

# ODYSSEY ORACLE



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Emily Auerbach, Co-Director/Founder; Oracle Editor  
Kevin Mullen, Co-Director  
Emily Azad, Program Manager  
Christina DeMars, Coordinator  
Beth McMahon, Oracle Designer

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

608-712-6321  
608-572-6730  
608-590-5862  
608-590-5948

# OUR DREAMS

*I have a dream . . .*



I have a dream. . .  
A dream of peace  
No more gunshots  
Or dead babies in the streets.

I have a dream  
A dream of a world

Where there's not more  
Fathers in cells than in homes  
No more childhoods so bad  
We dream to be grown.

I have a dream  
A dream of a community  
That's not guided by C.R.E.A.M.

I have a dream  
That one can be average, be successful,  
And still look like me. **(Calvin Valentine)**



I have a dream that one day  
I will be an architect here in the US.  
This is a trail already started a longtime ago  
In other continents, in other countries  
Other than here in the US.  
This is my hope, this is my faith.  
I will never give up because I believe in myself  
I am doing my best, above all, I'm working hard  
To make my dream come true, here in the US.  
**(Souad Bidar)**



I have a dream the country opens its eyes  
I have a dream we expose all the lies  
And the cover-ups of all the crap that's inside  
Of this horrible world and the ones with the power  
Are just getting hushed up with threats and they cower  
but they get their send offs for their final hour.

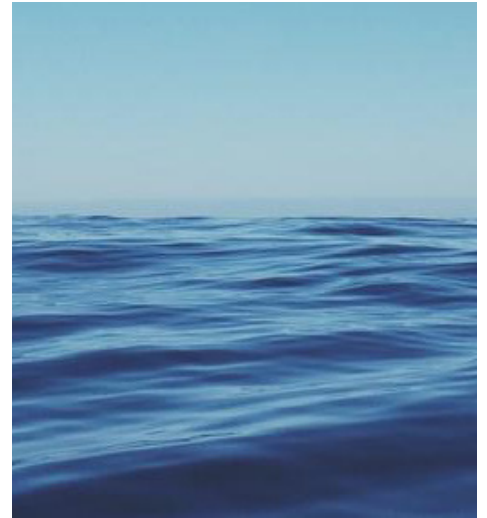
I have a dream that children and women one day get help  
And the trafficking rings get the cards they are dealt  
Then my kids and my neighbors can go to the park  
And play basketball and walk after dark.

I have a dream that the media shows how the world really goes,  
that it teaches us all and we all start to grow.  
Then the system's undone and the rings start to slow.  
I have a dream that the government will do the job they need to  
Until then, I'll stay woke for that reason and I have a clue  
It doesn't take reading a book off the shelf  
To know Jeffrey Epstein did not kill himself. **(Sarina Benford)**





I have a dream  
The sea will calm within  
The past can be faced  
The colonized and destroyed peoples of the world,  
Can take what is useful from their masters,  
Ditch the rest,  
And forge ahead.



I have a dream  
I can change, and won't fear change  
I can go out into the world  
And keep going out into the world  
With a loving heart and an open mind  
I won't seek emotional climax with those who've hurt me  
But instead allow past fixations to be subsumed by the vital present  
And a future worth reaching.

**(Farren McDonald)**



I have a dream one day,  
instead of worrying about  
the financials,  
I can focus on what makes  
my kids happy.  
I have a dream that my  
children come first and bills

come second.

I have a dream that memories and  
experiences can be made  
rather than me wanting to sleep or be alone.  
I have a dream to be the best mother I can  
be. **(LaBresha Green)**



I have a dream that one day the world has peace and no wars,  
when we come together instead of go against.  
I have a dream that discrimination doesn't exist,  
that regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic class, or disabilities,  
everyone can live a judgment-free life.  
I have a dream that we can live without a worry,  
no worries of clothes, food, shelter, transportation, education, healthcare, or debt.

I have a dream that the next generation succeeds,  
the school-to-prison pipeline eliminated, and each student  
receives adequate attention and time with a chance to prosper.

I have a dream that injustice everywhere is corrected,  
Cases overturned, families reunited, guns put down.

I have a dream that one day I'll be able to make a difference  
because change can't happen unless you're actively a part of being the change. **(Tawania Alston)**



I have a dream that I will become a teacher  
 I have a dream that I will own my own house  
 I have a dream that I will own my own business  
 I have a dream that I will be the best mommy ever  
 I have a dream that I will give my son a better life than I had  
 I have a dream that I will no longer be living in poverty  
 I have a dream that I will be married and have a big family. **(Anjelica Brown)**



I have a dream that I will be here to see my kids grow,  
 Two very successful black women they will be.  
 I have a dream that I will no longer wake up to see  
 All the violence in this world and lost lives of loved ones.  
 This all is becoming too often but it's life and not a dream.  
 I wake up and it's still happening.  
 I wish we can change the minds of others,  
 Protect our aunts, uncles, kids, brothers, and mothers.  
 I know and pray that one day my dreams become reality. **(Cashae Davis)**



I have a dream that the world will be filled with less hate....  
 That one day we won't have children in cages  
 or that black mothers won't have to fear every time their children go out in the streets.  
 I have a dream that the world will be filled with less hate....  
 That the amount of melanin someone has does not determine whether someone is  
 threatened or not  
 or that our street vendors will be safe from hate crimes and make it home at night  
 I have a dream that the world will be filled with less hate. **(Erika Gonzalez)**



I have a dream . . .  
 I have a dream that we are creating past the typical narratives year after year and calling  
 it education  
 We look forward in hope that one day our dreams become our reality  
 Our eyes gaze upon the manifestation of new hopes and dreams denied and denied  
 A dream without a goal is just a wish at its best  
 Use your dreams to fuel your future. **(Melissa Herriges)**



I have a dream that one day I can help others achieve their dreams.  
 I have a dream that one day people will not suffer from the traumas that poverty brings.  
 I have a dream that every man and woman can believe they have more options in life  
 than what society tells them they can achieve.  
 I have a dream of a world where no one person has billions of dollars and another is  
 starving on the streets.  
 I have a dream that no man or woman feels the need to commit a crime just so they and  
 their family can eat.  
 And I have a dream that anyone can be who they want to be.  
 Yes, I have a dream of helping other people achieve their own dreams. **(Jessica Jacobs)**





I have a dream... that all of my dreams will come true.  
That I am a successful nurse, a home owner  
with the pink slips to the latest Chevrolet Traverse.  
I have a dream that all of the children will grow healthy,  
that all grownups will set better examples for our future  
by taking care of each other and stop fighting one another,  
that it will be more peaceful and safer for all people.

I have a dream that COVID-19 will GO to the land of FAR FAR AWAY!!!  
That we will all overcome it, we have enough on our plates,  
That we are in this together and we will get through this together.  
The threat is the virus not the people. **(Delisha Smith)**



I have a dream that one day  
my girls will no longer have  
to worry about walking to a  
bathroom alone or be afraid  
of playing at the parking with  
their friends. I have a dream  
that one day, the color of

our skin will no longer matter, and that my  
girls will be able to spread their wings and  
succeed with the respect they deserve, that  
they are not looked at as less but equal.

I have a dream that our world will one day be  
filled with peace and positivity. Even though  
these dreams seem far from reality, we can  
still dream. **(Betsy Alfaro)**



I have a dream that the  
whole world will live in  
harmony, supporting one  
another in every aspect.

I have a dream that people will be able to give respect under all circumstances, to  
understand and appreciate any and every one's perspective on everything, to live up to  
what seems impossible and make it possible, to understand not only their dreams but other people's  
dreams as well, to live a wealthy and healthy life, to be free and organic, to teach those who cannot be  
taught.

Live to advance your knowledge, so that you can cover whatever question is asked of you. Give everyone  
equal opportunities. Treat people with the respect you want to receive. When you see someone down,  
go pick them back up and help them dust themselves off. I want the whole world to see eye to eye. Help  
one another out in every which way possible. Have unconditional love. Solve the problem, and make sure  
you understand the problem that you are solving. Show agape love. Stay strong and always build one  
another up. **(Valeria Gordon)**





I have always been a person who loves to learn. Even as a child, you could find me in my bedroom hibernating, reading a book on the weekends when the other kids were outside playing. My mom always pressed me how important education was, and you could always find her with a book in her hands as well.

