and I had never done algebra in my life. I'm a two-time felon who dropped out of school at 15. Next fall I'm going to attend a Big Ten university.

I'm proud of myself for learning how to surrender to the process in order to survive. I'm going to use my life to connect to and serve those starting the way I started. I also plan on using my education to turn this classist, racist, sexist American system on its ear. It's never too late for folks to start over. **(Adrian Molitor)**





"Sit back and let young pimping brag for a minute." --T.I.

I know I'm not asked to brag. I do that every day in class, but you just never hear it. Modesty is not in my blood. What do I have to brag about? My mind, my path, or my career? I'll pick my career.

As you know (or should), I am an electrician. In my history I have built the glass building overseeing the square, the new wing in the UW Hospital, the solar project in the city, and the Google mod in Nashville. With these hands I'm a bad **** You get the point, right? What makes this more impressive is the fact this was accomplished in a year and a half. Let me stop bragging before I make people jealous.
(**Ladaro Taylor**)



I'm proud that I even made it this far. Why? Because I was told that I wasn't going to make it. I was judged by people. My mom didn't really show me love or support, and my dad was barely around. I didn't have anyone to talk to. It was bad to

the point where I would spit up blood in school and have to fake it like everything was OK. I tell myself every day that I'm proud because I made it without taking the easy way, which would mean quitting. Don't listen to anybody else about your life. Their opinion doesn't matter, whether it's family or friends. (**Lisa Simmons**)

I am proud that I'm still able to get things done after my car quit on me about a month ago. Although I get up extra early for work because I have to catch the bus, I still manage to do everything in a timely



matter. What makes this somewhat difficult is having a three-year-old that doesn't want to get up or wants to walk really slowly. So the night before, I make sure everything is ready for the next day. That's what makes the day go by faster. (**Sch'Royce Brown**)



I'm very proud about my job. I have been working at Monona Terrace for five years now. I started my odyssey at Monona Terrace in 2011 as a temp washing dishes. After two weeks of work, I was offered a job by the executive chef. He said he liked my work ethic. In 2012, I was hired as a steward. Within two months' time, I moved to the cold side as a prep cook. That same year, I moved again to the host side of the kitchen. Before I knew it, I was working in all areas of the kitchen. In the spring of 2013, the chef asked me if I would like to work in the café on the rooftop of Monona Terrace. I said yes! I was a success in the café for two years. Then, lo and behold, a manager position opened up. I applied and got the position as the receiving manager, which I am very proud of. (**Derrick Allen**)



CHANNELING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

It is 1852, and escaped slave Frederick Douglass has just read a review in The Southern Quarterly Review stating that slaves cannot dream of liberty because it is “a conception which belongs so naturally to the white man.” The essay goes on to argue that it is “a cruel task to disturb him in the enjoyment of that life—slavery—to which God has destined him,” that slaves “bask in the sunshine and are happy,” and that “Christian slavery . . . is the brightest sunbeam which Omniscience has destined for his existence.” Frederick Douglass responds:

Dear Editor:

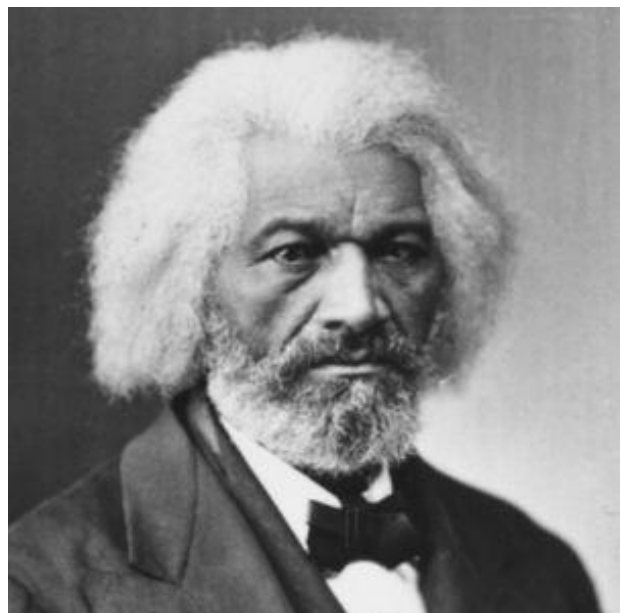
The infinite evil and ignorance with which the writer of said editorial writes most certainly is not Omniscience. Omniscience would be to know and have the awareness and insight that we are all men and created equally under God. The writer has stated it would be a cruel task to ‘disturb’ the slave in the glorious life of slavery. If the writer believes daily beatings, great injustices against your family, and having your children stolen in the night are great experiences to enjoy daily, I challenge him to live the life himself so that he could know the true ache of hunger, the physical and emotional pain, and, most of all, the true cold bitter nature of slavery. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

Does not the Negro have a history before slavery? Let us not forget the three great African Empires of Mali, Songhai, and Ethiopia. The Negro enjoyed life in his own land and amongst his own people. Your chattel slaves were once blacksmiths, farmers, and hunters. You exploited these skills to build your economy. How many Negroes have escaped your plantation seeking liberation, knowing that to do so is certain death? Crispus Attucks was the first person killed in the Boston Massacre; did he not sacrifice his life for liberty? . . . You speak of Christian slavery: this is an oxymoron because to be Christian is to be Christ-like, to love and show compassion to your fellow human beings. Slavery is hatred and the dehumanization of a human being. So, Editor of

the Southern Quarterly Review, go and listen to your slaves on the plantation as they pray to the Omniscience and sing songs of liberty, and you might learn what it means to be an American.

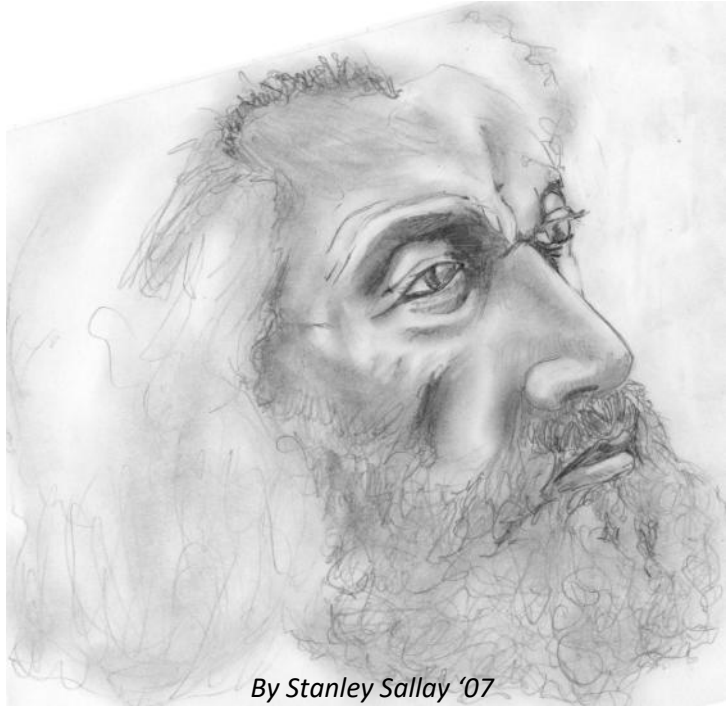
(Derrick Allen)

On behalf of myself and the rest of those in the nation suffering through extremely painful words, work, and whips, we deserve to live just as righteously as anyone else. We are all equal through our skin and our eyes. We deserve freedom and more. We deserve to have back our lives that were taken away from us at 12 months when our mothers were abducted from us. We deserve our emotions back, our families, and the rest of our souls that are out in the hot fields of the plantations. . . . Slavery is a dark hole with no light and no voice. **(Selena Muñoz)**



Liberty and freedom are for all. The white man is being selfish and wants to keep slaves ignorant. He does not understand that they are people like him, just another color, and they would love to enjoy their freedom. God loves us all and does not want this type of life for the slaves. (**Sayury Peralta Vivanco**)

Slaves cannot be happy because we are being mistreated. We do not know how it feels to be treated kindly. We are beaten for any little thing. We dream of liberty and freedom, but we get treated like we are nothing (**Arioun Jones**)



By Stanley Sallay '07

I remember young Henrietta and Mary, ages 22 and 14 years old. They had been whipped so badly that the open wounds on their heads, shoulders, and backs were infected. The fact that you are saying slaves like Henrietta and Mary were happy is wrong. Do you think a human being is happy to go through anything those girls went through? What makes them different than you? There is no difference; we are all equal. (**Lisa Simmons**)

I have to ask a rhetorical question: how can God want a human being to be a part of "Christian slavery" when all are equally respected under God? . . . Give me my God-given birthright to be a man. (**Ta'Tiana Clacks**)

I feel sorry for you because you are so ignorant to not know how slaves feel. You do not know the feeling when a child is separated from his mother and gets whipped without reason. I get angry when you talk about God and Christianity. God never says the white man owns the black man. God talks about love

and compassion, and you do not have any of that. (**Victor Rojas**)

You do not have the right to decide what our higher power feels is right. How can one determine my destiny? Have I not got a right to be a free man? This is the land of the free and the home of the brave, is it not? That blood-stained cotton and sweat-filled harvest belong to me. God did not create us to be your slaves. (**Charnice Anderson-Morris**)

My liberty that you speak of does not show that I lack the understanding that we all as humans should be treated equally. My liberty that you speak of does not show we have barely enough to eat or enough clothes to survive the year. . . . My liberty is sacrificed for your wealth. This God you speak of would not allow this kind of slavery. How is this Christianity that you speak of, to steal from the good to give to the evil? . . . My God that loves purely and with understanding does not carry blood on his hands. (**Tandalaya Taylor**)

Slavery is something you could never begin to fathom or grasp. Can you just for one moment picture being terrified all of the time, always confined under the white man's supervision and rules, being born into a world that hates you because of the color of your skin, born into this life of heartache and sorrow? Can you imagine being taken away from the only family that you know and never seeing them again, working in conditions that would be too cruel for a wild animal to function in, not knowing your own age or birthday, watching your own brothers and sisters get whipped senselessly, screaming out for dear life? **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

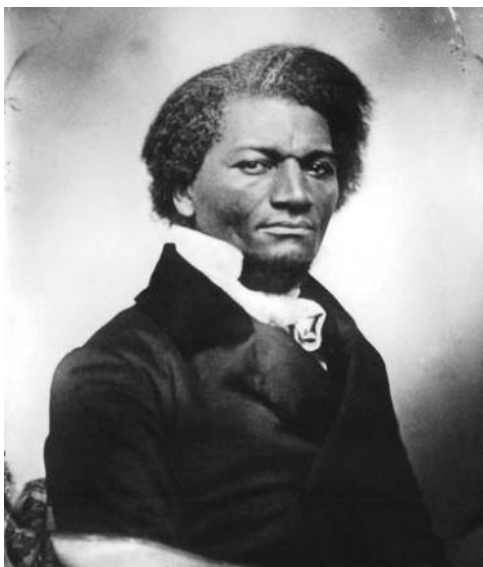
How dare you make such statements! The anger I feel as I write this letter is greater than the pain that runs through my tears. At times like this I think learning to read is more a curse. . . . Since the day we were both born, we have had different destinies. When you were born, you had your family by your side; I was taken away from my mother. You were pampered with clothes and fancy things; I could barely have a shirt and owned no pants. You were privileged enough to go to school; for me, learning was forbidden. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

I must vehemently disagree with your editorial as well as your opinions regarding the prevalent ideology of slaves, slavery, and freedom. We dream of being free physically, mentally, and emotionally. We dream of freedom for our children as well as our parents. . . . The Constitution states "Liberty and Justice for all!" We are part of that "all"! . . . In the Commandments, the Bible clearly states, "Thou shalt not kill," but we are killed, physically, mentally, and spiritually. **(Bruce Moore)**

If we are so unintelligent, why do you fear us so? The thought that slaves do not dream of liberty is preposterous. Many of us die on our quest for freedom and would rather meet our untimely demise than continue the treachery of enslavement. . . . You are wolves in sheep's clothing. You use the Bible to justify your barbarity. Yet we are David and you are Goliath, and this battle you will not win. **(Tori Armour)**

You will not be moved by the sight of an over-used linen shirt drenched in a year's worth of sweat and many days of dried blood from being whipped. You wine and dine, sit back and entertain yourselves by talking about who can take more beatings, keeping us in the fields and in your kitchens. Who are you to determine who stays in the fields day after day with blistering hands and feet? Imagine your grandmother, your mother, your sisters, your wife, and all your daughters getting raped or whipped. Who are you to play God's voice and say that it is God who chooses to enslave someone with a darker skin tone than yours? **(Bao Thao)**

I give voice not only for myself but for all my brethren born into bondage. . . . I now dedicate my life to the abolition of Slavery! We are Men meant to be free, not to be purchased! I probably will not see the end of slavery in my lifetime. But with the help of decent white men and other free colored men, we have begun the battle for the coming generations. Give us Liberty, or give us Death! **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



**Sincerely,
Frederick Douglass**

CHANNELING WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

Feeling it would be culturally inappropriate for him as a white man to write as a black man, Adrian chose to write in the voice of white abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, responding to the same 1852 editorial but using Garrison's passionate and flowery prose style.

