

ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 6, 2017

ODYSSEY ORACLE JUNIOR



Contents

Odyssey Adventurers.....	2
Odyssey Explorers.....	10
Odyssey Jumpstart	23
College Corner	26

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Odyssey Adventurers/Goodman Library, grades 6-12: Karen Dreyfuss, Mackenzie McDermit, Leigh Fredrickson, Scott Cooper, Lucia Chikowero '14

Odyssey Explorers/Space Place, grades 1-5: Christina Wagner, Marisol Gonzalez '17, Shannon Huberty,
Max Lenz, Kay Kriewald, Joy Bally '17, Milli Lau '14, Guadalupe Tinajero '16

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Guests: UW Language and Speech (with Peg Rosin), UW Slow Food, Alliance of Therapy Dogs (Read to a Dog), Nate Clark (Madison Public Library), Poet Fabu (Fabu Carter), Joy Bally '17, Eliav Goldman and Lisa Kjenvet (Madison Youth Choirs, Madison Children's Museum (field trip)

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ODYSSEY ADVENTURERS



POETRY FROM ODYSSEY ADVENTURERS

Inspired by Fabu

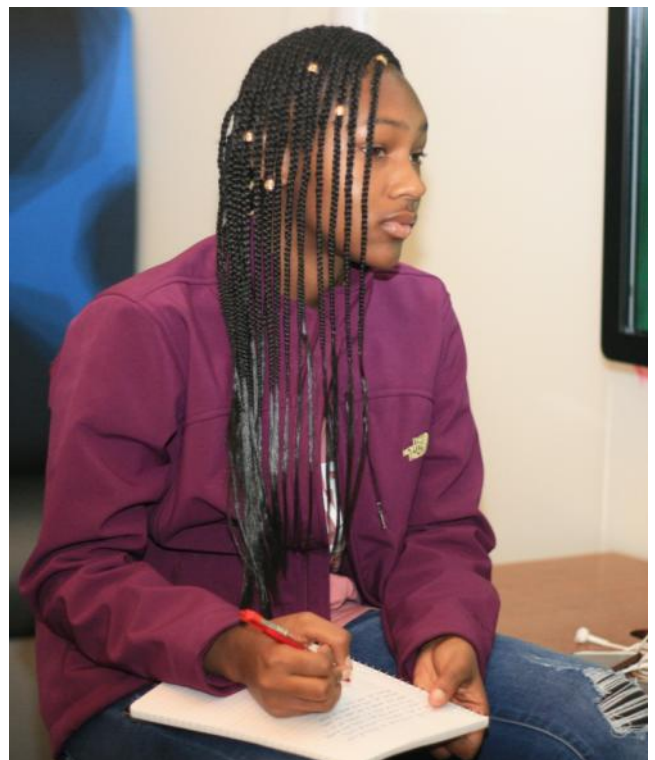
I am different and funny from New York City
 I wonder what the moon looks like from Mars
 I hear birds chirping in the hood
 I see the sunset opening like a red rose, sweet like strawberry
 lemonade
 I want to be a police officer, cute and lovable being on the
 walkie talkie talking fast
 I am different and funny, ice skating cold and cool
 I pretend to be a cop, playing dress up
 I worry I'm for Mighty God
 I cry black people, their greens and black beans
 I am different and funny from New York City



I understand Madison, Wisconsin
 I say especially when I sleep
 I dream hugging my grandma
 I try dog shenanigans
(Angel)

I am from cellphonedlandia, where my phone is my world
 Without it
 I am broken
 A part of me is gone
 I feel empty inside

Alone, disconnected from the world
 Alone
 Without a screen to have my eyes glued to
 Not to feel the smooth pink case in the palm of my
 hand
 I am...a lot of things
 Disconnected
 Bored
 Detached
 Heartbroken
 Unhappy
 Miserable
(Niya)





I am from autumn trees with falling red leaves
 From red roses and water that smell like life
 I am from the rain running down the windows
 Tapping, thundering, making me feel relaxed like a lavender massage
 I am from more deep red roses
 The nicest smelling flowers ever
 I'm from Christmas celebrations with loud talking
 Especially from Ameshia, my mom and Zaire, my gone baby cousin.
 I'm from the talking fast and singing slow
 From "Be successful" and "learn from your mistakes"
 I'm from getting baptized and going to Mt. Zion Baptist Church on Sunday
 I'm from Michigan, transplanted to Wisconsin, the home I love.
 Fried chicken and white rice in my belly

From Zaire who died too young as a baby and whose sister asks,
 "Why can't he be like the birds and come down to visit me?" **(Semaj'a)**



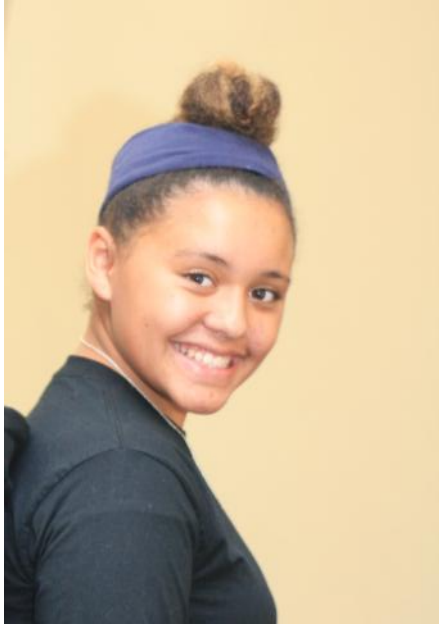
(Collage by Semaj'a)



(Bird by Tara)

You frighten me at day
 You scare me at night
 You creep in the shadows
 Give people fright
 I wonder why I am so scared
 I fear you're hiding somewhere waiting for me
 To come out of sight
 To give me a big fright
 Sometimes at night
 I sit in fear
 Wondering if you are here
 I know it was just a film
 But sometimes I think you are real
(Tara)





The Skin I'm In

You may say my skin
Is black
But that's incorrect
"The skin I'm in" is the skin
Of the slaves
The skin I'm in is the fighters
of the country
The skin I'm in is
Everyone
(Kamoria)



I am from getting home at 2:50 pm from school which is both prison
and freedom

I am from hearing my dog's nails tapping every time I open the fridge
for a snack and she wants one too

I am from my mom coming home blowing huge breaths full of
stress as she walks through the creaky plastic door

I am from saying "hi" to my mom. "How was your day and
how can I help you?"