I have a dream that human nature will truly live together as one species, a world where judgments and egos are nonexistent. Where shades of skin, texture of hair, and language spoken did not cause discontent. Whether you're a boy, girl, or both, it doesn't force you into a box. Where love is love. I have a dream that the true fabric of humanity will reach its optimum level. A world where the former average brain power of 10% is exceeded even by the youngest child. The fog of manmade social constructs is lifted and we can all see clearly, past the hate, jealousy, anger, greed, and lies of the old ways. We see reality as it is. No fear of one another, no competition. I have a dream that humanity being unaffected by these petty ailments will lead with love. The default mind of a child is the norm and we are free from bias and filled with true acceptance. Respect is given freely and unwavering to all walks of life because natural law is restored. I have a dream that the human ego is dead.

**(Feather Lloyd)**



I have a dream that one day I'll be able to rise up out of poverty and racial disparities. I dream to own a business without prejudice. A dream so deep, I can feel it coming. I dream everyone gets along to the point where we say "Black Lives Matter," and everyone nationwide screams it in unison, meaning it deep down so the clouds know we've done it. I dream my daughter is raised under the notion that she can walk outside maturely and not worrying about what may happen to her because of her skin color. Going to school, I experienced racism firsthand, being attacked by skinhead groups, being threatened by knives by students who were misguided by the thought that racism was okay.

I dream my daughter never encounters anything of the sort. I dream to keep educating my daughter on right and wrong, not putting negative thoughts into her mind to think she has to hate anyone. WE ARE EQUAL as humans regardless of race, gender, religious beliefs, or political sides... The dream lives on.

**(Burnett Reed)**



I have a dream to bring about change within my community, awareness, love, and unity. I have a dream of helping to increase our population by advocating for black expecting moms. I have a dream to provide my children with generational wealth and access. I had a dream to never stop dreaming, to always look to do and support new ideas.

**(Thedora Smith)**



I have a dream that there will be no such thing as poverty. If there wasn't poverty or ghettos, there would be fewer crimes. Think about it: if everyone made enough money to survive and not struggle, there wouldn't be robberies or as many killings. I'm not saying doctors and lawyers should make the same pay as McDonald's workers, but McDonald's workers should be able to take care of their families and live comfortably. They work really hard and get paid a little of nothing. Everyone isn't dealt the same hands. Why should they have to suffer? The rich don't know how it feels to go without, to want or need for things. I have a dream to end poverty. **(Sunni Walker)**





I have a dream . . .

This dream that I have, I can finally see it coming true. My dream is to finish a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in political science. I love politics! I hope to someday work in the field and see what it is like to be close to the place where rules are made, where big decisions that impact our everyday lives are made—or I hope to become a community college professor in political science. We all have dreams, I know, and this is mine. Not impossible, but not easy; however, I will put my heart and soul into making it happen. **(Henry Irisson)**



I have a dream that one day, I, Paris, will have my seat in the judge's chair, living in my mini-mansion with my family. I have a dream that my nieces and nephews won't need or want for anything. I have a dream that one day my family gon' be good. **(Paris Foster)**



I have a dream . . . that will awaken the world!!! My dream is so deep that everyone will want to know who tells me bedtime stories. When you dream BIG, sometimes you will find yourself alone...

My dream is to have COMMUNITY again, and not just your community or my community, but OUR community! Somewhere along the way in time, the sense of community has been lost or just outright forgotten about. I also believe that our sense of community has dramatically changed because babies are having babies, literally! Generationally, I am considered to be an elder...YES! There just don't seem to be any elders anymore...like 65-70. I have friends who are grandmothers at the tender age of 35. I am 35! My oldest is 15...

I enjoy getting up and traveling... I wouldn't want to be in the house after I get off work to watch my grandbaby so my baby could work to take care of his baby... My dream of community coming back into our world one day is so far out of this world...you would need a rocket ship to get to my community, or a great bedtime story! **(Sarah Galinski)**



I have a dream . . . that this nation will rise more than ever before, that these times of technology will not hold young minds from what truly is in front of them.

I have a dream . . . that more people from all over will have the chance to succeed with education and have the opportunity to read right to truly see life for what it is.

I have a dream . . . that my brown brothers and sisters can look in the mirror today, look at one another with open arms, and know they are not the enemy. To stand together as one allows our brothers and sisters from all colors and religions to stand with us to fight for what's still not right today.

I have a dream that one day the law will follow the law.

I have a dream . . . that one day we can march in celebration instead of for justice. **(Yvonne Johnson)**



I have a dream . . . to get a college degree. My grandma always said, “An education is the only thing you can take to the grave.” I never realized the importance of her words until now. To make a difference in my life, a degree is needed. I have worked in mortgages for 18 years. I have a secure job with state benefits. I am thankful for what I have, but I know this job is not my true calling.

My dream is to work with youth, especially those who are not on the right path. Growing up, I have seen some of the brightest youth running from the cops instead of running on a football field. I have seen youth get sentences to prison instead of getting an acceptance letter from college. This must stop, and the only way to make a difference is to get involved. I can relate on so many levels with these youth. My words come with experience. I can relate to some of the struggles they are dealing with. The jobs I see posted I know I am qualified for but require a degree.

Dreams give us something to chase, something to look forward to. Dreams help us make it through difficult times. I have a dream that I plan to make come true. **(Michelle McKoy)**



I have a dream that I can’t wake up from. The world was different, nothing like I had ever seen before. Wearing a mask was a mandate. Hand sanitizer was a human protective shield. COVID-19 was a swift thief stealing lives. Social

distancing was normal, and then the loneliness crept in. I have a dream that I hope to wake up from. **(Asia Pearson)**



I have a dream that all the hard work I put into this course, and all that I have done so far, will open a world of endless possibilities for me. My hard work has laid a strong foundation for my future successes. I have a dream that nothing and no one can stop me now. I am empowered and equipped to reach every goal that I set out to reach. The path that I have trailblazed was not easy: coming back to America, enrolling in and successfully completing education and career-training programs, and building a stable life for my children and myself.

I have a dream that my struggles will now become my stepping-stones to the next level in my education and career. I have a dream that I will be a leader in my community and open my own business that will make a difference in underserved and forgotten communities. I want to mentor young women and help women reach their goals too by leading by example as I have endured my own struggles. I have a dream that my children will see my hard work and they will be encouraged to pursue academic and professional greatness, become the medical doctors, engineers, pilots, and educators that they dream about. I have a dream that today is only the beginning and great things are about to happen. I am excited about my future because the best is yet to come. **(Stephaney Obi)**





I have a dream that one day, all of my dreams will come true. I have a dream that my journey will inspire you. Safely traveling through my dreams, finding clues to enlighten those with the blues. Showing people that there is hope no matter what you've been through. Letting my faith guide me in reality as I release control of what's in front of and behind me. I have a dream that the NOW remains to be important to me. I have a dream that my children remain dreamers in this heavily controlled society. Every night I have a dream that they exemplify the better parts of me. **(Faleshuh Walker)**



I have a dream that one day I can open up a foster care shelter for children in need. I was once a foster care child. I also have a deep passion for caring for those in need. I believe this would help many children of all ethnicities to be temporarily sheltered, fed, and clothed until they have found permanent housing. That would make me very happy, that I could give back to the community along with blessing others. **(Shiquita Woods)**



I have a dream where I inspire everyone without a word,  
A dream that I can stand out from the herd.  
I want my music to ring through the night,  
An enjoyment for anyone in ears sight.  
I dream of never having issues with money,  
But that's always the dream, isn't that funny?  
A dream where my family wants for nothing,  
Keep the dreams alive, they are glimpses of what's coming. **(Kwan Hogan)**



I have a dream . . . that one day the world will be a HAPPY place, a happy place for everyone . . . and that people who are struggling in poverty are given the opportunities to have access to better living and better-wage jobs. One day everyone will be one shade, but I dream they are still able to celebrate their cultures without getting backlash.

I have a dream that there wasn't such a thing as a group that you would be labeled as, but that you're free to be whatever and whoever you want. One day there will be an end to black-on-black crime, and we will all come together as a unit to love one another and understand that we are all dealing with similar struggles.