Dear Editor,

Today I ask you countrymen and city folk alike: at what speed would you yourself wish to live this life of freedom you currently enjoy? Freedom itself is an absolute; its reality is either felt or it is not. Our black Americans cannot and will not embrace the liberty of your imposed European God, written with the stinging lash of slavery's quill as a mere means of benefiting your churches.

Today, my good people, I ask: that every yoke be broken and every bondman be set free, free from the social construct of Christian slavery as employment and the chains and shackles as an acceptable practice. You offer the slow drip of emancipation as mentioned by Douglass with a promise of another man's liberty: Lunacy!

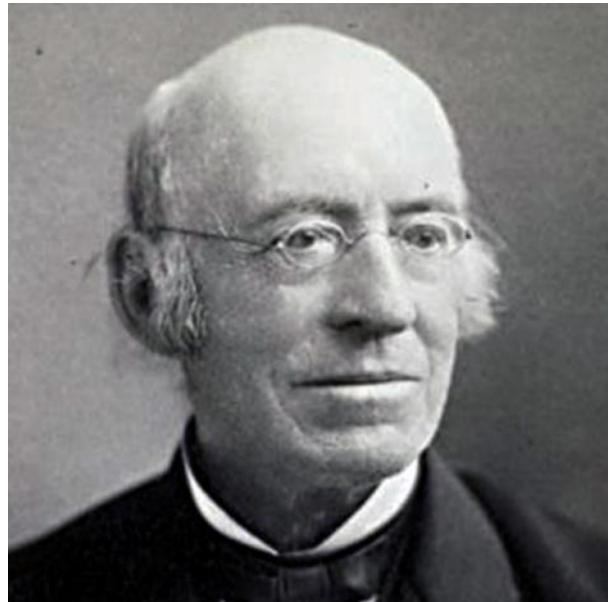
In my freedom from the American Colonization Society and in my constant writing against the lightning of your whips, my pen and life's actions resonate with the thunder of a just and thorough emancipation from bondage, with every man's God as a catalyst of true human faith in the swift freedom of all.

Our families need not be conflicted by the "self-evident" gospel of our current authoritarian grace, in the lives and pulses of the enfranchised former slave: the will of God himself. One day all Americans need to feel the rays of justice, the face of brotherhood found only in the abolition of the discursive Constitution and all writings and actions affiliated with the lies of gradual emancipation. I write and speak to you as one who is an immovable force of freedom for all, a warrior of all human will and its connection to a just God's will.

Yours in service,

William Lloyd Garrison

(Adrian Molitor)



SPECIAL PLACES

My special place would be my bedroom. It is my sacred spot. When I step into that room, it is like stepping into another world. My bed is warm and cozy, like being snuggled by a bear. The walls are white, like being on a cloud. To the left, you would see a self-made goal wall filled with daily prayer and motivational quotes. It is a reminder of my future. Right outside my window there is a big old tree; it is so long that it reminds me of Jack and the Beanstalk. My sacred spot gives me a peace of mind and makes me feel secure. It is a secret getaway from life, bills, and stress. (**Barbara Rodgers**)

The footbridge on Sherman is where I taught my nephew to fish. I hate worms, but he was always fearless when it came to baiting the hook. I miss him, but in that space, I can feel him in the grass beneath my feet, the wind in my hair, and the peace in my heart. It is where I go to think, to cry, to reflect, or just be. No matter where I am, Tenney Park will always be home. (**Tori Armour**)

I keep my bedroom simple, clean, and austere. The rest of my house is filled with toy cars, books, and all kinds of kid things. I like to keep my bedroom sparse and barren of things so I can clear my mind. I have just one bed with a night table next to it, and a table with a fan. The only real special thing in it is a very large, wall-length window that almost points at the sky. It is cool to open the blinds when there is a storm to look at the lightning. (**Hailey Sjuggerud**)



As I walk into the apartment, I can just feel peace. The picture of my family on the wall just describes all the wonderful moments we had together. My house is filled with all kinds of flowers, from white roses to tulips. The walls that help me express myself are filled with ancient Aztec figures, from a jaguar skull head with beautiful colors to a “Macuahuitl” (a weapon made out of wood that the Aztecs used in battle). The white doors in my apartment make me feel happy. They represent light to me. When I walk all over my house, I can see the paintings of saints and the Virgin of Guadalupe, which makes it clear that I have a religious belief. One of my favorite places is my living room, which has small sofas that are made out of leather. They represent the room I spend the most amount of my time in with my daughter. My house is my own space where I feel free and comfortable. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**)

There is no place like my dad’s grave. It is literally in the middle of nowhere. My dad is buried way in the back in the Muslim cemetery. The big strong tree with long branches is how I always remember exactly where to go. On a nice summer day, I go and sit on his grave. The wind, so soft and gentle, blows the chimes in the tree. It is so peaceful when the birds are chirping. I kiss my hand and put it on his grave while telling him how much I love and miss him. I wipe away my warm tears, get up and say “Assalam-o-Alaikum” (“peace be upon you” in Arabic). I smile and wave goodbye. When I am there, I am at peace; it is my happy place. (**Maya Rasheed-Bracey**).

I used to look longingly at the boxcars on the backside of Baird St. I would smell the wet blackened leaves on the ground. In the house were new babies, baby powder, regret. I couldn't be the father I am today back then. Every October a little piece of regret dies as I feel my sons' love. **(Adrian Molitor)**

All the waves, the wind, the sun, the sand, and a towel and a good book.... This is my special place. **(Victor Rojas)**

It's Sidney's room! The walls are light blue, and on each wall there are posters, her drawings and pictures from when she was two, three, four, and five. There are posters of water, pictures of her and me at the Shedd Aquarium in front of the large fish tank with sharks, dolphins, rays, pink, orange, green, yellow, and more! There were white fish, black fish, brown fish, brown and white fish, black and white striped fish, green fish, blue fish, gray fish, silver fish, red fish, yellow fish, and red, blue and white fish and more! They were all in a very large tank at the front of the aquarium. They all swim around in a big circle, from the top of the tank, the middle, and in the bottom. The water is blue green, and the

light reflects off the water and all the fish and mammals; it is such an awesome site! I have been taking Sidney there since she was three, and it is the first place she saw her favorite animal, a dolphin! **(Bruce Moore)**

The one place that has special meaning to me is my study room. I love to kick back in my chair and listen to John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" or some 90s R&B. Sometimes I sit quietly and watch my fish swim back and forth, begging for more food. It is special to me because this is also the place where I pray to God and meditate on his word. **(Derrick Allen)**

Troll Beach in Stoughton was a favorite spot for our family this summer. The water was an awesome blue-green mix, which glistened against the sunlight. The sand was light brown until the shoreline where it met the water, and then the color turned a dark brown muddy mix. The inflatable toys that floated on top of the calm crisp clean water were bright yellow and blue. The lifeguards sat perched on their high chairs, dressed in classic red swimsuits, with silver whistles hanging from their necks. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



I will write about my grandmother's house. My grandmother's house has a special meaning for me because it was the place where all my immediate family reunited every weekend. My uncles, cousins, and aunts reunited, and my grandma made a big meal for the day and for everyone. It was unusual compared to here because one of my uncles brought his guitar and my aunt and other uncle would sing along with him. My other aunts would help grandma cook, and my younger uncle would play with us. I miss those weekends where I used to see my cousins and play with them. My grandmother's home was amazing; it was green like the color of water and was three stories, but it was located in a regular area. Her house was next to others, so you had the chance to meet all the neighbors and play with them. I always waited for the weekend so I could see my cousins, neighbors, and friends and play with them. I remember we would play volleyball, roller skate, play hopscotch, mata gente (kill people) with the ball, etc. **(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**



My old room has special meaning to me. It is the place I grew up in, from posters on my wall of my favorite singers to a lava lamp that is on my dresser. **(Arioun Jones)**

The park is relaxing with the comfortable grass and a nice summer breeze. The quiet gives you peace of mind. The oak tree is dark brown and tall. The sky is bright and sparkly. **(Lisa Simmons)**



Books and pencils are the key to life. **(Alexis Law)**

My special place is my small kitchen located in my two-bedroom apartment. My kitchen is special because it is where I prepare my Italian meatloaf bowls.

Meatloaf bowls are just a bit smaller than tennis balls and are made from a meatloaf mixture. Meatloaf balls are placed on a bed of cabbage and a heaping scoop of homemade mashed potatoes.

I love the smell of garlic, onions, peppers, and Italian seasonings while my meatballs roast in the oven at 350 degrees for 45 minutes until done. The aroma fills the house for hours. **(Ruthie Allen)**

This place was a place that I learned so much about myself and where I would be in life. I learned how to love me and the time I had to share with the world. This place was always cold in temperature but warmed my body with the chemicals that would save my life. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

My green square card table that sits in the back of my bedroom fits right between my two big windows that give me lots of light while I am doing arts and crafts. It is two feet high and full of storage containers on top with all of my paintbrushes, pencils, jewelry tools, glue, and paint containers. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

My bedroom has a special meaning for me because I have a huge, comfy, and cozy bed that my daughter and I like to snuggle up in while watching scary movies together.

(Angela Carpino)

From the street looking towards the small, square, one-floor house, all you could really see was a lot of small green trees with guayabas growing out of them. There were also lots of colorful flowers. On one side of the small house, there were concrete steps to get you through the trees and flowers. Once you reached the top, you could see lots of green vines creeping their way along the outside of the small house made of bricks that were colored white. A big window was on the left side of the house, and on the right there was a small door with another little window on the right. This was a place that had special meaning because it was my grandparents' house in Michoacan, Mexico. Stepping inside, I would always hear laughter and see family photos hanging all over the walls. It smelled like my grandma was always doing laundry. A bright red arch welcomed you to the kitchen. It was always bright and sunny in the day because of the bright yellow walls, but at night, it was always dim, warm, and cozy. I

loved spending my time there with my grandpa. **(Carla Herrejon)**

When I was growing up, my aunt and uncle's house in Minnesota was always one of my favorite places to go visit. They both were so welcoming.

The building is made with brown and red bricks and is well over 100 years old; at least it looks like it. When you enter into the hall before entering the actual house, there are always lots of shoes. . . . By the windows are "grandma's couches," a cream color with lots of floral designs. Straight ahead is my uncle's shaman table (*ta neng*). There are lots of pictures of the family, nicely framed. The walls are worn down, but you are reminded that they are the walls of memories. There are more pictures on the buffet table. The bathroom was one of my favorite places because the tub was always tall and deep. This meant swimming/bath time equaled fun. . . .