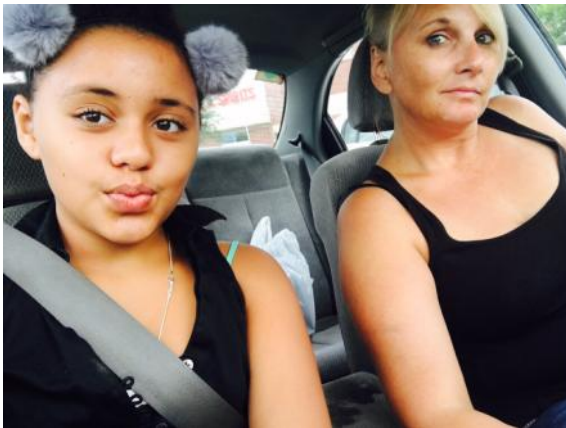
Mom smiles with an open mouth showing all her white teeth

I walk outside and stop

I close my eyes and listen

I can hear the wind passing through my hair

(Kamoria)



I'm from a place of fun
With smiles as big as an airplane
And a laugh as loud as a chicken that won't stop clucking

But I don't have fun all the time
Like when mean people yell at me for no reason

Then my favorite cousin puts me back in a good mood
And the smiles and laughs return
(Mari)



PEOPLE WE ADMIRE



Three People I Admire

First, I admire my mother, a strong powerful woman that not only speaks her mind but also her heart. She has been a bold inspiration for me since I was born, and she taught me how to be intelligent, informed, and advanced. My mother is one of the reasons why I am who I am, and she helps me remember responsibility and that life needs you to work with it so you can shape it to your dream. "We do what we have to do, so we can do what we want to do."



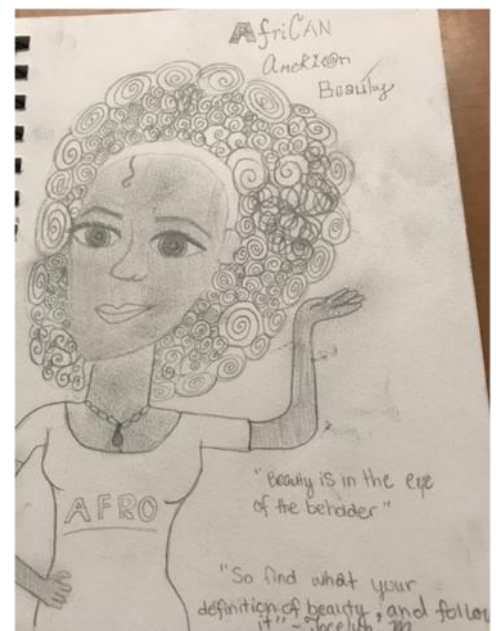
Second is my father. He inspires me to be the very, very, very best that I can be. He's told me quotes and helps me grow up each year. He fills me in on what I need to accomplish and shows me the most efficient way of doing it. He teaches me self-discipline and how to train myself for the good of me and others I may impact. "If you're going to do anything, be the best at doing it."

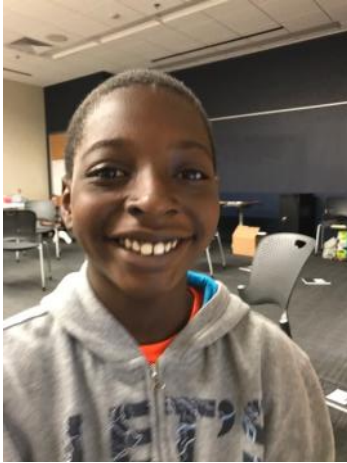
Third is Willow Smith, because as she's matured and grown up so far she provides music that speaks truth and music from my sort of perspective. She directs a perfect tone to her emotional part of the song, and she's not scared to question the thoughts and facts made by adults. For me, she also displays my emotions in audio form that helps cool me down and gather my own thinking.



These three people help shape my every day, my every me, and my every thought. I thank these three people for teaching, training, and helping me through my years of maturing, growing, and learning. I thank you, and those around me, for providing a new experience and perspective for my journey through life and beyond.

(Jocelyn)





Dear Michael Jordan,

I admire your ability to play basketball. There are a lot of great basketball players, but you are one of the best. I know you

practiced a lot when you were a kid, and I know you still did when you played in the pros. I've read that you took being competitive to a new level. I know that you were really competitive in other things like golf and even playing cards. Your traits encourage me to stay competitive in basketball, but also math, band, and other classes at school. You were also a good leader. Leaders do things on their own but also help others. You wouldn't have won the championships if you didn't help your team win. **(Jerry)**



Dear Lydia,

You are the best big sister ever, and I need you to know that I admire you for reasons you might not know. I admire you because you're a human; you have real life problems and feelings. You are my role model and show me that it's okay to have feelings, and how to express myself without hurting other people. You teach me that

sometimes you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of others. You were there when Mom wasn't. You were my second mom, and I need you to know that you are the best person ever. I love you.

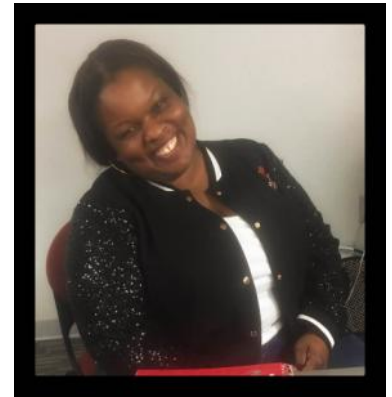
(Olivia)





My mom grew up with no electronics, and if she didn't clean up the house where it's completely spotless, she couldn't go anywhere. Her mom/my grandma was very strict, and my mom would clean all day until the house was spotless. What that taught her was if you do something, do it right.

When my mom was young she used to get bullied for how fat she was. She used to ignore it, or if they tried to hurt her, she stuck up for herself and fought back.