I have a dream there's an end to police brutality, and that we won't have to fight so hard for our equal rights as human beings. I dream there will be an end to all racism for all people. **(Keyanna Wilson)**



# ODYSSEY METAPHORS

Odyssey is a Buffet!  
 On a Wednesday night all who are able,  
 Come together at the Zoom table.  
 Everyone with something different on their plate  
 stacked like a pile,  
 Pay attention to what they have,  
 you may never find it in your own aisle.  
**(Kwan Hogan)**



Odyssey is a pool.  
 Not everyone is comfortable swimming.  
 The teachers serve as lifeguards.  
 They ensure that I feel secure.  
 They allow me to stick my toes in, just enough to check the temperature.  
 I like being able to ease into the pool, with caution and curiosity.  
 After the initial shock of submerging myself into this pool of opportunity,  
 I am able to float with confidence.  
 That float then graduates into a breast stroke.  
 As I turn to my left, I can see the more advanced swimmers cheering me on.  
 As I look to my right, those with exposed toes are inspired by the little splash I made.  
 This pool of Odyssey has helped to condition me.  
 I am no longer afraid to jump right in.  
 No other body of water can frighten me.  
 I am grateful for this pool of Odyssey. **(Faleshuh Walker)**



Odyssey is a life raft.  
 If you find yourself in the deep end, get in  
 Find your arms getting tired, get in  
 Lose your way, can't turn around, get in.  
 Enjoy helping others, get in. **(Calvin Valentine)**

Odyssey is a map.  
 That gives us direction in life.  
 Every class we learn how to express our feelings,  
 Or learn about history, or historic Leaders.  
 Before Odyssey I was lost at sea,  
 Not having a clue of what I wanted in life.  
 Now I know I can sail with the wind  
 Become a student,  
 Get a degree. And I believe in ME. **(Michelle McKoy)**



Odyssey is a ship  
 Built for a trip  
 That takes us across the sea, and far away  
 To ancient Greece, southside Chicago  
 And home again  
 By end of day

Odyssey is a ship  
 Whose shanties are strange  
 We sing the blues of Harlem  
 And not the waves

Odyssey is a ship  
 With a liberated crew  
 We turn the oars  
 Because we choose to

Odyssey is a ship  
 All hands on deck  
 Salvaged wood, winds of change  
 And self-respect.

Odyssey is a ship  
 Join this Mighty Crew  
 Emily, Kevin, Brian, Char  
 And YOU! (**Farren McDonald**)



Odyssey is soul food, the beat to the kitchen,  
 the way different cultures are blended together.  
 Odyssey is bread with a blend of butter.  
 Odyssey is mashed potatoes with a hit splash of gravy.  
 Odyssey is fried chicken with a dash of Louisiana hot sauce.  
 Odyssey is home remedies from the kitchen.  
 Odyssey is greens picked from grass from our ancestors.  
 Odyssey is food for a full stomach. (**Yvonne Johnson**)

Odyssey is a point of light in the dark.  
 Odyssey is the disruption of the routine,  
 Odyssey excites us to dare new things.  
 Odyssey is knowing how to learn from mistakes,  
 Odyssey teaches us to sublimate our failures.  
 Odyssey is learning self-knowledge, self-acceptance,  
 Odyssey encourages us not to lose self-confidence.  
 Odyssey is the infinite number of possible paths,  
 Odyssey encourages us to keep perseverance and creativity.  
 Be relentless, confident, optimistic, and combative.  
 Odyssey will guide you on the path to success. (**Souad Bidar**)

Odyssey is a magical journey  
 where dreams that were once forgotten come back to mind.  
 Odyssey is also a therapy,  
 a therapy to interact with wonderful angels.  
 Odyssey is a place to combat ignorance and embrace knowledge.  
 My colors will be forever Odyssey Project. **(Henry Irisson)**

Odyssey is a melting pot  
 of experiences and places  
 where people have come from  
 and people are going.  
 With multitudes of places,  
 Odyssey is a melting pot  
 of multi-colored faces,  
 presumably different races,  
 Still homo sapiens.  
 Odyssey is a melting pot  
 of experience and places.  
 We find shared spaces  
 Yet  
 All have different mazes  
 in our personal Odyssey.  
 Odyssey is a melting pot  
 different for you than it is for me.  
 The thing about a melting pot, it shows us  
 Universally.  
 The journey may be different  
 but it's still the same you see,  
 No matter the destination  
 we all take the Odyssey. **(Feather Lloyd)**



Odyssey is a Ladder.  
 Each step is a milestone towards your future.  
 You must climb and climb but be careful when you look down  
 for your fear of heights may cause you to fall.  
 Once you reach the top of the ladder,  
 you have reached the next level. **(Asia Pearson)**

Odyssey is a life saver, so sweet and savory.  
 The tutors are sweet.  
 COVID has caused it to have a hole in the middle.  
 With the leadership of Emily, Kevin, and Brian,  
 everything makes your breath smell good. **(Thedora Smith)**



Odyssey is a layover to your destination.  
It is up to you where you plan to ultimately arrive.  
**(Sarina Benford)**



Odyssey is a getaway  
a getaway from all the lies and doubts  
you've been keeping inside  
a getaway from being fake  
The Odyssey Project brings truth  
and brings up things you've been depressing down  
Odyssey is a getaway  
because class brings out your best self **(Valeria Gordon)**



Odyssey is a salad! I love food...GREEN foods! I have found out that Odyssey is a salad because I tried to add my spicy sauce and heavy heat on top and I was censored! Yup! CENSORED! So, with the knowledge that this main course or interchangeable meal is perfectly delicious just the way it is...I have chosen to continue to partake in this delectable, energizing, filling, edifying, life-changing, engaging and satisfying meal. BON APPETIT! **(Sarah Galinski)**

Odyssey is a potluck.  
Different races, backgrounds, and cultures  
Bringing diversity into one class. **(Tawania Alston)**

Odyssey is a journey for me,  
just like a deep blue sea.  
Soaring for greatness in such a harsh time,  
but in due time, it will all unwind.  
**(Shiquita Woods)**

Odyssey is a wicked turning point in each one of our lives.  
Some of us may have felt lost at some point of our journeys,  
but now we may feel some sense of clarity. **(Betsy Alfaro)**

Odyssey is a quilt  
A quilt of visions, memories, and daydreams,  
A process put together, very colorful,  
Vibrant, multicolored quilt  
Helping people find their voices, designs, and pictures.  
Odyssey is a quilt. **(Anjelica Brown)**







Odyssey is a charcuterie board  
 It has different cheese  
 But all still delicious cheese.  
**(Erika Gonzalez)**

Odyssey is like a wind of change  
 When we are on a journey to find a new part or portion of ourselves,  
 We are blown  
 We build walls to stop us from being pushed  
 in directions that we do not wish to go  
 In the end we all find a way to take it all in  
 to fuel our own windmills of transformation.  
**(Melissa Herriges)**

Personalities—we all have them in this class  
 From bubbly, shy, quiet, talkative,  
 to the ones that will make you laugh.  
 A person that loves to read  
 A person that loves to share opinions  
 A person that lights up the class by what they write  
 A person that is on Zoom but no face in sight  
 A person that gets involved in all discussions  
 A person that is outgoing and bright  
 We have so many personalities is what I have discovered.  
 But so many great people with these personalities  
 That I have uncovered. **(Cashae Davis)**



Odyssey is a church (a sacred place). Like a church, Odyssey is a sacred place, a place where you came to find yourself, a place where you feel fulfilled, a place of hope.

Odyssey is a sacred place. A place where you came and are free to express your mind and feelings, express yourself in general without being judged and yet still heard.

Odyssey is a church, a sacred place where you can come to commune, the only difference is that you are not communing with God, but with teachers and tutors in hope of finding knowledge, wisdom and guidance to reach your optimal academic goals and life's goals as well.

We attend Odyssey only certain days a week for a set amount of time, but one thing you can say is that it is time well spent, and at the end of every class, you feel empowered and enriched. like in a church.