The kitchen was small, but it meant everyone was part of the fun conversations at dinnertime. In the kitchen there were plenty of plants. I always asked, "Why do you always have so many plants?" My aunt would always reply with, "It's all good medicine for when it is needed." The stove was old, cream colored, and worn down, but it, too, can still do its job to cook up a mean meal for the whole family. I still look forward to visiting each time it's planned.

(Bao Thao)



My special place is anywhere alone with nature; somewhere I can just sit and feel the breeze and breathe. I enjoy this type of scene because this is where I feel like I am part of something and worth something. I feel free.

(Nathaniel Robinson)

When I was about eight years old and my parents were still together, I lived in a house with my two brothers and mom and dad. I can still remember the house like it was yesterday. I was the only one who had a room to myself.

My brothers had to share the bright room that faced the sun and the back yard, while my parents slept in the huge king and queen room in between my room and my brothers' room. I have never felt so happy as in that moment of my life. Even though I felt like I had only lived there for a day, I can remember the sunny weather and fresh rose-pink paint on my bedroom walls like it was yesterday.

The next thing I remember is being inside the warm, toasty house and having the messiest, stickiest hands from carving these bright orange pumpkins. Even though my pumpkin was small, I felt like it was as heavy as a gallon of milk.

It was nice to live in a gingerbread house instead of trying to share a one-bedroom apartment with your two brothers and parents. **(Selena Muñoz)**

My mom's house is a place of peace, some yin-yang, and everywhere relaxing aromas flaming from the winds of candles. Light drips off the wall, twinkling with mere beauty, and ocean

waves sound from the bathroom. Under my feet, I feel the comfort of soft, clean, light pillows in my toes. A smell comes from the kitchen of pie combined with steak and potatoes – homemade meals. I love the way a mere smell creates a place. Breathing to smell mint and lying on pure simplicity lavender makes me cozy. I feel like a baby in a womb. Mama's house: I love the feeling. **(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**

I am in a place so relaxing, seeing nature all around me. As I sit upon the lake to hear the water flow, it's like the waves are moving so slow. Ducks, boats, and butterflies are everywhere. Lost in thought, I feel very calm here. **(Ameshia Turner)**

There is nothing like when my best friend/partner and I enter into Call of Duty World. We link up to devour level after level of relentless juggernaut and soldiers, dogs strapped with C4, while also commanding teams of soldiers and buying and moving equipment to save our base. We do this all while lying in our bed. **(James Davis)**



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet. —Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet"



KEZIAH KIZZIEANN BESTER

My full name is Keziah Kizzieann Bester. My parents put a lot of thought into my name, and I know what each part means. My mom picked my name, along with all of my siblings' names, from the Bible. My

name comes from Job; he had a daughter named Keziah. It is a Hebrew name meaning "A tree deeply rooted by the waters of God." The name also came from a family friend.

My middle name is a combination of both my grandmothers' names from each side of the family put together. My grandma Kizzie from my dad's side and my grandma Annalou from my mom's side are put together as one to form my middle name, Kizzieann. I love it because I have a part of both of them in me.

Lastly, I found out the meaning of my last name. In school, the teachers gave us a project to figure out where our last names originated from. After some research, I learned that "Bester" was sometimes the last name given to strong slaves that took care of the animals. It was kind of sad and heartbreaking to learn that, but interesting to know.

RUTH ALLEN

Ruth comes from the Hebrew word re'ut, meaning friend. Ruth is also a character in the Bible related to the bloodline of King Jesus. The name Ruth is used by many as a Christian name for a girl child. The name Ruth is commonly used in English and the Bible.



The best thing about the name Ruth is my mom is named Ruth. I believe my children would agree also. The Urban Dictionary says Ruths are honest, not afraid to tell the truth, are not flawless, and can be subject to short tempers and

mood swings. The male version of my name is Rutherford. I bet my sons are glad I did not know that back then. Common nicknames are Ruthie and, for me, Ruthann. I also have two granddaughters that have Ruth as their middle name: Savannah Tina Ruth and Jasmine Ruth.

My last name, Allen, is Celtic, meaning harmony, stone, or noble. Allen is also the last name I inherited from my mother marrying my stepfather before I was born in 1965.

My nickname is Kitty aka Ms. Kitty because, being a big girl, I take soft steps across the room and have a soft voice.



ARIOUN JONES

My name was given to me by my grandma on my dad's side. I asked her what my name meant, and she said it is French and means kind, gentle, and sweet. Whenever I go

somewhere and meet someone for the first time and they ask what my name is, they always tell me that my name is unique. No one else has my name; it's very uncommon, and that's what makes me special.


HAILEY SPRING SJUGGERUD

I was born at the end of a long and hard winter, so I'm told.

My mom was a young 18 year old at the time of my birth, and while she did work and go to school, she enjoyed watching soap operas. My first name comes from her liking the soap opera star's name, Hailey Mills. When I was little, Hailey was not yet a popular name. I never met another Hayley until I was a teenager. When I was 16 years old it became the number one girl's name in the country and everywhere I went I heard mothers calling their little "Haileys"!



My middle name comes from my mother giving birth to me in the middle of a snowstorm. She said she looked out the window the next morning and it was spring, so my middle name is Spring. I would've been happier with my grandmother's middle name, Mae.

My last name is Sjuggerud. I have not tried to find its meaning and cannot. I do know,

however, my great great grandfather came from Norway; his name was Mathias Sjuggerud. He settled in a nice Wisconsin valley good for farming, and it was named Sjuggerud Coulee (Coulee means "valley").


ALEXIS LAW

Alexis is a Greek name that means helper or defender. This was the name of a third century B.C. Greek comic and poet. My auntie actually named me this because she said it was such a powerful

name. Also, it was close to the name of her favorite car, a Lexus. I really like my name because of the meaning behind it. I'm the helper of the family and such a giving person. I think my name reflects my identity because it sounds professional, and some people judge you based off your name.


TANDALAYA TAYLOR

I love my name. It took me some time to grow into it. When I was younger, I asked my mom what my name meant, and for a long time she told me it meant "precious one." It was a

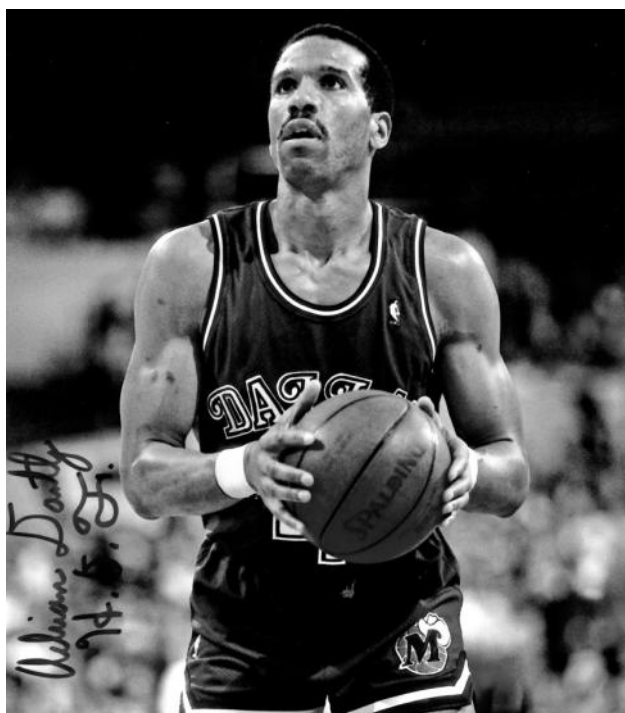
name given to me by my late aunt. She had plans to give the name to her child, but she had a boy instead, so the name was passed on to me. As I got older, I realized my name was unique, and there were not many people with my name, therefore making it unique and rare. I know with my name that people can or can't remember it. They can pronounce it or have trouble doing so. My middle name is very common and so is my last name. Those two names don't mean as much to me as opposed to my first name. My first name defines my uniqueness as a person.

**ADRIAN TY MOLITOR**

Adrian: after Adrian Dantley, a baseball player for Notre Dame and Dallas. My father watched him play after a factory shift and too much beer when he was 18 years old.

Ty: My Ma wanted Tyrone, but dad said no, so "Ty."

Molitor: Luxemburg name (Bohemian), Grandpa Leo.



My name doesn't mean anything in my language but is just a sound. It is a very common name for those born any time before the 1990s. I grew to like my name, as it is rather simple. It matches and rhymes with my last name. My sister says she wants to change her last name when she gets married because she was never really attached to being a Thao. I thought about it and would not change it on my end because I wouldn't be Bao Thao anymore. I love my Thao family and how big our family is.

**LADARO TAYLOR**

"You look like a Ladaro." I often wondered what that meant. Was I ugly? Weird? Or just honestly looked like a guy named Ladaro? I never figured out the meaning of that statement. It drove me crazy, even sad at times.

Being named after my father, I would often try to eclipse his shadow. "Hey, ain't you Ladaro's son?" I would hear this from the thugs that controlled my neighborhood like a custodian controls the lobby he mops. I would look down on them because they praised the name of a man who did nothing but cause harm to those around him. Then I realized it wasn't the name they respected, but the man who owned the name.

**BAO THAO**

For the longest time, I did not realize my name in English sounds like "bow," as in take a simple bow. I only realized this when at my first job, a customer came in and asked how to pronounce my

name and he tried saying my name and did a bow with it. I thought it was funny.

I began to own my name even though I was cursed to have it. I started to change the name from one that should be feared to one that should be forgotten. I didn't want to follow in my father's footsteps, so I became associated with being a forgotten person, one that helps people, only to go on to the next. My name to me means "the lone traveler."



MAYA MAKEBA CLEOPATRA RASHEED-BRACEY

Maya means a member of an Indian tribe (Mayan culture – Aztec). My parents actually named me after Maya Angelou. She was a very inspirational and strong woman. I have read many

of her poems and biographies; I think my name fits me well. I've been told I have a poetic/soft personality a few times before. I have two middle names, Makeba and Cleopatra. My dad liked Makeba, and Cleopatra comes from my grandma; we share that middle name (my mom's mom). Then I have two last names, Rasheed-Bracey. My brother and I are the only two with Rasheed. My dad converted to Islam when he was in prison, so technically any offspring after that must have the father's Muslim name, while his and my mom's last name remained just Bracey.



TA'TIANA MONAY 'BEAUTY' CLACKS

Ta'Tiana: A powerful individual with a unique mindset to achieve any goal set forth. My grandmother named me after a queen in a story she knew, a biblical story, Anna.

Monay: A sweet person who pushes through the pain even on any level, sometimes needing guidance, so she uses the higher power of God to push her through.

Beauty: A symbolic name given from my inner spirit that glows outside of me when I relish in my endeavors, aspirations, and goals. Through the worst of times, seeing the beauty in the most ugly situation.



SELENA MUÑOZ

The name Zelene has many meanings, but also many stories. Even though its heritage comes from the Puerto Rican descent, it was still given to me, a Mexican Latina. I have no middle initial, but my last name was changed

from "Sanchez" to "Muñoz." My mom made my dad change his last name because of her children (my brothers and me). Sanchez is my biological mother's maiden name, and Muñoz is my biological grandfather's name. When I change my name, not only will I legally change it to Selena, but I will have "Sanchez" as my middle name and Muñoz still as my last name.

As far as memories go, there are more negative than positive ones. Selena is the "Mexican version" of Zelene, and I feel this suits me better. I sometimes wonder if my mother gave me my name to add to my rough childhood. Either way, it doesn't matter because our relationship no longer exists or matters.



**CARLA GUADALUPE
HERREJON TINAJERO**

Carla: A German name. My name is important to me because I was named after my mother, and she was named after her grandmother. It is interesting

because a lot of people in my family are named Carla, or Carlos for a male. This name was chosen by my father because he wanted to name me after my mom since I was the first born child. The difference between my first name and all my other names is that it is very easy to pronounce. I feel like it is a very mature sounding name, so every time I got called by my first name in school, I would feel older.