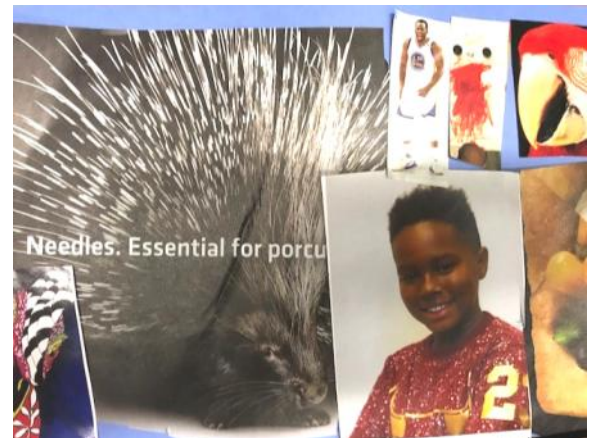


Even though she was forced to fight, she was always, and to this day still is, the nicest person I know. She always has a smile on her face. She also always buys me stuff. Above all, she helps me with my homework, or anything I want. That's why she is my hero. **(Shadavian)**

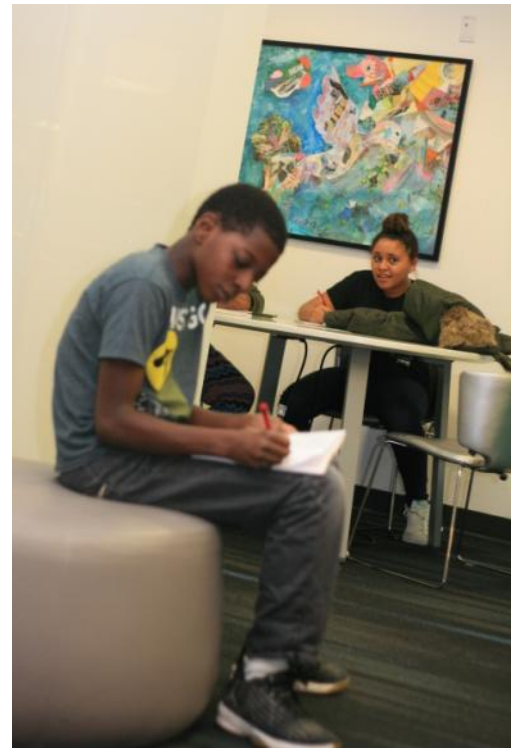


I admire my mom because she had me when she was 16, and my dad went to jail when I was 3 and when my mom was 19. Another reason is because we used to sleep in a nearby barbershop with our friend and then he moved to Chicago. I used to have a lemonade stand with his son in front of the barbershop

and we sold some candy and a lot of lemonade. Another reason is that she managed to take care of me when she was just in high school and when she didn't have any money. Then she took care of me when she was in college. She took me to some college classes sometimes until I was in 5th grade. My last reason is she makes a lot of sacrifices for me and my brother, like paying for my sports, which adds up to around \$350 dollars. Then she has to pay for my brother's daycare. She basically pays for everything we have with no help. In conclusion, my mom is a really great and nice person and she loves to encourage people who have trouble with their lives to not give up because she was in their position once, but she found a way to fight out of it. **(K'Shawn)**



ADVENTURE AT MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY



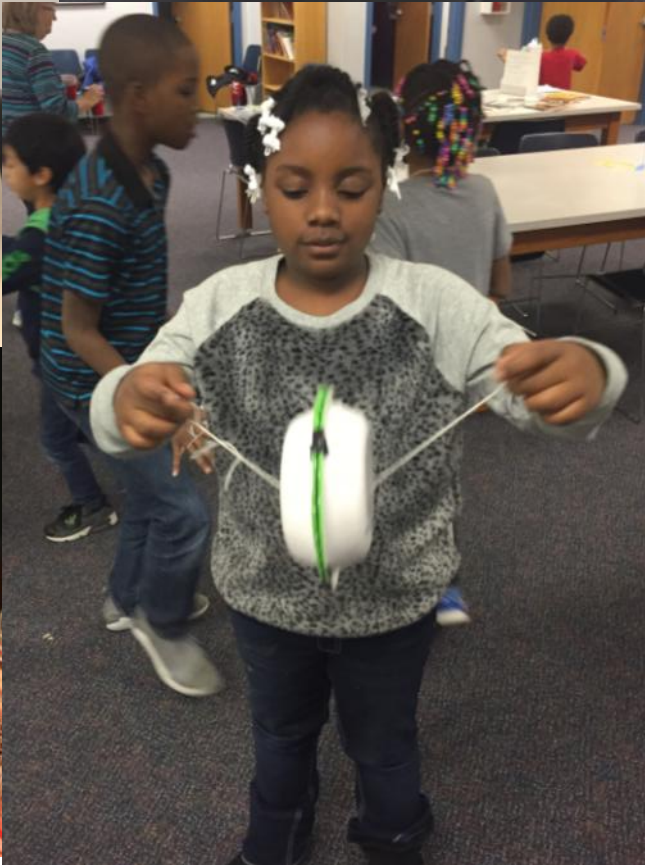
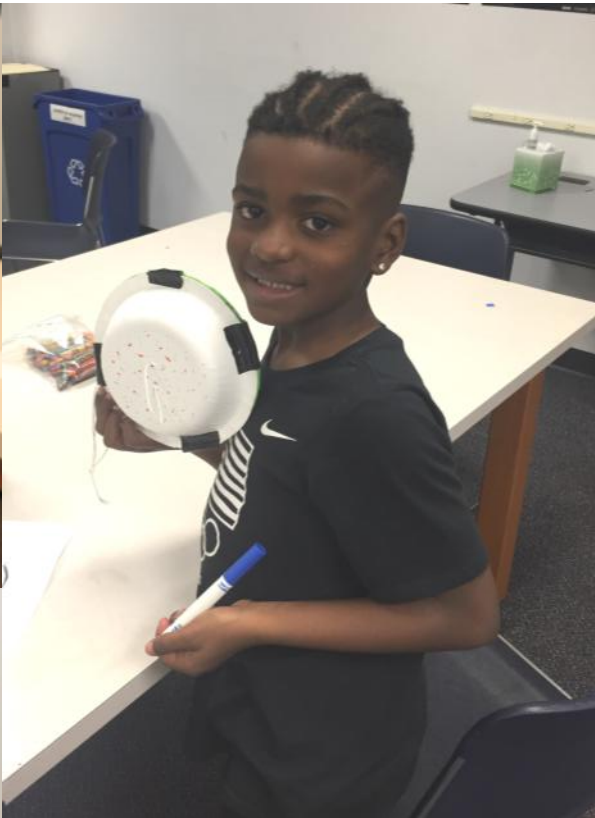
The Adventurers took a trip to the Madison Public Library's Central branch for a night of exploration and creativity. Students scoured the library's four floors on a scavenger hunt, discovering art installations throughout the space. After the hunt, we headed back to the library's teen section for some creative writing and chill time on the library's technology. Students wrote about what they would do if they were trapped in the library for a night (with a dead cell phone of course!) They were quick to point out that they always travel with a