Odyssey is a sacred place. **(Stephaney Obi)**

Odyssey is a place where you can turn dreams to reality. It's a strong support team, everyone loving and caring for each other. **(Paris Foster)**

Odyssey is a vast place of knowledge of the truths that people will speak about. It is vast, just like the infinite sky that seems never-ending. **(Jessica Jacobs)**

Odyssey is a portal. You can share and find the unfound. With the light of knowledge, you won't be bound to stained ways. Odyssey is a portal that you will always find in time. Odyssey is a portal to new ideas and creations. **(Dana Stokes)**





# SENTENCES FROM SOCRATES



*"Perhaps someone may say, 'But surely, Socrates, after you have left us you can spend the rest of your life quietly minding your own business.'"*

Plato was referring to the state feeling bothered by Socrates. It was almost like he butted his nose in where it did not belong. So, he was saying that surely after death he can finally mind his own business. **(Sarina Benford)**



*"I have never lived an ordinary, quiet life. I did not care for the things that most people care about, making money, having a comfortable home, high military or civil rank, and all the other activities, political appointments, secret societies, party organizations which go in our city."*

In my own words: I never lived a normal life, always so much going on. I don't care about materialistic things or popularity. That, other people care or think about.

The sentence means to me, don't try to live life like everyone else; be yourself. **(Anjelica Brown)**



*"It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of, but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know."*

This sentence stood out to me because I, too, come across folks that are just too smart for their own good, like c'mon. Lol. I would love to hear what my classmates have to say about this sentence. **(Sarah Galinski)**



*"The jury does not sit to dispense justice as a favor, but to decide where justice lies."*

Socrates/Plato is saying that the jury should exist "apart," concerning itself with only the facts of the case and not taking into account social standing, lifestyle, or any of the other thousands of factors that might influence a positive or negative judgement.

It reminds me of *The Stranger* by Albert Camus, which I believe I mentioned in my application essay. The book begins with the anti-hero Meursault attending his mother's funeral, an event he is mostly unmoved by. Later in the book Meursault will shoot, completely unprovoked, an Arab on the beach.

Ultimately, the trial that sends him to his execution hinges not so much on the murder itself, but on the extraneous detail that he didn't cry at his mother's funeral.

This kind of thing is really common in Ireland, where someone can get a very lenient sentence because of their community standing, their reputation in G.A.A, or because they super-duper, pinky promise to give up the booze this time, despite it being their fifth incident.

Regardless, the law is imperfect because we're imperfect, and if we were to remove the human element altogether it wouldn't be fixed, only a different type of bad. With that being said, for-profit prisons are an abomination and should be outlawed yesterday. **(Farren McDonald)**







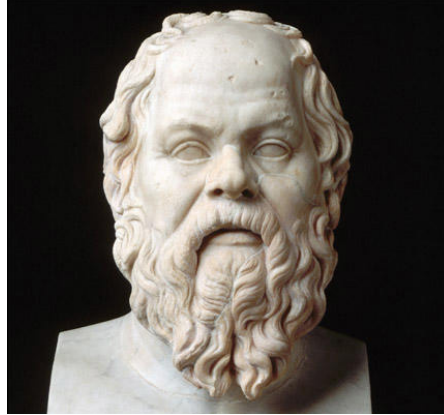
*"Now is it time that we were going, I to die and you to live, but which of us has the happier prospect is unknown to anyone but God."*

Socrates ended his plea to the jury with this sentence. He knew if he was going to die and the jury was going to live, that did not mean the men who lived would be happy. They would have to live knowing they put him to death. He lived a full life, spoke his mind, and died knowing he would not be forgotten. Just because he died did not mean he was unhappy. I think he was proud of the life he lived; he did not want it end, but made peace with it. **(Michelle McKoy)**



*"It may seem curious that I should go around giving advice and busying myself in people's private affairs."*

To me this quote says this: Who



am I to judge others and what they do in privacy? To me, he has made himself vulnerable and human-like in this phrase, as if to say I am no higher than the next man to be judging them. **(Asia Pearson)**



*"If you doubt whether I am really the sort of person who would have been sent to this city as a gift from God. . ."*

I believe he feels that he actually does have a purpose there. That's why he's there in the first place and feels something needs to be said, whether they like it or not. I feel he was a gracious, humble individual who just wanted what was right. **(Shiquita Woods)**



# FINDING A VOICE

*Students wrote short editorials designed to persuade others to change their minds or take action. In the past, Odyssey students have published editorials in local papers and read them on radio stations, and we hope students from the Class of 2021 will do so as well. One of Odyssey's major goals is to help students find their voices and use those voices to change the world.*



## **Mental Health and the Homeless**

I speak today to urge my city to raise awareness on the mental health of our homeless. During the recent pandemic year, there was a rise in homelessness in Madison. I noticed tents and shelters created in a park near my job. Over the course of the winter this year, I continued seeing those shelters stay up. Working at a hotel gave me the knowledge to know that the Community Action Coalition was being granted money from the city to help put up certain homeless people that qualified. Our hotel hosted homeless vets.

Towards the end of January, we stopped hosting the homeless and were waiting to hear if their grant was renewed with the city. I witnessed many homeless on the streets during those frigid winter weeks. I did my best to personally keep a bag of granola bars, hats, and any other things I could offer at a brief stop. Then I noticed a boy in particular one day. I don't think he was older than 17 or so. He showed obvious signs of mental health issues and was struggling to keep his ears warm while hitting his head with his hands. I think I gave him money, a hat, and some of the bars I had in my bag I keep.

Since that day, I go out of my way to help him. He is very appreciative, and I want to help him more, but I don't know how. I called 211 and spoke with a representative about this particular case and asked how the homeless are helped in the city when some suffer from mental health issues and do not know where or how to help themselves. The man on the phone told me that without that person calling in for themselves, there is not much I can do. We need to have more resources and outlets available to those who are looking.

It is now April, and I still see this kid in the same spot. I make sure to give him something any time I

see him. The other day I finally asked him what his name was. His name is Terrique. I want to urge the community to raise awareness for those like Terrique and assist with their needs and, more importantly, those with barriers. No person should be in that position! We can do better! We can help those who can't! We are a city that shows community and family are one and the same here! Now is the time to help those in the community that cannot help themselves. **(Sarina Benford)**



## **Madison Needs Benches and Trash Cans**

I have visited cities around the world, including the small town of Madison, Wisconsin's capital. The first thing that caught my attention was a lack of garbage cans and public benches for sitting, whether in pedestrian circuits or at bus stops. I am not talking about the downtown. I noticed this lack on the sides of the city (east, west, north and south).

Being a person who likes to walk a lot, even when I was pregnant, it happened to me several times that I felt tired and wished I could sit down and take a break. During my walks I would also see many old people. I was wondering how they do it on their walks when they need to sit down.

This message is addressed to town planners: remember to install benches regularly to facilitate movement. Some elderly people do not go out because there are no benches on the side of their walks.

Remember to install benches at the bus stops for people who come back from their jobs exhausted while waiting for the bus. Finally, please keep the city clean by putting garbage cans as needed throughout the walks. **(Souad Bidar)**





### Make Mental Health Services Free

We need to take actions for everyone to be able to have free mental health services. There are too many grown-ups and children suffering day to day because they can't afford proper mental healthcare. I have seen too many people, especially people of color, needing mental health help. These people are suffering from anxiety, depression, bipolar, PTSD, autism, ADD/ADHD, and schizophrenia almost every single day of their lives. You try living with hearing people talking in your head or seeing things that aren't there, having mood swings and breakdowns, or being afraid to leave home. It's time we step up and help these individuals. They didn't ask to be sick and some can't afford the cost, so it's time we set up and offered free mental healthcare. **(Anjelica Brown)**



### Give More Smiles!

Greetings, Community! What makes a day better? What makes you feel good? Is it FREE? Free to give/receive? I am calling on you today to take action NOW! Lift your head and give freely to one another! Give what you have today! How about we start with giving what's FREE for us to easily receive as well as give?

...A SMILE. YES! A smile. I am grateful for this opportunity to speak before you about the health benefits of smiling! Yes! You will live longer and have more healthy relationships by simply smiling more often. Sharing is caring and also wearing a smile. When you smile, it is a proven fact that your mood will improve. Smiling releases endorphins, which helps a person feel happier and more positive. A smile even makes you appear younger/youthful. A smile is also contagious...try it real quick! How do you feel? See...Lol

Cause a ripple effect today! GIVE FREELY what is rightfully yours to give. And receive freely and openly. A SMILE! **(Sarah Galinski)**



### Give Immigrants Licenses

Let's change Wisconsin state law that prohibits immigrants from getting a state ID/driver's license. Why, you ask? "They are immigrants so they do not deserve that right," you say.