Guadalupe: Means “river of the wolf” in Arabic. It is a very common Mexican name for Catholic people. It is significant to my family because it comes from the title “Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe.” In our religion, she is the mother of Jesus, so she is the mother of all of us. I like this name because I am named after her. I feel like I can identify with this name the most because it is the one that all of my close family members use. Instead of Guadalupe, they call me Lupita.

Herrejon: Not very common. I have never met anyone with the same last name as me. It is significant because it is my father’s family’s last name. It was given to me because it is my father’s last name. It has made a difference to me because it is unique.

Tinajero: Comes from Spain. This last name was given to me because it is my mother’s last name. It is also not common. Since I have two uncommon names, I feel like nobody has my whole name and that makes me feel unique. I like to use this last name because I identify more with my mom’s side of the family. I feel more like a Tinajero than a Herrejon.



**BARBARA SHAQUITA ANN
RODGERS**

I love every part of my name and why each part was chosen for me. I am now creating my own meaning, which is strong, ambitious, protective, merciful, intelligent, beautiful, strange, and uncommon.



Barbara comes from Greek Barbaros, meaning foreign or strange. Barbara was a woman who was a protector; she was tortured to death by her father for converting from Catholicism. I got the name Barbara Ann passed down to me from both of my grandmothers. Shaquita was chosen by my mother. She picked Shaquita because she wanted my name to be unique and uncommon. Shaquita was going to originally be my first name, but my mother and father agreed to name me after both of their mothers. Ann is also my middle name; it means merciful. I think that Ann was a perfect pick because merciful means forgiving, compassionate, humane, and generous, all of which others would describe me as. Rodgers is my last name, which was passed down to me from my father, his father, and their ancestors.

**LISA LAKISHA SIMMONS**

My name came from my auntie on my dad's side. I honestly don't know the story behind my name, but I am just guessing my dad and auntie were really close.

I don't know the meaning of my middle name (LaKisha), but that was also my auntie's middle name. A lot of people give me nicknames, such as Dimples, Le-Le, Nae-Nae, which I like because they're not ghetto. Every nickname describes me and my almost names. For example, Nae-Nae comes from Lanayaja, Le-Le comes from Lisa, and Dimples comes from me actually having dimples.

I was told my entire life that Lisa was a white name and my response to that is, "I love my name and I don't get how it can only be a white person's name." Well, for starters, I am not fully black; I am a mixture of white, black, Puerto Rican, and Italian.

I love how my name is so plain; it makes me feel more comfortable about myself. I dislike how people feel like my name has to be popular or has expectations to live up to.

I love my name. I couldn't see myself being named anything else. If I were to be named something other than Lisa, I hope it wouldn't be something ghetto.

**JAMES LEONARD DAVIS**

My name is James. At most points in my life I am mostly known as Little James, which contrasts with my father's name, Big James. My middle name is Leonard. I have little to say about this part of my name, in part because it always

brought me great pain. As a kid, we had little shame in making fun of that part of my name. Last but not least, Davis. It has brought me great pride in knowing it was a way to trace my family's pain.

**SAYURY YISELA PERALTA VIVANCO**

Sayury: A Japanese name given to me by my grandfather to keep the Japanese heritage alive. It means "flower in the morning," and I like it because my name is unique.

Sayury is the name that I was born with, and I have been able to keep it until now. My name has a lot of history and stories—sad, happy, etc. It also reminds me that I am still part of my Japanese family, who I see once in a while.

Yisela: A Spanish name that my mom liked and named me to remind me that I am part Hispanic.

Peralta: A name that changed my life and is a new part of me.

**TORI ROSE AMOUR**

The only family significance with Tori is it starts with a "T." My family has three generations of T's. Rose is my middle name and it comes from my paternal grandma, Karen Rose.

**TYJEANA LOUISE GALLOWAY**

Every name in my mom's family (just her brothers and sisters) starts with the letter "T," so my mom named me after her two favorite things at the time she was pregnant. Her best friend's name was Gina, and they would eat at

Ty's Fish Market all the time. My middle name is my grandmother's first name, since I was her first-born grandchild. My nicknames have been Jeana Beana, Beans, and the name I go by, Jeana, which is also what I refer to myself as whenever I am talking to myself or giving myself a pep talk or something. I didn't like my name because no one could pronounce it . . . I just wanted to have an easy name so that I wouldn't get bothered by every nurse and teacher. With my first daughter, I tried giving her a short name that I liked and that everyone could pronounce. Sadly, I was wrong.



GUADALUPE HERNANDEZ NUÑEZ

Guadalupe – I love my name for everything it represents; the fact that my parents chose my name just makes me feel joyful. As many people know, my name

comes from the Virgin of Guadalupe. This is the reason why I was named Guadalupe. My mother told me that when I was little I became very ill. My mother is Catholic, and she decided to make a promise to the Virgin that if she could heal me, she would name me after her, and so she did. The origin of my name is known, and some say it comes from Arabic “wad-al-nub,” which means “River of Love,” but the one I know is that Guadalupe comes from the (Nahuah) language of the Aztec Empire—“Coatlaxopeuh,” which means “the one who steps on the serpent.”

Guadalupe is a unisex name, which both men and women can have. However, as a shorter name, they usually use “Lupe” for men and “Lupita” for women.

I have no middle name, but I have two last names. The first one, Hernandez, comes from my father, and the second one, Nuñez, comes from my mother. Nuñez represents a journey of great people coming together to create me. I have a lot of pride in my last names, and they are what define the blood that runs through my veins. My full name has 23 letters, and I love each and every one of them. Having this name has been a bit difficult because I have to fill out forms and it never fits, or I have to spell it out every time. However, I love it, and I love to be able to be unique. I just love everything about my name. Every single thing makes it so great. Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez: I love the meaning, the story, and the mystery behind it.



DERRICK DESHAWN ALLEN

I was adopted at a very young age. Why this name was chosen for me, I don’t know, but I have given this name on to my son. As I explore my name, I realize that my first, middle, and last

names are all first names. What does that mean? I don’t know. I looked up the meaning for my first name, Derrick, and according to Webster’s dictionary, Derrick is a hoisting apparatus or a crane supporting heavy loads. Amazingly, this is exactly who I am. I’m the backbone of my family and the one they dump their emotional load on. I also uplift, encourage, and support people at work.



ANGELA ROSE CARPINO

My first name was almost Noel. My mother changed it as soon as I was born and told me the name came to her when she saw my face.

My middle name is Rose. It is a strange coincidence that my soul is in love with flowers. I keep them in my home all of the time.

My last name is Italian and was my mother’s maiden name. I am glad to be born into that last name because I think it is beautiful, and that is why I chose to have it tattooed on me when I was 15 years old.



REFLECTIONS

Odyssey is the only thing I do for myself, but it's not really just for me because the end result will benefit others. I don't do anything for myself. Reading this assignment, I thought it was a bunch of malarkey and I didn't want to do it. It made me have to think about myself, and I don't know how to do that. Everything I do, I do for my crew. I'm the glue that keeps everybody together.

Odyssey is the only time I don't have to worry about everything else that's going on in my life. I look forward to class, but I feel guilty because while I'm here I have to think of me. I should always be thinking about my crew. I am ashamed that I feel guilty, but I do. I can't shake it. **(Tori Armour)**

I'm in a phase in life where I am so content and thankful for the woman that I am becoming. I like to look at myself and my situation as a butterfly or a flower. They start out not so great, but when they bloom they are truly amazing. People who doubted them in the beginning stages now feel bad because they didn't see or weren't aware of all the potential they had. I know I'm not there all the way, but I'm getting there. This class is the reason why. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

I want to succeed in life, and I sacrificed a lot. I always put everyone first before me because I love to help. I like honesty but that is hard to find. I went through a lot but I'm still here—I survived.

When my first child, my son Cole, was born, I had a very bad case of postpartum depression. It was very surprising to feel this way after wanting to have a child for so long. My new baby also had colic, cried all the time, and never slept. I still run into old neighbors who ask me if my son still cries like that, like my newborn from seven years ago would still be crying.

I also had to find somewhere to live and move to right away, and I had to find a job because nobody would hire me while I was pregnant. This is illegal but still done. I did these things surprisingly well in a short amount of time. In time, my baby's colic went away and I got better, but this was an extremely hard part of my life. My heart goes out to women going through postpartum depression or struggling alone to take care of children. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

I want to thank Emily for accepting me into the Odyssey program. This is the place you want to be because it's a warm environment. My classmates are so friendly and like family. School is actually fun and full of laughs. But let's not forget the best part—learning new things. I've never been so excited for Wednesday to come just to come to school. This class is a big motivation to accomplish your dreams. I would recommend that everyone come to this program. It furthers your life experiment. **(Alexis Law)**

I'm always grateful for where I grew up. I always felt the liberty to do whatever I wanted to do. My family taught me a lot of their skills. I learned how to make bread, how to sew, how to sell things, how to take care of animals, and how to know what time it is just by seeing the sun. I feel very proud of my family. **(Victor Rojas)**

Wow, did Emily and Kevin mix up "write" with "right" [typo on Worksheet 6]? What should I "right" about myself? I'm right handed. My tattoos are on the right side of my body. My right tire went out on my car. I have a right in this country to be seen as a person and not anything less because of my skin. I like right-handed people better. I believe I am doing right. All right. **(Ladaro Taylor)**

I am a recent cancer survivor. That may have been the scariest moment in my life. I was diagnosed with Stage 4 blood cancer. I tell the story more often than I probably should. That's because I don't look like what I've been through. I've learned to appreciate life because I was so close to death. I've always had a positive outlook on life, no matter the circumstances.

I want to take the experiences that I have been through with cancer and be a support system for people going through the same things. I also want to write a book . . . and work with cancer organizations. I want to be a spokesperson for young adults with lymphoma. I feel like people don't notice other cancers if it isn't about pink (breast cancer) ribbons. I feel there isn't enough light shed on other cancers. I want to be able to sit in the hospitals and talk with people who are going through the same things. It's important to have people visit you when your family can't come because they have to provide for others—just to have someone there when you're going through the process of trying to survive and hopefully make it through the chemo. . . .

A lot of things I'm trying to bounce back from involve me battling cancer. It started with four months of being extremely sick and not knowing what the real issue was. I feel like I have been given another chance at life, and the universe is saying now it's time. I'm not sure exactly what I should be doing. So I'm at a point where I'm living a grateful-unsure-of-my-life-calling Life.
(**Tandalaya Taylor**)

I love dancing. Since I was a child, I remember dancing every day. I remember when I was around 12, I woke up in the middle of the night and flipped through channels. I stumbled upon a channel showing older kids doing different styles of dancing that looked like they were being filmed at a school. I started copying every move. Since then, I have danced every day of my life.

I used to not tell or show anybody. I would only dance in my room with the door closed. I would leave BET on all day and copy every move that was shown on the videos. I never showed anybody until I was around 16 or 17. I was at a friend's house, and we all started dancing. Everyone was so surprised at how well I was dancing and doing moves they couldn't.