charger, but they had plenty of creative ideas about how they would pass the time, including ransacking the vending machine and befriending book characters that come to life at night! We love the creativity of this group. **(Mackenzie McDermit, Odyssey Adventurers Teacher)**



(Collage by Luci Ndongwe Chikowero, Odyssey Adventurers Teacher)

ODYSSEY EXPLORERS

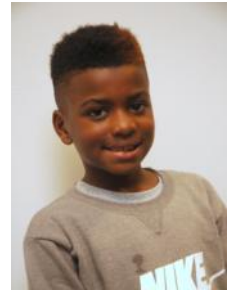


MADISON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM TRIP



On November 8th, I went to the Madison Children's Museum. I had a good time. One thing that I did there was to go on the hamster wheel. I went so fast that I almost fell off. Another thing I did was go to the play farm. I also dressed up like Frank Lloyd Wright. Another thing I did was go down the big slide. I painted the window and went in the shadow room. I had a good time. **(Sheari)**

I liked the hamster wheel and the slide at the Madison Children's Museum. I also liked the shadow room and the paint window. I would love to go back again! **(Javone)**

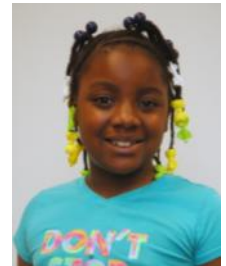


It is hard to choose which activity was the most fun to do at the Madison Children's Museum, but



if I had to choose just one, it would be the hamster wheel. I also enjoyed playing the farm game. Also, in the kitchen, it was fun serving Guadalupe, Joy, Shannon, and Max. Ms. Chris said, "Five minutes, everybody!" I didn't want to go, but I was hungry for snack. Then, we took the bus back to class. **(Kyniah)**

The Madison Children's Museum was fun. I loved the water display. It was cool and splashing, as the balls were pushed up in the air and then came crashing down. I also liked painting on the window. It was fun to go on the hamster wheel. In the shadow room, you go into this space, you put your back to the wall, and press a button; it will leave a mark of where you were (a shadow) on the wall. The climbing gym was cool; I went up in it, and it twisted around. We had an hour at the museum. Then we got back on the bus. I sat with Ms. Chris. We finally got back to the UW Space Place where we played a few games, and then it was time to go. My grandma picked me up. I was in the car, and because my house is close to the Space Place, I was home so fast. I went in the house, and I took a shower and went to bed. **(Kamia)**



I really enjoyed going to the Madison Children's Museum because there were a lot activities to do like the hamster wheel and the slides. In the hamster wheel, I ran really fast. **(Alan)**





All about the Madison Children's Museum

Going to the Madison Children's Museum was the best time ever. I said, "Why is no one here?" My teacher said,

"Because the children's museum was so nice that they are letting us come in when it is closed." I ran and got on the spinning wheel – so fun! I took pictures and painted and then went back to the spinning wheel with my friend. I also went in this room where you push a button and make your shadow. I made a lot of those. I loved the slide, climbing up it and sliding down fast. I liked making food for customers in the kitchen and calling my friend from the phone booth. I did art and made a little thing. It was the best time ever. I wish I could go back one day. **(Kaleah)**



I loved going to the Madison Children's Museum. There was so much to do there. One thing I really loved was the paint window, where they actually let us paint the window any way we want! It was awesome. There was also a hamster wheel which was fun and scary at the same time. Another thing I did was play in the kitchen, and I had a lot of fun doing that, too. I had a great time at the Children's Museum, and I hope I can go there again sometime. **(Sidney)**



Quando fui al museo de los niños, yo jugue con mi hermano, Alan. Nosotros usamos la rueda. Jordan y yo hicimos pizza. Yo comí oreos en la merienda. El museo me gusta mucho.

When we went to the Madison Children's Museum, I played with my brother, Alan. We went on the wheel. Jordan and I made pizza. I ate Oreos at snack time. I liked the museum very much. **(Erick)**



En el museo de los niños, yo disfrute construir una casa de perro con mi mamá. At the Madison Children's Museum, I enjoyed constructing a dog house with my mom. **(Alex)**



I went to the Madison Children's Museum. It was very fun. One of the things I did there was this hamster wheel. I also went in the shadow room. What happened in the shadow room was I went into this dark place and when I hit the button, it took a picture of me on the wall – my shadow. Then, I went in the water room. The water display had live flowers. **(Truth)**



I liked the cabins and the office at the Madison Children's Museum. I also liked the hamster wheel and the bridge. I liked everything except the climbing thingamabob because it was scary. **(Shuan)**



The Madison Children's Museum was super fun because we got to wash windows and write on them with blue paint, and we got to go in the hamster wheel. And that is why it was super fun. **(Mella)**



At the Madison Children's Museum, I liked the trains and jungle gym and the rolling balls in the maze. **(Carlyle)**