Well... Let me give you some points on why I believe Wisconsin would benefit from allowing anyone that resides in the state of Wisconsin to have access to a state ID.

1) They will be safer drivers

-more people will enroll in driving classes

- the state will benefit from more money from car registration, license renewal, insurance

2) Anyone will be able to identify themselves to law enforcement with a state ID

3) A state ID is not a social security card; it does not allow them to receive any state benefits.

**(Erika Gonzalez)**







### Access to Usable Education

The usability of the educational content taught to our children is extremely low. Not only is no new content introduced aside from math after the 5th grade, it is also redundant. They are taught the same articles of history, with a repetitive recognition of people who built this country, who fought and died for this country, and the falsehood of how great and powerful we are. Teachers and students have no room for authenticity and creativity due to education now being about the all-mighty governmental dollar.

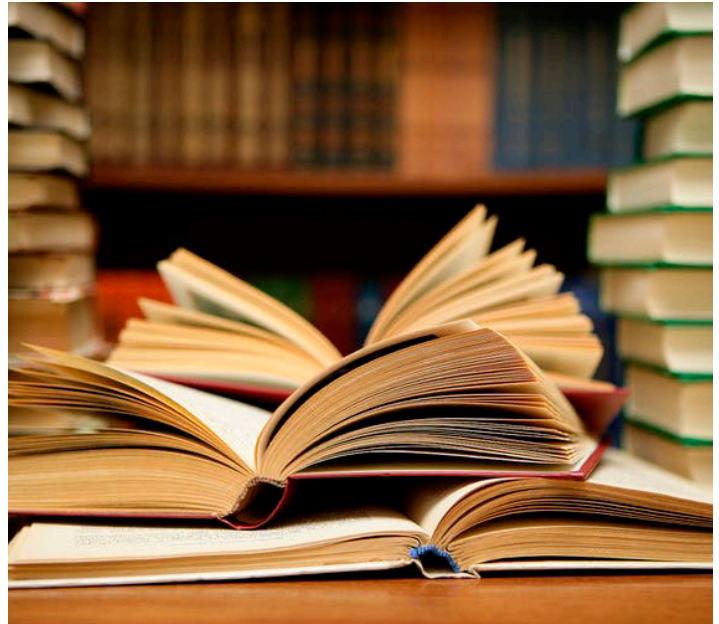
Our children graduate from high school not understanding the democracy of this county, how to manage their money, or why their heritage makes them who they are. They have no sense of self outside the comfort of their home. Today's education is not only unusable but also negatively impacts the social emotional health of children by requiring them to conform, an unnatural state that asks them to create a shell of their former selves to fit the mold of the ideal student. If we as a county say that we are great, then the usability of our children's education should be a high priority. Why? It will determine the longevity and sustainability of our country. Many will say that a usable education does exist. If so, why is it only accessible to some and not all if we are indeed indivisible with liberty and justice for all?

**(Melissa Herriges)**



### Treat Homeless Shelters like Halfway Houses

The world indeed is not a perfect place. You can go outside and instantly see several things that can be changed. I personally believe that the people are our priority. We see it everywhere we look, every stop light, everywhere you turn downtown. There are plenty of challenges this world brings, but one that has always been close to my heart is homelessness. This is one of several major problems to me.



Not only the amount of people living on the street but also the struggle there is in this economy makes it impossible for them to get back on their feet. Even finding a job is tough because there aren't many places for them to go that will allow them to shower or give them clothes to get that job.

I propose that we treat homeless shelters like halfway houses. When I say that, I mean we give them a place to sleep, shower, eat, help them with a resume, and get them on their feet. For this we would need more shelters, donated clothes, and volunteers who would work on helping the homeless get their foot in the door at interviews. No, this wouldn't happen overnight, but I believe with time and persistence we can safely clean up the streets and help the community at the same time. **(Kwan Hogan)**



### Legalize Immigration

As an undocumented person myself, and after years and years of reading about immigration reform, I believe the wait for an immigration bill is long overdue.

There are so many misconceptions about us, from not paying taxes, draining the system, to voting. Both parties have used us in their agenda. The Republicans are always using us to inflict fear on

people, and the Democrats are using us to gain votes, but nothing has been done since 1986.

The truth is this country needs labor. Go around asking restaurants, construction companies, farms, hospitality and such about their shortages today. And in no way I believe immigrants should only be entitled to these jobs; no, not at all. I believe anyone should have their freedom to choose, but the reality is that many of these jobs are essential to keep the economy of country going, especially in a country where the culture of consumerism is part of who they are; therefore, these workers are not only needed but are a must. Why not legalize their status? All these workers pay taxes. We are given an ITIN number, which stands for Individual Tax Identification Number. This means that the government knows how many of us are here. You wonder how they know that we are about 11 million or so; well, that's because they have these numbers on file. In short, we pay taxes yet we don't get the benefits most U.S. citizens get. Taxation without representation: where have I heard that before?

The fear that people are going to take over American's jobs is a fallacy. We are already here, and I can assure you that most of the jobs we hold didn't come from taking them from Americans; Americans gave them to us, plain and simple! No one wants to work in the fields for long hours and low pay. And don't get me started on the fact that we lower the pay as if we have the power to do so, or have you questioned if it is the system doing it to you and doing it to me that we are getting nothing out of labor? Did you know that if we come out of the shadows it is 100 percent likely that we will reduce labor exploitation? We will also make a decent, livable wage, which in turn will make more tax revenue. It also reduces security concerns as immigrants will be able to have a driver's license and therefore get a car. Getting car insurance equals safer roads. Please, ask yourself these questions and do yourself a favor; please research about it.

The human thing to do is to uphold the genesis of the American values – keeping

families together, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If a person has good character, shows good morals, and contributes to the well-being of the country at large, isn't the right thing to press our politicians to fix this issue once and for all?

You may argue that this is not a possibility; you may argue that there is no space for more people; you may argue these and more questions. But the true questions are: How are these immigrants affecting my life currently? Can I do a farm job, all day, seven days a week for twelve hours each day? Could it be that we in fact need these people, and, if so, why don't we give them a work permit, so we know who is coming across the border into our country? That way we will in fact achieve border security. I think if the American people start asking questions like this and do some research about it, we will find that legalizing immigration is the right thing to do. Our politicians have been playing us. And do not blame them for it all; we must blame ourselves for not digging into it and learning more of the subject matter. **(Henry Irisson)**



### **Defund the Police, Re-fund the Community**

What does community look like to you? What kind of changes would you like to see so that everyone feels safe and free? These are just a couple questions that are constantly being asked, but not a lot is being done as far as a real solution goes.



Locking people up has always seemed to be the solution for the system, but the solution has to be deeper than that in order to address the real problem at hand. Because of this, we deal with mass incarceration. Police budgets are  $\frac{3}{4}$  higher than the budgets that are put together for community resources. To me, that's absurd because if the root problems like poverty, homelessness, generational trauma, trauma, mental health disorders, and substance abuse were addressed and dealt with in a larger capacity, then there would be less crime, fewer police, and less incarceration. If we had more programs dealing with and addressing these issues, if we had more programs helping individuals re-integrate back into the community from incarceration, then mass incarceration would decrease dramatically.

We need to address the root problems. The system and these private corporations capitalize off of people's struggles and it's wrong. It's the biggest crime. It's theft in my eyes. So, what does community look like to you? I say it's helping our brothers and sisters in need and not locking them up and throwing away the key. **(Jessica Jacobs)**



### Give Prisoners a Voice

I am here to speak on behalf of the prisoners in our community. I ask that you hear me; I ask that you hear them.

What makes them different is that the actions that took place are the reason they lose their voice. Think of the loved ones who you know would love to have a second chance. Think of yourself—if you were ever in that situation, would you want your voice to be silent? Most of all, take a second to think of the wrongfully accused. Don't you think they deserve a chance to speak?