I've always wanted to take my dancing further, but after I busted my knee and it started popping out of place throughout the years, I knew that was no longer an option. I still dance or move whenever I hear music. When I do get a babysitter, I like going out to places with dance floors. (**Angela Carpino**)

Breathe
I never noticed someone breathe so deep
Remembering your face as you collapsed in the street.
Mom, come on, look at me.
She whispers my name.
Come on, Mom, don't go to sleep.
She doesn't look the same.
I gently pick her up. (**Derrick Allen**)

I guess God sends us for a reason, and I'm trying to do everything possible to make my living. But I always feel that it is not enough. Everyone tells me I am smart, but I don't see it. I'm afraid of class because writing is my nightmare, but now I feel that in every class I'm doing better. I feel a little bit free and happy that I'm able to learn more and more. . . . I never knew where the blues came from before this class. I feel ashamed of my weight, so I wrote these blues:

I wish I was skinny
So I can fit in hot clothes.
I wish I could be sexy
But in reality I'm not
Because after I had my four babies
I got big and fat.
But this will not stop me,
I'll complete and accomplish my dreams.
(**Sayury Peralta Vivanco**)

Can somebody tell me why I feel so alone?
 I'm lost to the point where I can't find my way home.
 Feelings in my head say life isn't right
 But until everything's all right I've got to fight.
 So much drama
 Maybe I deserve all this unexpected karma.
(Nathaniel Robinson)

The lack of confidence I had yesterday is dead and gone
 Today I'm going to hold my head high in stride
 I wear it as a badge yes I'm speaking of pride
 I love myself in sickness and in health
 When the time is right I'll be blessed with wealth
 To be rich speaks to a monetary value
 Wealth is a blessing within a lesson taught me
(Ameshia Turner)

Big Heart
 To have a big heart means to me
 to make others happy and not grouchy.
 Patience comes from a big heart
 that loves to see other people start.
 I'd rather see everyone make it than fall.
 I wanna break down rather than build up walls.

Struggles
 I was strong and I was bold, but some roads were just too rough.
 I had visions, many images, but sometimes dreaming just isn't enough.
 There were nights, and there were days, where I'd just cry cry cry.
 I heard voices screaming, voices saying die die die.
 There was a beast that had a drug that I kept on feeding.
 I have this heart, full of love, but it kept on bleeding.
 I cursed God, I cursed my parents, I even cursed myself.
 I lost meaning, I lost hope, and eventually turned into something else.
 My own reflection made me cringe as I saw myself in the mirror.
 But it was a little hope and the surrendering of self that made my vision a little clearer.
 Now I live breath by breath, for the day is just too long.
 Now I'm not afraid to dance and look like a fool to my favorite song.
 Now I can accept my wrongs, and resurface with some rights.
 Now I can close my eyes and like the company I keep a night.
 So if you're struggling with an addiction or a mental health disease,
 If your eyes are pouring tears, enough to fill the seas,
 Please
 Please
 Please
 Get on your knees and just believe. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**

To have a big heart is to be unique
 To have a big heart is to be me.
(Lisa Simmons)



The Congress of Fools
*Inspired by Arnold Zimmerman's work at the Chazen
 Museum of Art*

The Congress of Fools love to shout out their boos
 As they sneak in my head while I lie down in bed.
 I want them to leave because they should obscenities
 and make me feel worthless as they sing their awful
 song.

"You are a lost soul who wanders without a home."
 That's what they tell me, and that's what I believe,
 but it's not true 'cuz my home is where my family is.
 The fools are wrong 'cuz my home exists.

(Reggie Reed)

Terrified of one of my brothers becoming hashtags
 Cop see them and they just see another black man
 Lock them up, don't throw away the key
 'Cause they'll be back, man
 System set so legal slaves become the cash, man
 That's the type of stuff that mess you up mentally
 But you can't show it
 'Cause you got hood tendencies
 So you do what you can
 Sell those illegal remedies
 So you can soothe the souls of the people on the
 streets
 But when the streets meet the cops
 Someone always gets shot
 They looking for the trouble
 And they always making plots
 That's so stereotypical
 It's sad 'cause it's typical
 Happens all the time
 That's a white man's ritual
 Always getting physical
 They label us the criminal
 They doing just fine when our condition's
 critical
 Unapologetic sympathy
 Can't apologize for killing sprees
 It's always open season when a black
 man's walking free
 I'm speaking for the people



And not just the color
 We all got problems and we all got struggles
 Incarceration has not limitations
 It's just that minorities are given lower expectations.

(Keziah Bester)

Eat Your Heart Out

*Inspired by Ann Agee's "Tulip Vase" at the Chazen
Museum of Art*

The pain you've caused, it hurts me deep,
 so deep it's been so long since I've been able to sleep.
 Tears fall from my face, I wish you could hear me
 weep.

We were together, so much in love.

Where there's me there's you, it fits like a
 glove,
 Silly of me to think it was love.
 Eat your heart out, I have no more love to
 give,
 When you left I felt like I couldn't live.
 Eat your heart out, my love is in a drought.
 Once upon a time it ran effortlessly, like
 water dripping from a spout.
 Us together was a special kind of force,
 but now our love is gone, it has run its
 course.
 You've caused all this pain,
 My question is what did you look to gain?
 I thought of you as someone I could trust,
 but in the end it was a whole lot of lust.
 Eat your heart out. **(Ameshia Turner)**

Who Prayed for the Girl?

Who prayed for the girl with pain running deeper than the ocean?
 Who prayed for the girl that wanted love but found lust?
 Who prayed for the girl who gave her all but it wasn't enough?
 Who prayed for the girl that was broken and confused?
 Who prayed for the girl whose pride didn't let her go home?
 Who prayed for the girl that wishes she could right her wrongs?
 Who prayed for the girl whose heart shines bright as gold but can turn dark as the night?
 Who prayed for the girl battling depression and anxiety?
 Who prayed for the girl who keeps getting pushed back by bills and life in general?
 Who prayed for the girl who's tired but too ambitious to give up?
 Who prayed for the girl who's now a woman who wants to break through from what she's been through?

(Barbara Rodgers)

FINDING PLATO'S CAVE TODAY



or even believe all of the opportunities here in Madison. Eventually I settled down, got a job, and had children. . . .
(Derrick Allen)

The racism I have experienced throughout my life is similar to what Plato described in "The Allegory of the Cave." Plato's scene, where the prisoners are chained and only able to look forward, was like me

My cave was an alley in Chicago where I grew up. As a child, this alley represented a place where I could escape the harsh reality of the inner city. I was a young ghetto boy hanging milk crates on a light pole so I could shoot some hoops. This alley consisted of broken down cars and abandoned garages, and we used this area to hide when we played tag.

As young adults, we used this same alley to hide drugs and guns. Like "The Allegory of the Cave," I became a prisoner of the alley. My legs and neck were chained to a lifestyle of drugs, women, and violence. The only men in my life cast shadows of beautiful women and luxury cars, and to me they made it seem easy, attainable, and even possible. For years I tried to reach this goal without going to jail or, worse, being killed.

It wasn't until I became homeless and alone that I came to realize that the street life was an illusion! Like the prisoner in the cave, I stood up and turned my neck around. I moved to Madison and I was in shock—never before had I been around people of other races. It was hard to see

being chained by the lack of opportunities for an education.

This lack of an education because of learning difficulties has haunted me for most of my life. For me, education opens doors for increased financial opportunities, as well as for advancement in the workplace and increased quality of life for my family. During my life, I've watched co-workers and supervisors at my job. I watched as I was passed over for promotion, and it didn't matter that the people getting those promotions were people I had trained, orientated, and mentored. I also did the same job they did, worked harder than they did, and created new benchmarks for production . . .

I realize that this situation will not change much, and acknowledging that fact is depressing, but nonetheless I cannot quit because it's not an option. I have to change because, while it hurts and pisses me off to no end, I have to endure and strive to be better and do better—for myself, future families, and my community.
(Bruce Moore)

The cave represents extreme ignorance and the refusal to change because of habit. In this case, we all are in the cave in one way or another. For all I know, I am currently in a cave and cannot notice it because I'm being entertained by puppets.

A time when I was in the cave was when I was entertained by my own negative thoughts (or still am). My negative thoughts entrap me so much that I refuse to love. My negative thoughts entertain me to the point I do not interact with people. A chain around my neck would be better than being stuck in the mud, worrying about how other people feel about me.

Have I ever seen the sunlight at the end of the cave? Yes, but my insecurities burn thoughts in my head that I am not good enough. Good enough for who? You, them, or me? I do not know; I am in the cave . . . (**Ladaro Taylor**)

I would say that most of my adult life has been spent in a darkened room, so to speak, and my cave or room has been the care for others and somewhat lack of care for me. I would also say that some situations were self-inflicted by making poor choices, or what seemed to be the best choice.

I had my first child at 17 and married at 18, while still a student in high school. This was the foundation of my cave. I thought marriage would give me the freedom to become an adult, but, in the long run, it led to me becoming a prisoner of circumstances that would affect the rest of my life.

Cutting a long story short, the marriage became abusive not only

to myself but to my children, and it led to my first experience of homelessness and an unbelievable, unspeakable breach of trust. Sometimes my heart still aches from those experiences.

I have been a caregiver all my life, from youth to adulthood. This has been my cave . . . I'm slowly working my way out towards the sun, aka the light. It's a process and a journey filled with bitter and sweet, dashed with the gaining of knowledge. (**Ruthie Allen**)

The first cave I was trapped in was not being able to get off the couch, watching television all day. I too believed that what I saw were real-life experiences. Now, going through life as an adult, I realize that fixing problems is not as easy as it looks.

As a teenager I was trapped on my computer, playing games all day. Now I am a prisoner to my phone, which is very hard for me not to see. It's useful, but I get trapped watching social media and talking through it instead of talking to people over the phone or in person. And similar to the Allegory, where they believe the shadows are their only reality, I believe everything I see through my phone screen is my reality. I live people's lives, watching them online, instead of making my own experiences. (**Carla Herrejon Tinajero**)



I have lived in many caves throughout my life . . . One example [of living in a cave] is my mother, who lived with domestic violence. Everyone in the town, including my grandmother, had been living in a cave through generations, thinking they had to put up with what they had. There is a famous phrase that says, “Te tocó vivir la cruz de tu calvario” (“You have to put up with your cavalry cross”), which means that you have chosen this and have to put up with it. But my mother chose to find herself and escape that life. She proved everyone wrong. (**Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez**)

I believe that when I interviewed I mentioned that I felt trapped, stuck, or whatever word would explain the feeling of not moving forward in my life. Yes, I have a nice job that typically does require education. I was smart enough to teach myself the basic knowledge of computers, communication, human resources, and everything that comes along with it. Although this gets me by, it's not enough, and the feeling of wanting more out of life taunts me. The lack of education prevents so many doors from opening for me. I can read all day and night and study many laws, but it won't be enough until I actually attain a degree. The fear of having a degree and working in my dream job has always prevented me from leaving and then returning to the cave. (**Charnice Anderson-Morris**)

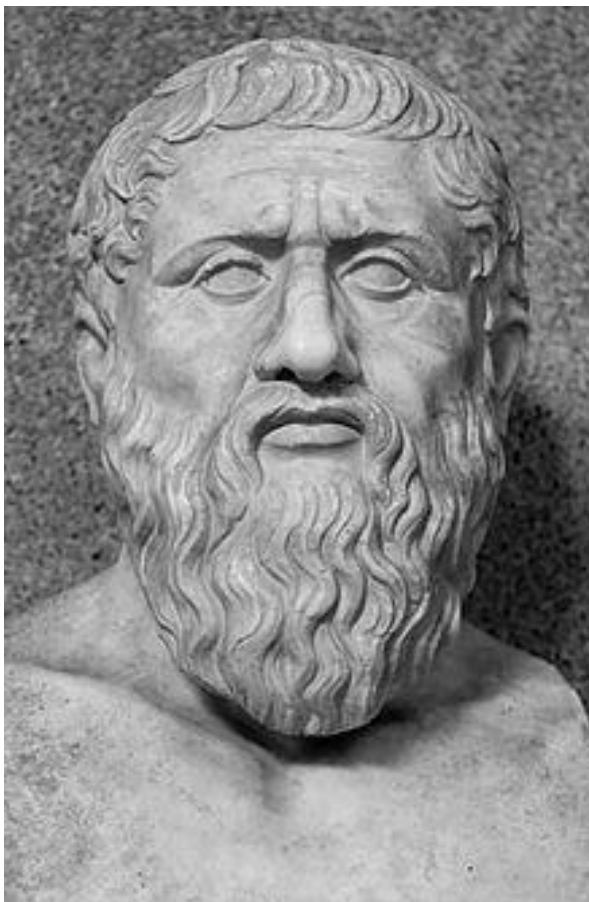
I am the prisoner in the cave. My family is on the roadway. On the screen I'm seeing shadows of a loving family, of people wanting to see the best of one another; people that love each other. I'm seeing people support each other. I'm seeing what a family is supposed to be.