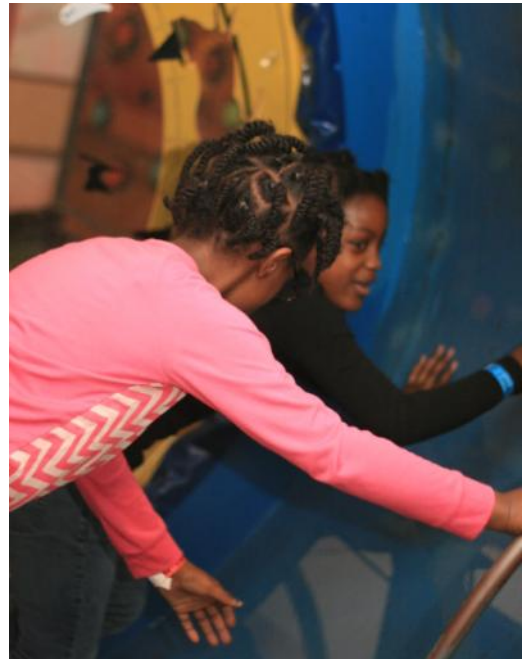
The museum was fun and awesome. My favorite part of it was art and the people who work there. **(Cole)**



At the Madison Children's Museum, my favorite thing was arts and crafts. Also, I loved the slide, jungle gym, and the car that Max, Chris and I rode in. I will never forget our first field trip. I wish I could go again. It was my second time going there. **(LaNiyah)**



My favorite part of the museum was going down the slide. My other favorite thing was making things in the art room. **(Malaysia)**



WRITING INSPIRED BY FABU



Odyssey Explorers enjoyed a visit from Fabu Carter, former Poet Laureate of Madison, columnist, and author of several books. Here is the writing that Fabu inspired. Be on the outlook for some of the important tools in creative writing that we've talked about this year: similes (comparisons using the words "like" or "as"); metaphors (implied comparisons); alliteration (same sound at the beginning of words); repetition (repeating phrases to emphasize something); onomatopoeia (when a word imitates the sound it is describing); and rhyming.

Where I was Born
Wisconsin es como un mar
porque tiene muchos lagos azules.
Es el estado con
mas lagos
de todo el mundo.

Wisconsin es el estado
reconocido por su queso
pero a mí me gusta el queso Mexicano
cómo el queso blanco.

Wisconsin is like the sea
because it has many blue lakes.
In this state,
more lakes than the whole world.

Wisconsin is a state
recognized for its cheese
but I like Mexican cheese
like queso blanco. **(Alex)**



Thank you, God

God, I thank you for making the world.
You are amazing.
You created people,
Sun, moon, trees and flowers.
You are amazing to the world
Thank you, God. **(Carlyle)**



The Story of Angela

Angela was an orphan. She had to cook and clean but never got a break. She loved to read, and her favorite book was “Cinderella” because she could relate to the story.

One day, Angela saw a girl outside her window. She looked identical to her! She thought maybe she could have an identical twin that she didn’t know about. She said to herself, “Oh, silly me! I could never be as cool as that girl!”

Nevertheless, she thought about that girl all day. She did not know why, but she couldn’t get that girl out of her mind. She told her stepsisters, even though she was afraid they would just laugh at her.

Strangely enough, they did not laugh at her; they didn’t give her any reason at all. They just gave her a different kind of look, but Angela walked away and mumbled, “That girl...”

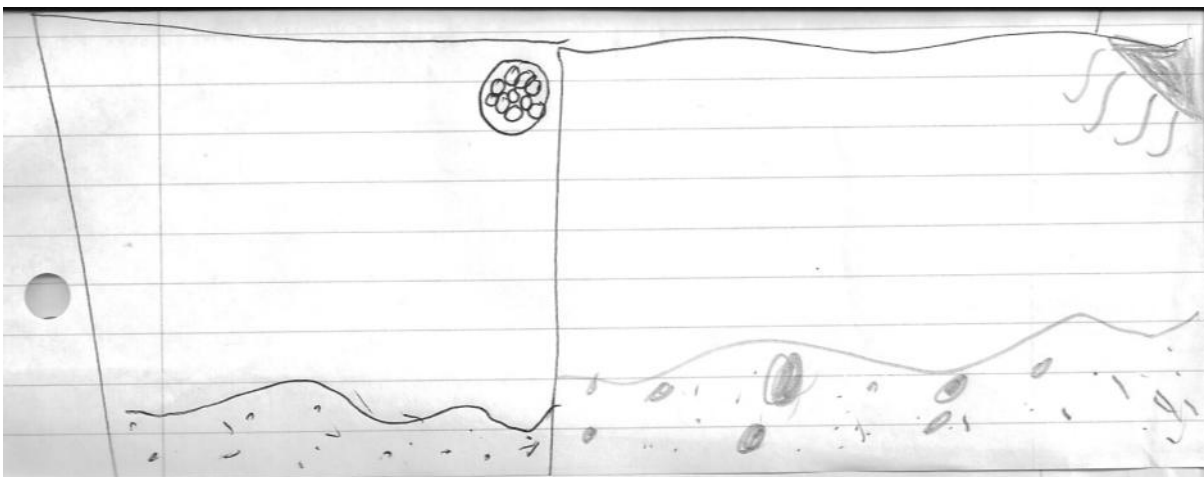
But one day, Angela was sent to Pick ‘n Save to get some eggs and raw fish, and she saw the girl again. Since she was on her own, she thought she would go up and ask her what her name was. The girl responded with a “Who are you, and why do you need to know?”

Angela said back to her, “We look kinda similar, so I was just wondering how old you are because maybe we are twins and never met before. So what is your name?”