The system has failed time and time again, so let's not make this mistake again. Let's think about family—this is someone's child, brother, sister, friend,

father, or mother. Time for punishment is one thing, but to be forced to be silent altogether is death within itself. What is life with no rights? Let their votes matter. Thank you. **(Yvonne Johnson)**



### Rethink Irish Stereotypes

It is my sad and solemn duty to inform all Americans of Irish descent that you are not Irish, you haven't been Irish for a very long time, and your views of your soggy motherland are hopelessly outdated, absurdly romanticized, and riddled with Hollywood-style misconceptions and stereotypes. Furthermore, using your distant ancestry to justify your unhealthy relationship with alcohol is self-serving and self-deceptive, helping to perpetuate those same Hollywood-style lies that provide soft support to the assumed hierarchy of the United States.

In my travels, I have noticed people of the WASP persuasion will often comment on their "Protestant work ethic." It's something to be proud of, no doubt. Those of Irish descent will often say, "I'm





Irish, that's why I drink," as though the things were so inexorably linked that they might in fact be one and the same. To be Irish is to be drunk. I never hear, "Oh, I'm Irish, that's why I love poetry." Or "I'm Irish, that's why I support a strong welfare state and socialized health care."

No, no, please don't try and tell me your story. I've heard it all before, numerous times, we all have. It's quite simply not true. Here, I can tell it to you first. Your grandfather, a ruggedly handsome freedom fighter, had to flee Ireland because he was wanted by the British for being just so damn awesome that they couldn't let him go on living. 4.5 million Irish people emigrated to America, and it is curious that the vast majority seem to have been guerrilla soldiers when the IRA at its height boasted about 10,000 members. My god, with 4.5 million active volunteers we might have engaged the English in total war, semi-nude, with buckets on our heads, and still come out on top.

If they were followers of Daniel "The Liberator" O'Connell, or members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, it's highly probable they were



committed socialists and considered themselves to have more in common with Jews in Europe, peasants in India, Maoris in New Zealand, and Aborigines in Australia than they did with the slave owners in Virginia.

In the words of Daniel O'Connell: "I am the friend of liberty in every clime, class, and color. My sympathy with distress is not confined within the narrow bounds of my own green island. No—it extends itself to every corner of the earth. My heart walks abroad, and wherever the miserable are to be succored, or the slave to be set free, there my spirit is at home, and I delight to dwell."

I'm sorry to say, and this is directed particularly to listeners of a conservative bent, your ancestors were not glorious warriors ascending to Yankee Valhalla. They were economic refugees, the very dictionary definition of poor, tired, and huddled masses.

It is true that in a broader sense your ancestors were on the run from the British. England instituted numerous destructive policies, based on an assumption of racial superiority, that made life in Ireland intolerable. When Eire fell into a predictably degraded state, this was displayed as proof of English supremacy and justification for the ongoing extermination of Irish culture. That is the natural language, history, music, sports, dress code and customs. This was all so that the people could become grist for a colossal, economic machine.

I hope that by now the modern parallels to the suffering of people of color, Latin Americans, and Indians are so glaring they will be apparent even through the thickest, green-dyed beer goggles.

So when St. Patrick's Day rolls around next, I say do a true honor to your Irish ancestry. Put down the bottle, pick up a book by one of our four Nobel literature laureates, and stand in solidarity with the natives of this land and with all the refugees who still come to her borders looking for a better life.

Maybe along the way you'll even become an American. **(Farren McDonald)**



### **“Not in my neighborhood!”**

I have heard these words many times from residents in Madison, Wisconsin because they do not want affordable housing built near them. I have also heard “the crime rate will go up” and “my property values will go down.” Do they not realize affordable housing is for the working/middle class? That means construction workers, firefighters, police officers, bankers and bus drivers—the list goes on. Most people living in Madison are using more than 50% of their income for housing, or working at least two jobs and still struggling to pay their monthly bills.

Rent and property values keep going up, forcing many people in Madison to live in surrounding areas that have more affordable housing. Madison has been voted one of the greatest cities to live in. Hmm—do they mean for the wealthy? I do not understand how affordable housing for everyone is not a priority. Let us call a spade a spade and call it what it really is, which is Red Lining. Yes, Madison, the truth can hurt. The real reason you do not want affordable housing in your neighborhood is because people of color might become your neighbor. I know that scares you—you want us to stay in own neighborhoods away from you. The truth is we have more to fear than you do. We know the first family event the cops will be called, or when we walk our dog everyone will be watching us. I promise you, we are way too busy working and do not have time to hurt or steal from you. Affordable housing should not be a luxury! It should be required for every hard-working person in Madison. **(Michelle McKoy)**



### **Reform the Police**

The need for reform in the way police interact with people and communities of color in America is evident. The cases of Daunte Wright in Minnesota and Ma’Khia

Bryant in Ohio are the most recent that highlight the disparities in outcomes for people of color when law enforcement is involved. In both cases, black youth were killed in situations where police could have easily deescalated and would have done so if the victims were white. These black victims are loved ones, friends, community members, and neighbors, yet the media demonizes and dehumanizes them in a concerted effort to justify law enforcement’s unwillingness to protect and serve black and brown people the way they do white people.

Furthermore, the continued negative portrayal of victims in the media programs people to be desensitized to these executions which results in people in the black and brown communities suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to these constant images, news stories, and false and stereotypical narratives.

Changing policies in law enforcement to hold police accountable for their attitudes and interactions with





people of color is the first step in police reform so that future generations of these communities will be afforded the same rights, privileges, and protection as their white counterparts and so that liberty and justice for all will prevail, as promised. **(Stephaney Obi)**



### Challenge Unfair Laws

Could you imagine committing a petty crime and receiving a harsh penalty? Me neither. Since 1980, the federal prison rate has increased by 790 percent. Many

people are currently serving life without parole sentences for possession of marijuana, which is legal in some states, or nonviolent crimes.

Together we can lead the fight for nationwide law reform. This will decrease issues such as mass incarceration and racial injustice standing in the way of an equal society that is free for all! Now is the time to challenge existing laws that are unjust and unfair. We may not be able to change the past, but we can certainly mold the future for those to come. **(Asia Pearson)**

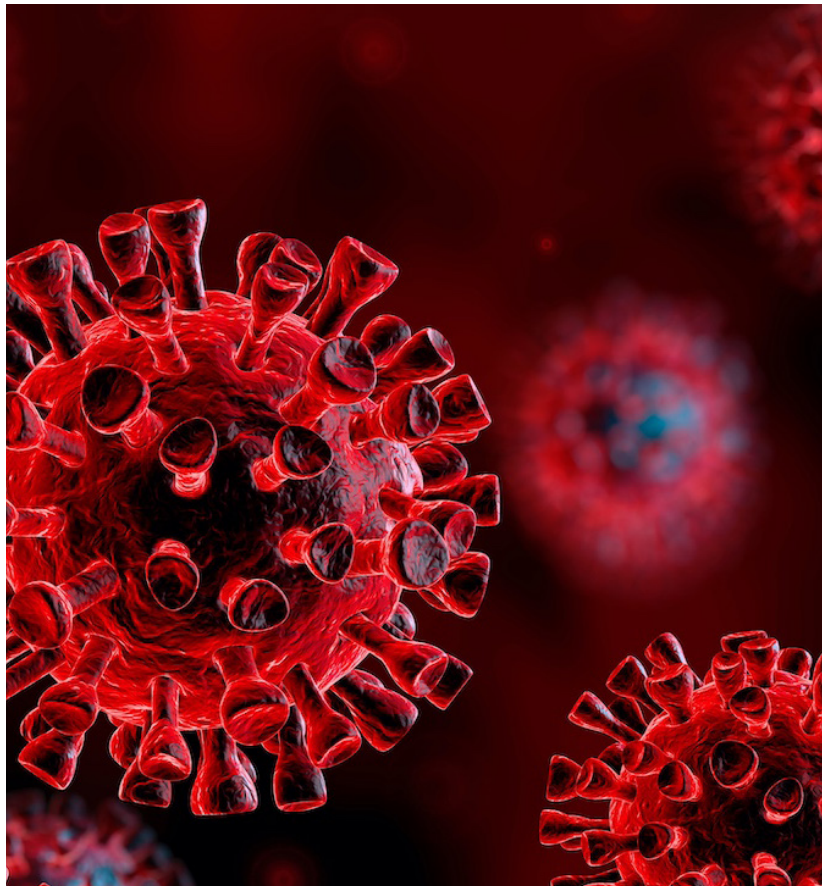


### Fight Covid Holistically

Writing this is somewhat uneasy and unpopular; however, I wish people could change their minds about the COVID

vaccinations. Instead of receiving the vaccines, taking a more holistic approach to wellness by boosting the immune system. Let's face it, we all have, in one way or another, assimilated, been born into, and/or adopted a way to take care of our bodies. Whether we get the ideas from our maternal ancestors, watching Dr. Oz, or taking advice from a trusted friend who recently lost a substantial amount of weight... but due to the burdens of life making everyone overwork, get less sleep, overeat, and not exercise.