When I come out of the cave, I begin to feel hurt—not only from the light, but in my soul. The farther I ascend, the deeper the hurt cuts. I see conditional love, a love of convenience or

obligation. Lies ring in my ear, and people treat me poorly.

Realizing the truth was hard to face because, even after seeing the light, my love is still genuine and real. I still appreciate knowing the truth because now I'm able to decipher what is real and what is not. I'm able to rid myself of toxic relationships, and I'm able to accept the love I deserve. (**Tori Armour**)

A cave for me was when I was first laid-off from my job. There was a recession going on, and I could not find a job for about two years, no matter how hard I tried. I feared that I might never find a job and remain homeless like I've witnessed others having to do. I escaped that cave by starting school at MATC, and I believe having that on my resume boosted it and landed me my next job. (**Angela Carpino**)



The school aspect of my own cave comes from a teacher I had in middle school who was especially mean to me and even hit me by throwing a book at my head. Almost my whole sixth-grade year I was scared of Mr. Thompson and didn't want to be there. That feeling continued into my seventh and eighth grade years, and I started skipping school.

I tried to persist in school and did difficult programs until finally I just got an HSED. It's a shame I didn't do as well as I hoped to in school. My dream was always to be a college graduate. If I had pushed harder to graduate high school, I would have seen that more teachers are nicer and that college is a different atmosphere in itself.

I have always had regrets about finishing my schooling. I hope to attain a college degree so I can feel that sense of accomplishment for myself. I suspect I can do this, and the rewards of doing so would feel better than I could have imagined. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

I felt like I was in a cave again when I moved to the USA. After I had managed the language and was stable [in Sweden], my father was granted asylum in the USA and asked me to come here to get my permanent residence. When I came here I wasn't able to communicate with anyone. I only knew the basics: "Hi, how are you doing? My name is Sayury." I felt sad. . . . Now I'm able to talk, read, and write in English—not perfectly, but at least I made it for good.

Now I am proud of my accomplishments since I got here. I've learned that here in the US there is an opportunity for everyone to grow, to work, and to be who you want to be. It's only up to you to make it happen. I want to be better and learn more and get out of my cave because I'm scared that I won't make it. **(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**

One of the biggest caves I've seen and still see today is the wants and needs we tell ourselves are important. I've only come to realize this because this year I've lost a lot of friends and family members right and left. Yes, I'm guilty too by telling myself I need this and that. We as individuals create this want of things, and then we buy a bunch of things without realizing that after there is no more of us, no one will care for the things we've been buying and collecting while alive. Besides food, we tell ourselves we don't have enough money to buy the things we want. If we could just see past that and use money for books, schooling, and knowledge, we wouldn't be so much of a prisoner financially. **(Bao Thao)**



I think I have been in the cave of comfort for a lot of the time. I was ok with a life without dreams or goals. My life was only working until a few years ago when I started my own business. It was hard, and it is now too. But I like it. I like the challenges, and I don't think I will be going into the cave again. **(Victor Rojas)**

In June of 2010 was a day when my life changed, for better or for worse. I had been living in a fairytale, thinking that he was Romeo and I was Juliet. It was us against the world, and in my eyes he could do no wrong. I was a prisoner to his love; the cave was represented by his love, and I was trapped. The shadows I saw in that cave were marriage, a house, kids, and graduating. Seeing these shadows made me feel comfortable and secure, like there was no need to go into the light. The cave got very dark when we started seeing the shadows differently. For example, he did not see graduating as being important. He saw fast money and designer clothes. I realized I was giving him all the power when I didn't see my shadows anymore—I only saw his. Everything was dark until one day the light blinded me to the point where I was scared to see what was on the other side, but I knew that if I followed the light I would find my reality. The light represented my independence and my goals. . . . **(Barbara Rodgers)**

A time when I was in a cave is when I was in high school. During my senior year, I was excited to graduate, and I couldn't wait to leave. In the beginning of the school year, I told myself that I was going to stay focused, attend my classes, complete my homework on time, and not fall behind.

Towards the end of the year, about four months before graduation, I started falling behind, skipping class, and sometimes not showing up for school at all. I started to get depressed and lost hope. It was difficult for me to force myself to get back into the habit of going to school every day for the rest of the year, but I had goals I wanted to achieve, and skipping school wasn't going to help me get there. **(Arioun Jones)**

Living with my mother is like living in a cave. When I lived with her, her energy rubbed off on me because I was always in the house with her. I experienced so much anger and loneliness that when I did go outside it was never positive. It was literally like I was stuck—not being able to show excitement or smile, just always looking angry around others. I had to break out of that shell on my own, so I started to interact with others and smile more. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

I was in an abusive relationship for 14 years. I had to hide bruises on my face from the outside world. I worked at Lens Crafters, which is all about people's eyes, and when I did go to work with a bloodshot eye, I was so embarrassed. I didn't go back and lost the job. I liked where I was—making good money and getting recognition from my bosses. I had to lie to my daughter about why I would have black eyes. So I would stay home and wear sunglasses, and I would go back to my boyfriend every time. The worst was when I had to have five metal plates put in my face and my cheekbone was broken in half. I lost my job at the Wisconsin Restaurant Association because I needed to recover, which took a long time. **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



The glorious night I turned 18 years old, I was kicked out once again and for good—not because I did anything offensive or acted out, but because my mother was in denial that I was her daughter. For 18 years I had lived in a cave, not becoming enlightened by the world as I should have because of my mother's restrictions for my brothers and me . . . I despised her when she would say that she was blessed with well-behaved kids because in reality my brothers and I were terrified of our mother half of the time. If I didn't want to blow my entire paycheck by just simply handing it to her, she'd let the stove get warm and slam my hand on it until it was burned to her satisfaction. The last time I went to revisit their cave to enlighten my ignorant, conservative family, I got slapped in the face and, at 21 years old, I never looked back again. And the worst part is, neither did they.

After being compelled to find a nest for myself, it was painfully lonely at first, but I felt an adventurous journey coming on. This was my version of ascending to the light. I was reluctant, like the prisoners in the Allegory, but my light today is still the city of Madison, Wisconsin. After the effort of getting myself acquainted with the people, I discovered how liberally I can live. Not to sound like a party animal, but the fact that I was liberating myself was just the beginning of revealing who I really am! **(Selena Muñoz)**



There is something about guilt and shame that can leave you paralyzed in a state of self-condemnation. Every day I feel as if I'm in a battle with myself. My demons inflict pain while my angels are nurturing my wounds, the only problem being that the wounds are gaping and being created at a rate that my angels cannot keep up with. My battle is that of self-preservation—keep my head above water to prevent me from drowning in this struggle.

I'm struggling with finding stable housing, employment, and finding self-purpose. . . . The smell of a shelter has enough power to make me think back on everything that anyone has done for me, along with everything that I have done to anyone else for my own satisfaction and greed. The smell really makes me reflect back on how good I once had it. The smell really has a way of making me honest with myself, leaving me with no choice but to blame me. The guilt that is created is so powerful that it leaves me confused on how I'm going to get myself out of the mess I'm in; it also reminds me that I have to do it on my own. . . .

I'm struggling to find myself. I'm afraid of commitment because commitment has failed me. It's hard to trust myself as trust was always broken. It's hard to dream as dreams were overcome with nightmares. The only thing I know how to do right now is keep fighting, as that's all I've done my whole life.

Hence my cave is full of hope and dreams, but I'm tied down by self-judgment and failure and the fear of time running out. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**

MOVED BY MUSIC

Music for me is therapy. I love listening to music when I'm in a sad mood; it lifts my spirit. One of the best artists to listen to is Bob Marley. His songs always put me in a great mood. When I am studying or just reading, I like to listen to jazz. It seems to bring the book alive. I have different music for different moods. When I feel



like I just want to give up, I play some good ole gospel music, or when it is time to work out, it's some old school hip hop! I don't think I can operate in this world without music. It is truly a gift. **(Derrick Allen)**

Music. Music is the sound of the soul. Through music you express yourself, your feelings, and your passion. I listen to all kinds of music, including Bachata, Merengue, Regueton, Corridos, Banda, Cumbia, Regional Mexicana, Duranguense, Grupera, rap, hip hop, rock, and baladas. Music just seems to change the atmosphere around me. Every song and every sound makes my soul vibrate from a motion of feelings. Some songs make me feel happy, sad, energized, and, most of the time, so peaceful. Every song has a story that brings with it so many emotions. My life would be so empty without music. I would much rather live without television. My whole life begins with music and ends with music; it is a part of my traditions and a part of me. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

I listen to all kinds of music: rap, hip hop, rock, reggae, etc. If it is about emotion or about meaningful things, then I love it. I also listen to electronic music from time to time, mostly

electro-swing. I listen to music to relax, to sleep, to cry, and to process emotion. If it weren't for music, I wouldn't know who I am. Music has saved my life and I wouldn't have gotten so far without it.

The music being played right now is reminding me of how I used to feel while with someone. I once felt so happy and peaceful by simply being around this person and we used to talk every day, but now we barely talk at all. **(Reggie Reed)**

"You're worried about the wrong things, the wrong things." – Kanye West Music to me is life. I have loved music ever since I heard "Tootsie Rolls" through my mother's boom box. I recall loving music to the point I didn't care if I was teased for being in the band. Music is where I found out I had an allergy to steel. Due to this, I was forced to give up my trumpet. I loved it so much that I used to sneak behind my mother's back to play it, regardless of the pain

and scars it gave me. Music is where I became a killer, movie star, bank robber, or countrywide playboy. With music, I could drift off and go into my secret place: my mind.

Speak of my mind, this music playing now gives me the feeling . . . that I lost it all. I was a king, and now I am a lowly peasant. . . . Maybe I will never find my way home as a king.

(Ladaro Taylor)



For me, music is very important because I love it. I like the different kinds and, depending on my mood, I like country or rancheras, or rock when I am happy or working, but I like classical music as well. I love to listen to Wisconsin Public Radio or NPR. I like music because I like to dance, too. **(Victor Rojas)**

To me, music is relaxation. I listen to all types of music. I don't have a type. When I listen to music, it takes me to a whole different place; it is like I can picture myself somewhere, calm, and away from everybody. Sometimes, my brain is somewhere else daydreaming about stuff that hasn't happened yet.

I love to listen to emotional or R&B music when I get in that stressed out mood, or maybe sometimes I don't even have to be in that mood. I just love listening to it. **(Lisa Simmons)**

The kind of music I listen to is R&B, hip hop, and some gospel music. Music is the best thing someone could've invented because it allows you to express yourself. Music gives you peace of mind and blocks everything out of the way. Also, I really like that there is always music for whatever type of mood you are in. It gives you a chance for someone to hear your voice. I feel like music affects how I act, dress, and do things because of the words that I hear. Life without music would be miserable because it is a form of entertainment. Through music, you hear people's life style and life stories. Music is also a good way to communicate

to people. When you're bored, you can turn on some music and listen to something happy. Beats or rhythm with music is easy to catch on to and very interesting. **(Alexis Law)**

I listen to a wide range of music: hip hop, R&B, classical R&B, country, you name it. Music causes me so much anxiety. I always want to find more or find the perfect song to fit my mood, which is nearly impossible because there are a million songs out there. Music saved my life. I remember being deep in depression as a child, and next on my playlist on my MP3 player was Smokie Norfolk, a gospel singer. He sang "I Need You Now" and it was almost like God himself chose that song to play next. After hearing that, my suicidal thoughts disappeared. The small amount of faith I did have grew three times. My life without music would be boring. I play music to escape. I couldn't imagine not being able to turn on YouTube in my office after being called every name under the sun by an angry employee, or if I couldn't turn on a song so my kids could dance themselves into a sleep coma. Music is a part of me. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**



I listen to all different genres of music. My favorite opera singers are Charlotte Church and Sarah Brightman. Because I played clarinet, viola, and some piano, I really enjoy playing Mozart and Beethoven. There doesn't seem to be anyone to compare them to. I do



We're the only couple on the floor. He pulls me close, then twirls me around to a quick dip and lifts me back up. I smile at this dark handsome man whose gentle touch I feel on the small of my back. Even through all the silk and ruffles on my dress, there is a warm feeling in my stomach. I imagine him

enjoy many songs from the composer Hans Zimmer. I enjoy listening to pop, some Spanish music, and rap.