“Fine,” said the girl. “My name is Joy, and my aunt told me about a twin I had named Angela.” So, the two girls sat on the bench near the store and had a pretty good conversation for about twenty minutes... (to be continued) **(Mella)**

Snow

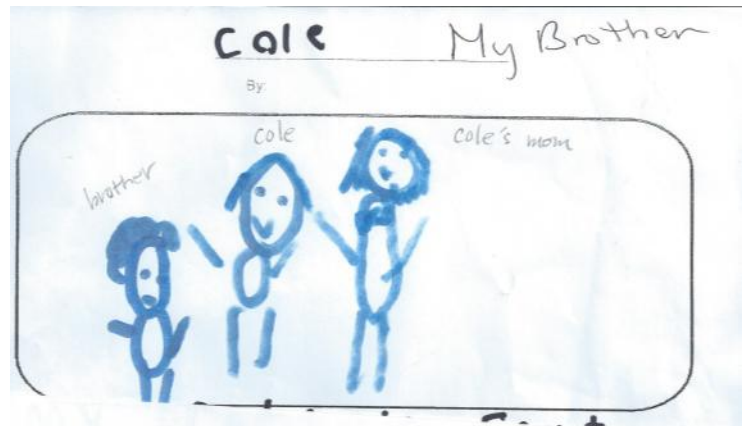
The snow glows tonight
in the moonlight.
Then it glows in the sunlight.
The next morning
The snow is melted. **(Javone)**



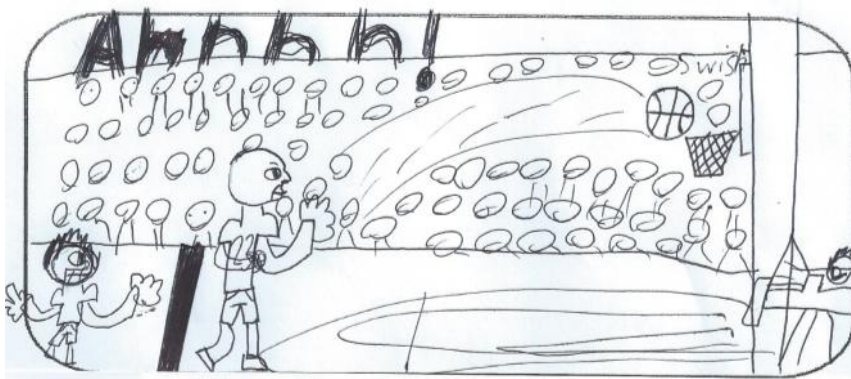
My Dog

My dog is smart
 My dog sometimes farts.
 My dog can be right.
 My dog can be tight.

In my bed with me
 Oh she, oh she, oh she
 How nice, how smart
 Oh how tight she can be
 In bed with me. **(Mella)**



My Brother
 My little brother is cute to me and our mom.
 He is fun sometimes.
 He is annoying to me and my mom sometimes...
 I like my little brother. **(Cole)**



The Inspirer Story

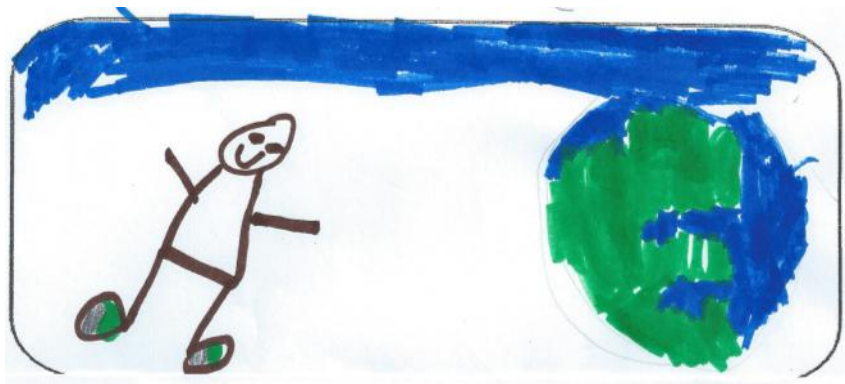
The person who inspired me is Michael Jordan. He inspired me by playing basketball. He showed me that things are both easy and hard. He inspired me by making shots and shooting threes. I tried to do that. It

wasn't easy, but today, I proved my theory. Now I want to be a basketball player. **(Jordan)**

Julius in the World

Be helpful.
 Be yourself.
 Be Julius in the world.

Because Julius in the world
 Is helpful, a super good learner.
 Is anyone like me?
 The world likes this. **(Julius)**



My Friends

My Friends are Bradley, Kara, Jaylyn, Cole 1 and Cole 2. I play basketball with Cole 1 and Cole 2. I build forts with Bradley. Kara and I play tag. I have gym with Jaylen. These are my friends whom I enjoy playing with in school. **(Julius)**



Kaleah's Friends

My name is Kaleah. I'm all about school. I have a lot of friends, especially J'emire, Oliver, Will and Ankac. We play at recess. We play games like tag and hide-and-go-seek.

My dad took me to Walmart with him, and while we were there, I saw them and said hi to them. I also said, "Do you want to have a play date?"

I go to Odyssey. My teachers are Ms. Chris, Joy, Max, Shannon, Marisol, Guadalupe, and Milli. They are so nice. Sometimes, I get to go in a cab, and sometimes I go in my Grandma's car. When I get there, we eat and just play games. When I go home, I just watch TV. **(Kaleah)**

I live with my sister and a funny brother; he is SO nice.

My mom is in heaven, and I miss her.

I have to share a room with my sister because I am the youngest. I have two grandmas. They are so nice. **(Kaleah)**

My Brother

My brother is smart like a pig.

He runs like a cheetah.

He is like an elephant (but not as big).

He is crazy like a hyena.

He is cool like Diary of a Wimpy Kid.