The corona virus actually saved me from myself. During this time, I was able to slow down life, meditate, and reflect inwardly on my divine femininity. This abrupt halt on life allowed me to listen to my elders. One particularly taught us that when they removed us from our origins on the continent, they didn't bring our food with us, so adapting to limiting forced-fed foods. We have adjusted now with fast food and a change in industry. We come to enjoy fast, unhealthy food which lowers our immune system and our vibration. People are dying daily and believe that the vaccination will stop the virus, making us less responsible in boosting our immune system naturally. Drinking greens, juices, cleansing, performing enemas, detoxing, healthy eating, and exercising are all great ways to defend our immunity. **(Thedora Smith)** *[Editor's Note: The entire Odyssey team of faculty and staff has chosen to get vaccinated against COVID because we understand the scientific data showing that vaccines reduce the risk of death not only for ourselves but also for our loved ones and community.]*





### Cycles of Shackles

Starting off in poverty, he never really had a way out. The only thing he'd seen was drugs and guns. This is what we called the cycle. The mental state isn't all that strong from the constant pressure of not knowing what the future really holds.

He started off on the corner, just to survive, landing in a world with shackles combined. The first attempt wasn't but a warning, mentally wasn't alarming. Not knowing the corner is a home became a part of the cycle. Nowhere to turn as a felon, still a part of the cycle. No way out, no one cares. Just a number, still belonging to the cycle.

This is a cycle of shackles that has become an issue of society, where one is stripped of one's rights: rights to a future, rights to a home, rights to proper living, rights to a job. He remains in one cycle that now feels like it has no ending. No one cares, so let's give him the attention in this society. The attention of the help needed of him being found.

Mental help, job access, shelter, with a future to build. No longer feeling the pressure or stress because he's no longer labeled as the convicted felon who served his time, but the growing man who's doing just fine. **(Keyanna Wilson)**



### Save Lives with Free Mental Health Care

I choose to speak about providing free mental healthcare. Everyone faces personal challenges that others may not be aware of, including that person themselves. There are a lot of people around the world that may not have the finances to take care of themselves, which can make the situation worse or may even lead to death if not treated at the appropriate time. That is a very sad and unfortunate situation. If mental care was free to all, I'm sure it could save a lot of lives.

Healthcare is very important for everyone, known or unknown. There are people who weren't taught to take care of themselves, but if they had the proper resources, solutions, and finances out there

to do so, it would be very helpful because at least it's open and available when needed. Even if they don't use it, the opportunity was there. To me, it's like having God as a part of your life. No one's perfect, and we all make mistakes. We can all ask for forgiveness and to be delivered from unrighteousness and live better days. I pray that mental healthcare will be free in the near future. Everyone deserves to be free mentally, and the service can definitely save lives worldwide. **(Shiquita Woods)**





# CREATIVE CORNER

When I'm feeling down  
 I don't want no one around  
 When I'm feeling down  
 I feel like I'm low to the ground  
 Because I am down  
 They say I should lift myself up  
 But when I'm feeling down  
 my energy is never enough  
 And when I'm feeling down  
 I don't know how to get up  
 And when I'm feeling down  
 I can't pick up where I left off  
 Cause I'm feeling down.  
 But my education is important  
 and when I'm feeling down  
 I got to know that I'm anointed  
 Because I was down  
 But I'm back up  
 Just when I was down  
 I got back up.....  
 Self-meditated ....  
 Mind elevated  
 Yeah, I graduated!! **(Cashae Davis)**



Life is a swing  
 One day down, another up  
 There are relaxed people who live up  
 There are people who live down  
 And me, I'm still swinging between the down and up  
**(Souad Bidar)**

My canvas is a window  
 A clear view of me  
 My canvas is a window  
 Take a peek at my creativity  
 My canvas is a window  
 Pure transparency  
 My canvas is a window  
 A true representation of me **(Faleshuh Walker)**

Life is a maze  
 You may hit dead ends and twists and turns  
 But in the end there is always a way out. **(Tawania Alston)**

Old Irish man in a bar in San Francisco  
Well, the team has won,  
In a place that you're 'not from'  
But you've been here twenty-seven years,  
So you join in the cheers

You buy another round,  
It's a great night to be on the town  
All around you, smiling faces  
Guess it helps drown out the empty places  
That you keep inside

Now the others have gone home  
And you're drinking all alone  
Drinking 'til two, or three

Drinking to kill the time  
Drinking to kill your mind  
Drinking, so you'll never have to leave

You stumble a lonely street  
Forget all the faces you meet  
Have trouble unlocking your front door

The shadows seem to swallow you  
You don't know what you're going to do  
But tomorrow, there'll be another sport. **(Farren McDonald)**



My life is like a pair of mismatched socks.  
Has its moments of vibrant color, moments of darkness,  
but no matter if I find the matching pair or not,  
the fit is perfect in my imperfect life. **(Betsy Alfaro)**

Hair is a blessing  
Hair is magical  
Hair is beauty  
Hair is unique  
Hair is fashionable  
I love everything about hair **(Shiquita Woods)**

I remember hearing love conquers all.  
Imagine my surprise to learn all means all.  
yes sir that sword cuts both ways.  
a strong weapon deadly if handled by the wrong kind  
powerful knowledge capable of destroying an immature mind. **(Calvin Balentine)**



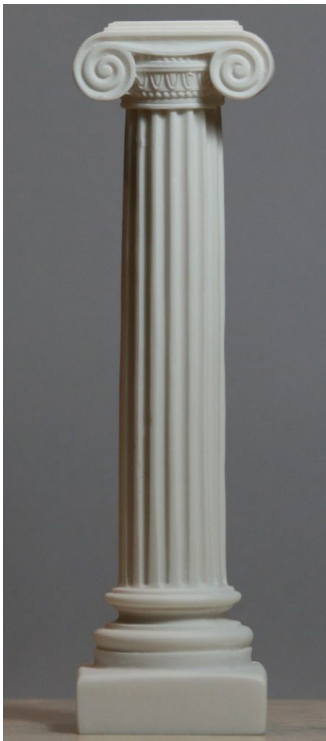
Adventuring is a story.  
You must write the chapters as you go. **(Sarina Benford)**

Life is a rollercoaster  
From the start we are clueless to what awaits  
We stand in line hoping to get our shot at the top!  
The anticipation grows with every step.  
Before we know it, we are strapped in and locked down while life take us on a ride!  
Don't jump off! Because it's not too late.  
You may have been though ups and downs, but I assure you it's worth the wait. **(Kwan Hogan)**

Life is a rollercoaster  
Hold on 'cause it can be fast and scary,  
Slow but fun,  
Ups and downs,  
Going through many obstacles,  
You can scream or enjoy the ride.  
Life is a rollercoaster  
Close your eyes and hold on  
Other times raise your hands up and enjoy the ride.  
Life is a rollercoaster  
Except I keep going up, not down.  
Life is a roller coaster. **(Anjelica Brown)**



Life is truly a mad ride.  
It can slap you in the face without giving you a warning.  
Heck, I say slap it back on its butt. **(Henry Irisson)**



Truth is a pillar.  
It is very righteous.  
It also can stab just like a knife. **(Jessica Jacobs)**

Life is like the Ocean.  
On a good day, the sun shining, and the world seems like a beautiful place,  
You can wake up to blue sky and smooth sails, ready to take on the world.  
On a bad day, life can feel like a thunderstorm that sinks you to the bottom of the sea,  
Or washed away from rocky waves and up on a deserted island,  
Feeling alone and isolated.  
Life is like the Ocean.  
It gives you many paths to sail, so you can make things right. **(Michelle McKoy)**