When I was 17 years old, I got into an altercation with my mom and stole her car. While I was getting pulled over by the police, "No Limit Soldier" came on the radio, a rap song by Master P. I felt like he was speaking to me, so when the line came, very aggressively he says, "You're a no limit soldier! I thought I told ya!" I felt like he was speaking to me and I couldn't let him down, so I proceeded to lead the police on a high speed chase, and I turned up the radio. Needless to say, I got in a lot of trouble for that! So, music definitely influences your mood. I wish Mariah Carey had come on at that time because I probably wouldn't have thought I wanted to be a gangster in that moment.

The current music playing is calming and intimate because I feel like I can hear every note. I imagine myself in a huge party dress with lots of jewelry on and big hair. I'm dancing with a handsome stranger. We're surrounded by those huge Greek columns and we hear the click of our shoes against the marble floor as we saunter around together. There's a water fountain flowing nearby and everyone is watching our every move.

taking my hand leading me from the dance hall to the wine bar. We get our glasses and take a stroll through the flower gardens. It is dusk and the sun is almost set. We don't speak yet, just listen to the music behind us.

(Tyjeana Galloway)

I listen to all types of music because I never know what type of mood I will be in: rap, gospel, country, rock, neosoul, R&B. Having music is very important to me because it can motivate me to better things in life if I feel I am going down a bad path. When listening to certain music, I feel a sense of calm, or maybe even the urge to get up and dance all around the house. Without music, I think life would be very boring because I wouldn't be able to clean up my house, my son's birthday party wouldn't be as exciting, and I probably would feel lost. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

The music playing now sounds sad, like someone is dying. Without music, life would be dead. Music is a big part of my life. If I am not singing, I will hum a song that comes to mind. For me, music affects how I feel. If I listen to a song that I can relate to, it will have me in deep thought. If I listen to fast music, that will get me turned on or excited, and then that will be the mood I am

Without music, life would be dead. in. **(Arioun Jones)**

As a child, I was never a child. My mother thought that I was deaf and screamed in both my ears. Ten days old. Mic check testing, discursiveness, the pins and needles, anchored my youth into the ground searching for a Maxell XI II, waiting for my name on Saturday night, shout outs searching for the sound (of silence), searching for



I have come to realize the older I get, the more I can feel the music and endure its sound effects. I feel this is because the older I get the wiser I am, which leads me to believe that I can relate my experiences to

the next abandoned building. My thirst for music so much more than for culture. I never forget the first time I climbed out my window and landed on the ceiling. I saw the Guru at the Paramount, I saw Public Enemy as a kid. As an adult, I wondered what a child feels. **(Adrian Molitor)**

I am very open-minded when it comes to music. The way I put it is that I let music attract me. I let my feelings and emotions attract music. What I listen to is based off how I am feeling, not what I am doing or where I am at. If I feel like I really need something uplifting, I'll listen to some blues, or if I need motivation, I'll listen to Tracey Chapman. When I have high energy I listen to a little hard rock to keep that energy. When I am really in myself and in my emotions, feeling hurt or sad, I'll listen to hip hop. When I am thinking of a girl I miss, I usually listen to R&B. I don't listen to music and feel a certain way. Sometimes I will sit in silence and that will be my perfect tone for the moment. Right now hearing the viola and piano, I find it soothing and somewhat peaceful. It does help to write to such a melody, although I did just day dream about my daughter playing in the leaves. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**

the harmony of certain tones. For some reason, certain instruments and tones trigger experiences. Working out, for example, gives me strength and power because without it I feel weak. Without music, I cannot detect how to take scenarios in movies. However, with working out, I would need fast beats to make me feel like I am running with the music I am listening to. I have to feel happy when I am working out and the only motivation that can push me to feel happy is music. Some music pieces are so classical that the songs themselves can reveal an entire story without using words. For instance, certain songs make your brain draw an entire painting full of feelings. **(Selena Muñoz)**



I like to listen to
neosoul, R&B, old
school, and urban

R&B music. Some of the music is calming and motivates me to be happy with my inner peace. It motivates me to be myself and love who I am. Music can be sad, and music puts you in different headspaces. Some music brings back bad memories, so when you hear the song you instantly go back to the time when you were happy or sad. I grew up listening to gospel music. As I got older, all the gospel music began to sound the same. As I go through different journeys or times in my life, I find music can be calming and needed to take your mind off of things that may be bothering you. I am not sure what my life would be like without music because I have always listened to music in more ways than I can remember. Sometimes music is just what you need to get over a moment or think about a happy moment. Music makes you want to dance. Some music requires you to dance fast or slow, but it makes you want to move. If there is anything that can keep one in a happy tone, it will be more than music and great sounds. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

Music means spending time with my dad. My dad doesn't talk much, so he doesn't really have conversations with us as much as my mom. He loves to play instruments, though, and he would always sing and play the guitar for us. To this day he still does. He will play us new songs he has learned on the guitar, and sometimes he will try and teach us how to play. Music to me also means memories. There are a lot of songs I listen to and remember a time of my life that was either a very happy time or sad time. Listening to a song can change

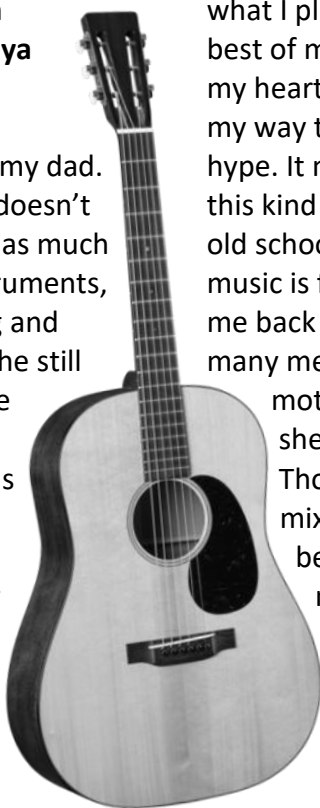
Music makes you want to dance.

my mood to either happy, sad,
or mad. I like any type of music.
I feel like without music life

would be very dull and boring. Listening to the music that is being played right now makes me relaxed, but at the same time very sleepy. I could listen to it at night to go to bed. **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**

Music is my secret getaway whether I am happy or sad. Sometimes it digs me out of my cave when I am feeling lost. I think I love music so much because it played a big part in my childhood. There was never a gathering without music. My favorite music is R&B because that is what I can relate to the most and I think I can sing. My favorite things about music are the emotions it can bring out of you and the way people are able to express themselves through music. **(Barbara Rodgers)**

Music for me sets a tone. Depending on how I went to sleep plays a really big part on what type of music starts my day. Gospel music is what I play when I feel like life is getting the best of me and I want God to hear and listen to my heart and lead it in the right direction. On my way to work, my music is more upbeat and hype. It makes you want to move around and this kind of beat gets me motivated. I also like old school R&B from the early 80s and 90s. This music is from my mom and dad's era. It takes me back to when I was a kid. It brings back so many memories. I often find myself missing my mother and the family that we had when she and my dad were still together. Thoughts and memories all together mixed for some reason make me feel better. It gives me a sense of security for my heart to know that even through a second divorce, we will always be family. **(Ameshia Turner)**



Music means a lot to me, and I swear I have a song for any mood that I am in, where it is good, upbeat, sad, mellow, etc. I listen to music when I shower, clean, cook, do homework, and just because. I listen to just about everything. I listen to a lot of old songs, but I am still in tune with the new stuff. Music is just satisfying to me and makes me feel good. My life without music would probably be boring and I would feel like I am missing something. The music in the classroom is peaceful and just makes me feel comfortable and chill. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

Music is an escape for me.

I used to play the bass

clarinet. Now, I just enjoy

listening to music. The music changes depending on my mood. I have an eclectic taste in music. I

like pretty much all kinds of music except new hip

hop/rap. When I cook I listen to old school Mo

town or 90s R&B. When I drive I listen to 90s or

early 2000s rap/hip hop/R&B. When I am sad I

listen to slow jams or old rock songs. I love music

with a message. I could not function in a world

without music. I feel bad for this generation

because of the garbage the radio plays. My family

doesn't listen to the radio much because I feel it

is too negative. Music should be

moving; it should be felt.

(Tori Armour)

Music transports me to mental and emotional places. When I am sad, I choose music to lift that emotion, then I acknowledge the feeling and the causes. Then I can/do choose another type of music to help me change any mood to happy or focused. Music means a lot to me and I love many types. It lifts my soul; it has passion, energy, and touches all of my emotions. Music makes me laugh, cry,

want to dance, creates moments of wonder, creates influences on my imagination. When losing myself in the music, I can be or do anything.

I like jazz, blues, opera, R&B, country, ragtime, Big Band, Latino jazz, all African jazz, African R&B, Cuban, Indie, hip hop, positive and motivational rap. I cannot imagine not having music in my life.

I listen to some kind of music every day. I loved all the music that was played tonight! A lot of the music I know and some of the music I played for

my child when she was little. Some I

used to put her to sleep with. Quite a

few of the songs bring back fond

memories connected to things we've

done in the past. **(Bruce Moore)**

I like all kinds of music, but rap, hip hop, soul, and

anything old school are my favorites. I grew up

always listening to old school because of my

parents, so it has always been a part of me. To

me, music can sometimes be like medicine. If I

have a long and hard day and just need to calm

down, music can change all my emotions. I even

like writing my own music. I took a class in high

school called hip hop studies where I learned to

record and make my own music

and beats. I hate when teachers

in school used to say we

couldn't listen to music while

doing our work because it was

distracting and no one can

multitask that way. For me, that

isn't true; music helps me

collect my thoughts and bring

them to paper, almost as if I am

writing to the rhythm and beat

of the music. Even now while I

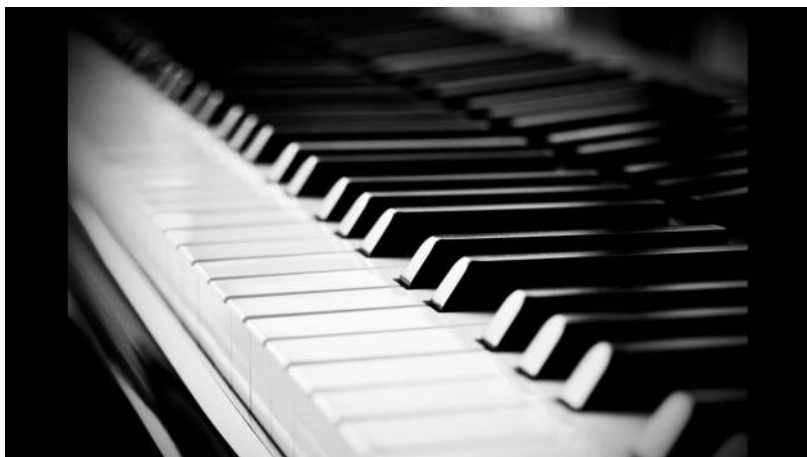
am in class we are listening to

music and it is helping me relax

and think about how I am

feeling. **(Keziah Bester)**





I play music everyday, from getting up in the morning to helping me cook up a meal to taking a shower and getting myself ready for my day. Music means a lot to me. At times, you feel you are alone, but once you play that one song, it gets you right back on your feet and into a good mindset to keep you moving.