I love my brother like crazy. **(Kyniah)**

Olivia

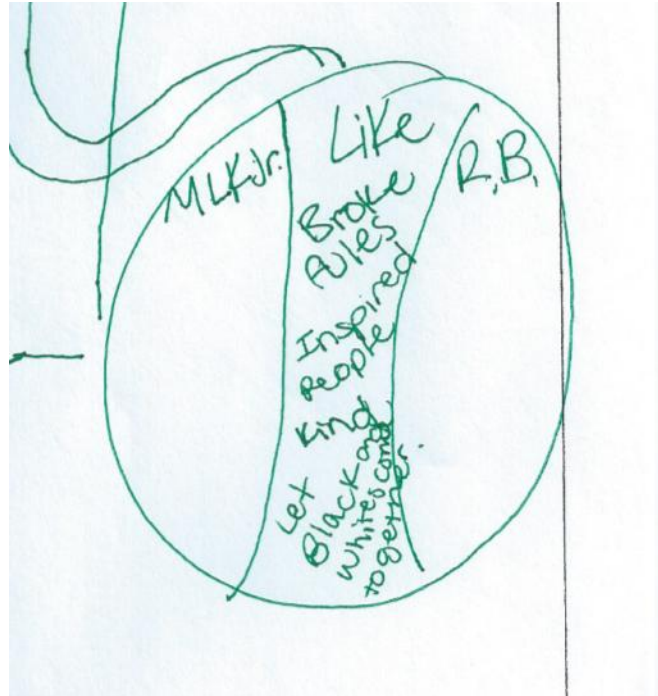
Olivia is my best friend. She helps me with my math and sometimes reading and my work. She helps me when I'm down and, and she will get me back up. When I'm on the playground and I'm bored, she helps me and plays with me. She is the best friend ever. These are the reasons why she is the best friend in the world. **(Kamia)**

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ruby Bridges

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
made speeches and led marchers.
Inspired people, kind to people
and himself.

Ruby Bridges,
kind to herself,
broke rules
to break racism,
like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A girl
went in a white school.
Inspired little girl.
I wish I could meet you.
And you are the same,
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
and Ruby Bridges. **(Kimari)**



My Auntie

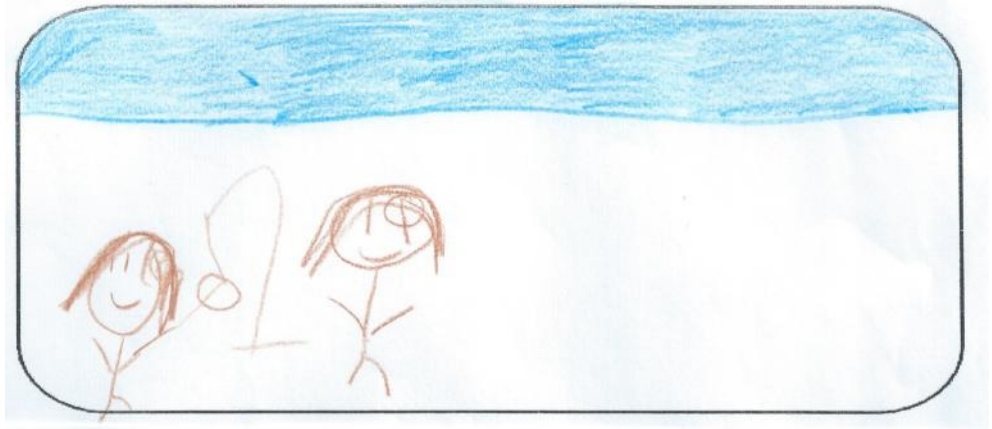
This is a poem about my auntie who passed away.
You were so nice and caring to me.
I love you, and you are more than you think to me.
You are my everything.
Ooooh how much I love you
And I miss you.
You always did a lot of things to help.
Our favorite color was purple.
Your son is doing well and so is your husband.
How are you and Uncle Daryl doing in heaven?
Love you!

(LaNiyah)

School

I love school.
It is so much fun!
The most fun
is math.

I love school
and reading for 40
minutes
and recess.
That is why
I love school. **(Malayia)**



fluffy Unicorn



My Pink Fluffy Unicorn

Pink, fluffy unicorn
Dancing on a rainbow.

Look at them
Dancing in the sky so high.
Pink, fluffy unicorn
Dancing on a rainbow. **(Sheari)**

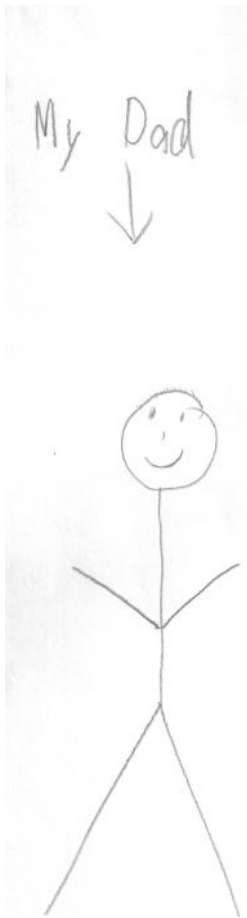
Keep it 100

Hey, I'm Sean!
I have 100 Lamborghinis,
400 Bugattis
and an Impala.
I love going like this in my Impala:
Skree Skree Vroom!!
I have a wife and three kids
And one dog, two cats,
And a shark under my floor.

I also have 3000 pairs of shoes. **(Shuan)**

Theme: Everything
5 dollars, 5 cents
Can you tell what I miss?
Every day, every night
Put in the bed with fright
Up, down, left, right
I want to be very nice.
But I don't
But I will
When my friend
Who screams with fright
I'm not scared every night.
(Truth)





My Dad
My dad is amazing.
He's a nurse
a father
a chef
a driver
and a tutor, too.

My dad is also a
TERRIFIC, KIND, AWESOME
friend.

My father is named
Bruce Moore! **(Sidney)**



The Cheetah
A cheetah, a cheetah is fast.
A cheetah eats meat.
He has lots
Of polka dots
A cheetah, a cheetah is fast. **(Jayden)**

The Jaguar
They are hunters.
They are camouflaged.
They are fast.
Jaguars love meat. **(Jayden)**

EXPLORING MUSIC

On November 29th, Odyssey Explorers went on a magical, musical journey with Eliav Goldman and Lisa Kjenvet from Madison Youth Choirs. We watched clips from the movie “Inside Out” and listened carefully for how emotions like “joy” and “anger” are expressed in music. Then we were divided into small groups and told to create some music that represented a certain emotion. We were given a variety of instruments such as shakers, drums, xylophones, vibraslaps and handheld bells with which to compose. After we composed our song, the other groups had to guess what emotion we were expressing with our music! Next, we watched another movie clip from “Ratatouille” and learned how music can express a particular food (how it tastes, what it feels like when you prepare it or eat it). Eliav played a song he wrote that sounded like popcorn popping as a demonstration. Then, it was our turn! *That* was a little harder, but we did it!



Afterwards, the Explorers each filled out a survey about music. The two most popular types of music were rap and pop, but many other kinds of music were mentioned as favorites, including jazz, romantic, hip hop, Christmas, Mexican, rock, and calming music. Listening to their favorite music made them feel happy, calm, and motivated! What about their least favorite kind of music? It's rock, although some of the Explorers did not like folk, orchestra, classical, jazz or baby music. Listening to music that they don't like or in some cases music that is really loud makes them feel angry, weird, or bored, or “it just doesn't feel right.” When asked if they found the music or the lyrics more important, Explorers were divided, although some said both are equally

important to them. When it comes to singing, they love to sing in the car, while doing chores, in the shower, and just about anywhere.

The final question was “What would the world be like without music?” All agreed on that answer: boring, lame, dreadfully different, or as one student said, “There would be no happiness in the world.”

Some Explorers reported that they already play an instrument or are learning to play one. This summer, we hope to connect those Odyssey Junior students who want to learn an instrument or sing in a choir with the opportunity to do so.



ODYSSEY JUMPSTART







COLLEGE CORNER

Jaleah Price, granddaughter of Odyssey alum Jovenus Price '13, took part in Odyssey Junior. She was accepted at Howard University, Spelman College, Cornell College, Clark Atlanta University, and Central State University. Below find her letter to current Odyssey Junior students about her first semester at Central State. Following that, check out Jaleah's poem written while in Odyssey Junior.



Hi, Odyssey Junior participants!

My name is Jaleah Price. I am a former Odyssey Jr. student. While in the program, I was able to express my hardships through writing. Odyssey Jr. helped me find this outlet and gave me an identity through my pen and paper.

This academic school year I am one of the youngest college students on the Central State University campus. Central State is an historically Black college that was ranked the best HBCU of the year, beating institutions like Spelman College and Howard University. At Central I will be studying biology in hopes to best prepare myself for graduate school

and my aspirations of becoming a community leader and role model.

I hope to pursue careers in social justice linked with psychology as they possess the ability to touch many lives through devoir service. The potential of social justice and psychology speaks to me because they offer to serve the community through the value of "service above self by diminishing racial inequality and social barriers. A cross-career between the two aligns with my aspiration of fostering unity by acknowledging, speaking up, and educating our world about social dominant issues that are hindering world prosperity; I want to empower individuals who are distressed with daily challenges. I want to apprehend how human interaction narrates racial inequity.



By acquiring deeper knowledge in college of the emotions behind racism, I will break stigmas and internalized biases that affect the progression of society to then be closer to improving the quality of living. I want to do this because I believe that too many people in our world strive for individual success and the acquisition of power. I know that if we could work better together and truly be a united nation, we could prosper further together. I want my education to influence my career to follow the ethics of community involvement, helping lives, and influencing the evolution of a more inclusive world. I hope to develop such through my experience this year at the number one HBCU of 2017, Central State University.

My classes at Central State have extremely interesting professors because they are all so diverse in ethnicity and where they went to school. The feel of a HBCU is amazing. I love stepping out my dorm and seeing people like me.



I am doing really well this semester! College is different from high school, but so far not too much to handle. I'm doing really well in my classes. I have straight As, so a 4.0 GPA so far for midterms. I hope to keep it up the rest of the semester. I am grateful for the help of Odyssey!

This Is Me

By Jaleah Price

(written in Odyssey Junior class)

My family, religion, gender, race and beliefs make me whole.

I am female, and female I will always be.

Yes, it is a man's world, but women are the heart of the world.

I am African American and am always reminded that I am.

I will always be looked at, passed over, and assumed incapable of reaching my dreams.

I accept this for what it is, but will never let this settle because I know I can do all things I put my mind to.

I will use being a female in a man's world and being African American in an unaccepting world as an advantage. An advantage to prove to all those who doubt me wrong.

I won't let these physical characteristics stop me from receiving my blessing and reaching my many dreams. It does not matter what your gender and race is, but it's about your capabilities, mindset, and faith.

I am one of millions living in poverty, but poverty does not live in me.

I am rich. Richer than what the eyes can see.

I am rich with knowledge, hope, faith, and determination.

I am rich in my soul, mindset, and integrity.

I don't live with luxury but instead love. Lots of LOVE.



Jaleah and her sister at her grandmother's graduation from Odyssey May 2013

At times I fall, break down, and cry when the storm is too strong to bear and I feel as if it's my time to lay to rest.

But My Lord steps in and lifts my head, and again I am filled with determination to make it.

I stand strong when the hardships pour in and attempt to destroy me. I stand strong with the help of my family.

My momma's mistakes and my grandma's faith give me the encouragement, push, stamina, and guidance I need to keep my head above water.

Momma's lived a life of selfishness and pain. Momma has brought the bittersweetness of danger and love into my life.

Even though I will always be scared by her poor decisions, I love her unconditionally and always will.

It's because of her I learned what hurt was at a young age.

It's because of her that I have a developed good morals because all her mistakes have shown me what not to do because I know what great pain they cause.

It's because of her that I know how my decisions can affect one greatly and can alter a life drastically.

Grandma's constant prayers, cries at night, size 10 shoes, long black hair, and beautiful smile have kept me encouraged and hopeful about the future.

I can always depend on my grandma for whatever I need. I know she puts herself aside and puts me first. And for this I love her so much.

Her soul sings beautifully and at times her words can sting, but this is what keeps me in check.

She reminds me of where I'm going and why I will make it. Her words, "I'm proud of you," bring joy to my soul.

It is because of my grandma that I am determined to make it because she has done so much for me and I have seen her overcome so many of life's lows.

I am who I am today and who I will be tomorrow and the day after next and the days after because of God, the pain and hardships I have overcome, being an African American female, and being a child from poverty.

My hardships and pain have made me strong.

My God and faith has keeps me hopeful.

Momma teaches me what path not to take.

And grandma has shows me how to love, how to be strong, how to keep faith through trials and tribulations, and shows my hope every time I look into her brown eyes.

She has taught me how important education is and has told me education is for me and I am just right for education.

For all of this I am thankful.

I am the face of the future.