The music I listen to really depends on the mood I am in and what it is I need to get done. So far, an example is when I am trying to get up in the morning I need something energizing to get my mind and body to want to get up. For cooking, I just play something I can sing along with and have fun with while cooking. During my showers, I play calming music because it is my time to unwind and relax. If I am trying to get ready for a party, I play self-beautifying music that is happy and bubbly, so really I am open to music. I forgot to mention while at work it can be very stressful, so I would play "calming piano" music to get by with my day and work. (**Bao Thao**)

I like all kinds of music, a little bit of everything. Music has meant or been different things at different times. When I was young, my mom listened to Fleetwood Mac, Bob Seger, or various seventies or eighties rock. So when I hear it, I think of being a kid and my childhood, a simpler time. When I was in middle school, hip hop and rap became much

more popular thanks to BET and MTV. My friends and I raced home to watch music videos after school and make up dances or imitate the video's dancing. As I moved along in high school and I had my love, R&B resonated more with my feelings and eventually my broken heart. I still love Keith Sweat. My high school years also meant more dances and going to clubs, so music and dancing go hand in hand. Naturally I

heard a lot of music at house parties. Around 18, a lot of my friends started going to college as I struggled with starting to further my education. However, their own college experience of music included things like jazz and that wore off on me. As an adult dealing with a lot of stress, music always relaxes me in my time of need. I have to watch what I listen to, though, because too much down beat and depressing music will have that effect on me. I try to watch the music I listen to like a person might watch their diet. (**Hailey Sjuggerud**)





Music is what I use when I am sad and frustrated or emotional. I like to listen to any kind of music, but classical music or opera music I only listen to in the theater. Music makes me remember stages of my life, like when I was a kid, both young and now. The music he is playing takes me to another stage of my life and makes me imagine things that are not real. This song reminds me of when my father took me to the theater or when he taught me how to dance. I listen to any type of music, Hispanic, English, and Swedish.

However, I like happy music, the kind that makes you dance or move your body with the beat. The way music affects me depends on my emotions. When I am happy, I listen to salsa and hip hop. Every song or type of music is happy. Sad music affects me and reminds me of my dad when he passed away. I avoid this type of sad music because it makes me depressed. I am an outgoing person and music makes me happy. I don't know what I would be in my life without it. It is hard to answer this question. I have never experienced being without music. **(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)**

What music means to me – music means escape from anger and hurt and sometimes being the outcast. Music means calm in the midst of my storms. Music also means difference from the norm for a black child

growing up on the south side of Chicago. Music solidifies my belief and calls to mind my convictions. . . . My kind of music choices change from minute to minute, hour to hour, and day to day. On any given day, the 70s disco style will rule, as it is my favorite; this era meant freedom. Music can dictate sadness to happiness, highs to lows, love to anger, and vice versa across the board. Life without music would be very, very melancholy. . . . **(Ruthie Allen)**

Music is the window to emotions that help express certain elements in your life or environment. I love R&B, jazz, gospel, and a little country music. . . . Music is not only music; it is "freedom of expression." I would be lifeless without music. It plays a huge part in many ways to help soothe and validate my way to express what is unspoken. It can connect strangers from all walks of life. My mom would always listen to gospel while my father was into relaxed R&B and jazz and country. I picked up from a childhood friend as deep as your mind would expand, opening doors of all meaning depending on how you feel. I am in love with music and even all levels of how it can help to make you speak through tones. **(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**

WHAT WILL HOME BE?

After learning about Odysseus's many detours on his long journey home, students were asked to write what home will look like to them when they arrive.

Home will be when I feel comfortable and happy about going to a space that I created. Home will be me finding a great job, getting through all the hurdles that are in my way, finishing school, and finding a purpose in life. Home will be becoming financially stable and not having to worry about debt or living paycheck to paycheck. That is when I know I'll find a home that is for me. **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

I feel my final point when I feel at home will be when I finally finish achieving the degree I choose to pursue and enter the career that follows the education I obtain. Then, at that time, I will feel secure, complete, and fulfilled. **(Angela Carpino)**

My home will be built by hand, with a big back yard, a garden, and two kids. I don't know where my dream home will be yet. **(Lisa Simmons)**

I will know I have reached home when the struggle is not so hard. I will know I have reached home when ideas freely flow into my blog. I will know I have reached home when my soul no longer feels guilty for putting me first. **(Ruthie Allen)**

I know that I'll be "home" when I feel comfortable and at peace with myself. I will have achieved goals that I've set for myself long term and short term. I will not have any

financial troubles holding me back. I will be happier, and the people I love will all be there with me. **(Maya Rasheed-Bracey)**

I know that I will have found my home when I feel happy with myself and have a fulfilling relationship with someone. **(Reggie Reed)**



I will have a peaceful home full of laughter, and bills and nonsense will not interrupt the process of life. There will be smiles and happiness, pink flowers, a white picket fence, and the sun shining— a fairytale in real life. There will be success in the basics—my children happy and healthy, a level of contentment, all the levels of comfort, and mental freedom. **(Ta'Tiana Clacks)**

My home will be a life where my career is one that I build. I am the boss. I'll have a degree. My children will be well off, and I will have money for all the things I need and want. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**

The feeling of home will be when I am around family and I become a nurse. I'll have a big, beautiful house with peace and motivation. I will feel like I accomplished my goals. I'll have a husband with things that we build together. **(Alexis Law)**



My ideal home will be in the future when I won't have to worry about getting by and making ends meet. In the future, I plan on being married with one child and having my career as either a detective or a psychologist. In the future, I plan on being able to help my family, so they won't have to worry about anything. **(Arioun Jones)**

I would have grey hair, new teeth, and a house. I would be married to my person, with kids that are great at sports and school. I would live in the city and have a nonprofit. My sons would be happy and grown. My family would have money to go on vacations and NBA games. **(Adrian Molitor)**

I know I'll be home when I feel safe and comfortable with myself and where I am in life. I'll have a sense of belonging when I accomplish my goals and learn from my mistakes. I know I'll be home because I'll be happy and healthy. I will make it to where I want to be with the support of my family and friends beside me every step of the way. **(Keziah Bester)**

My future home would be me feeling comfortable financially, not worried about living week to week or paycheck to paycheck. I would like to live in a house that my children can play and run around safely in, and not be told to be quiet by neighbors. I don't want them to have to walk on eggshells. Home would be a safe place with things going on. **(Hailey Sjuggerud)**

Home will be when I wake up and have opened my Drug Rehab home in Chicago, IL. I have arrived knowing that I can help give back to the streets that I once took from to help mold men and women into independent and motivated individuals. **(James Davis)**

I hope and pray that where I stand now in my life will lead me to my true destination of success and happiness. Success and happiness to me is having my daughter in my care and living in my own, stable place. I won't have to worry about where my next dollar will come from. Maybe I'll be in school working on a psychology degree. My home will be warm and peaceful. Married or not, I will be content with who I am, where I am, and what I am doing. My daughter, Dahlia, will be well taken care of, happy, and healthy. I will conquer my depression, anxiety, and fears. Home to me is being content with myself. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**

What will home be? Home will be a place where the "haters" hate. Home is where my pain no longer is painful, but where pain is learning a lesson. Home will be when I can imprint my knowledge on a younger generation. I'll finally make it home when I can no longer call my current home my home. **(Ladaro Taylor)**

I will reach home when I am without any addictions and have more time for my family and my business. I will have a nice home and, most importantly, a happy family. **(Victor Rojas)**

Home for me is warm and cozy, filled with laughter and joy. Home is the smell of cake baking in the oven on and off on a Sunday, waiting for the show, because in my home, it is never ending. **(Barbara Rodgers)**

My perfect home in a few years will be:
When I reach my goals professionally and personally
Professionally: receiving a degree
Personally: owning my own business and helping my kids reach their career goals,

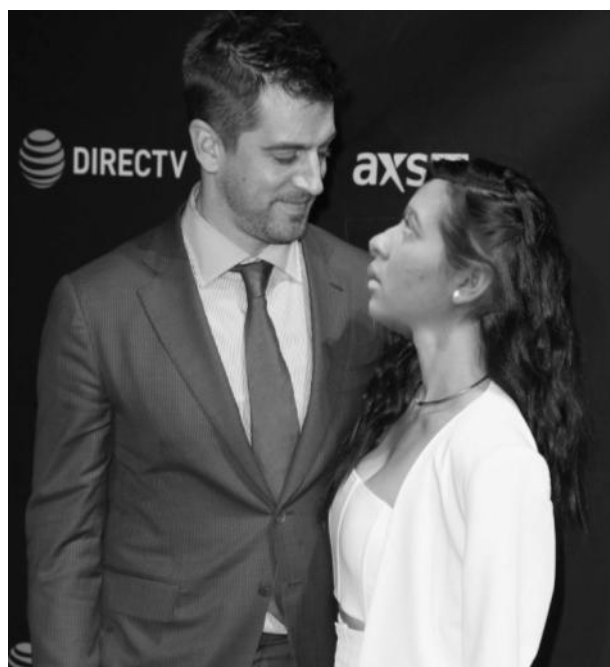
having a big home where I can have a bedroom for each of my kids and a place for them to stay when they visit me with their families

When I am financially stable and secure
(Sayury Peralta Vivanco)

My home will be welcoming and comfortable. There will be lots of plants and flowers. There will be loving people, all paid for. It will be a safe place for kids with no abusers. No one will be destroying their things or stealing.
(Tyjeana Galloway)

I will recognize my home in the future not by what it looks like, but by how it feels. I will teach my kids that home is where the love is. When I finally reach home, I will be surrounded by love. The air will be filled with laughter. My heart will overflow with peace.
(Tori Armour)

I will know I have reached home when I have married Aaron Rodgers and become a mother of six for a football team. My home will be a sanctuary for my family and fostered farm animals (as home pets). **(Selena Muñoz)**



Home is when I know that I am happy, free of stress, and able to go to my own backyard and pick my own fruits and veggies. I'll be able to enjoy the herbs that heal the body naturally and see fields full of flowers and different trees. I'll hear all the birds chirping and the sound of the nice breeze in the air. **(Sch'Royce Brown)**

I'll know I am home when I am able to get a home with a clean and decent yard. It will be a clean home with a clean smell. I'll also know I am home when I have a stable job to pay all the bills, and still have enough. I'll be home when I no longer have to worry about not having enough to pay for rent or the electric bill. **(Bao Thao)**

As I reach my home, I can see myself graduated from college with a three bedroom home. My daughter will be in school and have everything taken care of. I will feel a deep peace of mind, and I will feel as happy as I feel now. I will see my whole family close to me. I will have a very successful business and hopefully be living in Mexico. I will be enjoying life next to my family, just laughing. **(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**

My home would be a sparsely furnished, three bedroom home in a nice and quiet neighborhood with a tree-lined street. My home would be different tones of brown, green, and blue. My living room would have a cork floor, two soft chairs, a table, long beige couch, and pictures on the wall

of my children and grandchildren. I would also have a few of my favorite books and my statue of The Thinker.

My kitchen would be bright, but also full of the aromas of pie, cakes, coffee, and tea. There would be ongoing conversation about worldly things, with wisdom dispensed like spices in a meal made with love.

It would be a place where family and friends would and could call....Dad's home. **(Bruce Moore)**

I will know that I've arrived at home because in my mind I have goals: 1) being a successful business owner; 2) being financially stable – not rich, but wealthy. Home will be filled with love and knowledge. Comfort is what I want to feel when I arrive at home, along with a sense of security and the ability to relax and laugh. **(Ameshia Turner)**

I will know I am home when I am accepted into UW Madison after a long odyssey of education. **(Derrick Allen)**