My mind is a cage.  
I try to escape but I cannot fit through the bars.  
I keep searching for the key to free It,  
but it is nowhere to be found. **(Asia Pearson)**



What time is it? What time is?  
 A liar time I say!  
 Is it tomorrow? What's the hour? Is it yesterday?  
 Time for tea, time for wake and time for rest.  
 Time for a holiday or celebration that's best.  
 Remembering that one time and in anticipation of another.  
 The last time you seen your mother, or the future birth of  
 baby brother.  
 We anticipate this liar, we wait right down to the wire.  
 But,  
 The only time is now.  
 Let's set this clock on fire! **(Feather Lloyd)**

Time is a liquid  
 You can sweat it out your pores  
 And when the glass is dry  
 All you want is more

Time is a liquid  
 Get too much and drown  
 Time is a flood  
 It's washed away this town

Time is a liquid  
 Labor squeezed to juice  
 Sometimes the tap is dry  
 Sometimes it's running loose

Time is a liquid  
 It evaporates in sun  
 And piles up all around  
 When the winter comes

Time is a liquid  
 Drink it while you can  
 For when you're in the ground  
 It waters only plants **(Farren McDonald)**

My feet are as long as piano boxes. Wearing a size 12 ½ is no joke.  
 Getting my shoes special ordered is frustrating  
 and uncomfortable when shopping for shoes.  
 The only shoes available are the big ugly ones;  
 you know, the ones your granny thinks are sexy. **(Thedora Smith)**





# LETTERS TO THE ODYSSEY CLASS OF 2022

*Dear Class of 2022:*



I am so proud that you applied! It feels so great to start a new journey, and the first step to beginning that journey is to apply! Emily, Kevin, and all of the teachers are amazing, and you will soon learn to love them the way I have, and I did it virtually!

This year has shown me just how great my potential can be. I am a mom of two boys, working fulltime and balancing their classes with mine, but Odyssey just fit into place with it all! I never felt stressed out about my homework, and that was the one thing I was worried about.

Since this class has started, I have applied for summer term as a UW special student, was elected a chair on the student council, and plan on working towards a degree in communications. If you would have told my last-year self that I did all of that, I would have laughed. Even during a pandemic, great things can be cultivated; you just need to be a persistent gardener! Get it, Class of 2022! **(Sarina Benford)**



This will be a year of a lot of positive motivation and changes. Odyssey will be a long journey, even bumpy at times, but one thing for sure—don't give up. Emily and Kevin are wonderful teachers and are there to help you when needed, even outside of class. Don't be afraid to

ask for extra help or even ask your classmates for help with the homework.

My advice to you is to stay focused, maintain positivity, and, when you feel like class is rough, reach out for help and don't give up. This class requires a lot of reading, so if you're not a big fan of

reading, that will soon change. But there are some interesting readings that will happen, like *Raisin in the Sun*. **(Anjelica Brown)**



I was so excited when I received a call from Emily stating I was accepted in the Odyssey Project! A couple weeks later, I was told that class will be virtual. I started to worry because:

—I was nervous because I wasn't very disciplined and struggled with time management;

—I was more a visual learner and was concerned about taking a class virtually;

—I also preferred to learn by interacting socially with my classmates, teachers, and tutors.

This was a challenge for me, but I was up for the challenge.

During the class,

—I learned how to manage my time more. One thing I appreciate about this class is the reminders we got via email with updates. I am a person who forgets things.

—I received help with school—the teachers and tutors and support staff were all there to help me succeed.

—Self-care—I learned to take mental breaks and to see how helpful they are in my learning process.

—Emily made me feel welcome; often times you may not feel welcome, but at Odyssey everyone is welcome.

The advice I will give to upcoming students:

—don't give up; there were times I wanted to quit—I remember I was so behind in my class work. I felt so defeated because this pandemic did a number on my family and me, mentally. I had a conversation with Brian and told him everything I was going through as a parent. Brian offered so many resources for my family and me.

—I still want to give up, and the class is almost over, but I'm not giving up.

I have two words to leave with you: KEEP GOING!!! **(Tisha Butler)**



What's suppppppppp, Class of 2022!!! Lol nah, but for real. How are you feeling? Check in with yourself for a moment or two. BREATHE! This is your TIME! I am so proud of you, and I appreciate you for BEING! Yes! Just being YOU...

sometimes we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of LIFE, totally forgetting to breathe and give ourselves GRACE.

This past 2020/2021 has been a doozy to say the least. The pandemic with its socially distant learning has set many folks back as far as their mental state goes, as well as financially. With all the challenging circumstances that have been bestowed on us this past Odyssey year, we have had an amazing, supportive, OUTSTANDING group of tutors and staff. You all are in for a treat, and I would ask of you to have an open heart and mind to the infinite possibilities of growth and transformation. **(Sarah Galinski)**



I hope that you guys are back in the classroom and get to experience the real class setting because it was tough having to only meet my classmate through a little camera. Most of all, it was hard to speak with all eyes looking at you (so it felt) at the same time. In other words, if we made it to graduation during a global pandemic, nothing can stop you! Do not be scared or embarrassed to ask for help, no matter what the situation is.

Everyone there is so helpful and will find ways to help you guys. **(Erika Gonzalez)**



Hello, future Odyssey students! This was by far one of the best classes I have ever attended. When I first applied I was nervous, thinking I wasn't going to be good enough for the class, or that I was going to answer a question wrong or be judged. I worried all that time for no reason. The Odyssey Project wants you to be yourself 110%. There's no wrong or right.

I have always been a shy person, but I wasn't shy in my writing. So even if you're a shy person, don't be shy with your writing. Express yourself to full compacity. I know that there will be obstacles. Go right through them till you get to the end of the course reader and end of the course. Have a ball, everyone!!!! **(Valeria Gordon)**



Prepare for a journey that will change something within you. Today you may think this is only an English class, but you will come to learn it's so much more. Get ready for conversations that will challenge what you think you know. Prepare to take a journey through time, music, and new ideas.

The reason you chose for taking the journey of this class will change before it ends. I guarantee that you will not be the same and you will find a better version of yourself along the way.

The unique people you get to know as your classmates will inspire you beyond your wildest dreams. As you all work together, unknowingly, you all will reach the end. The teachers and support for this class are beyond amazing. Allow yourself to let go, have fun learning, and make room for the new you to come.

You made it. Congratulations! Welcome to Odyssey and enjoy the journey!! **(Melissa Herriges)**





Welcome to Odyssey, a journey where your skills and talents will be brought to light, along with your hunger for knowledge. There is a saying that “school ISN’T for everyone,” but to me school is for all. For all those who feel stuck in the same spot, for those who want to challenge themselves, and for those who want to find a voice through writing and poetry, Odyssey IS the place for you.

I came into Odyssey last year fearful that I wasn’t going to finish out strong, much like when I went to MATC after high school. Quickly that fear I had went away. The instructors are so friendly and so understanding that it takes away the stress that we all know school can bring. This is a chance to meet people with different backgrounds with amazing talents, and together you will become beautiful mosaic art pieces.

When coming into this program, it is important to keep your mind open and your doubts behind you. There are going to be a lot of your classmates who won’t have the same views as you do. You have to be comfortable enough to share a space where no one is judged, and everyone is uplifted through just a single Zoom chat message! Reach out to your peers. They are going through the same thing you are, and a team tackling a problem is better than going at it alone and feeling defeated. The most important thing... is to have fun! Yes, this is a class where you will have homework, but I cannot count a time where there wasn’t laughter coming from every person.

This environment is built to help and motivate you, and I can say it’s done a great job of doing that for me. Congratulations on becoming an Odyssey student! (**Kwan Hogan**)



Odyssey, my friends, has changed my life forever. It had awakened something in me in regards of furthering my education. From the very educational reads of the wonderful MLK to Plato, this class



has it all. How many of us get discouraged for X or Y reason to achieve something good in our lives? How many of us think reaching our goals is just an unreachable dream? I sure have been there; however, this program and Emily, plus the outstanding supporting staff, are here to help achieve this dream become a reality. Plus, the class is super fun!

And when you think you can’t do it, whenever you think you can’t make an assignment on time, always reach out for help, whether it is Emily herself, or the wonderful supporting staff and even your classmates. Do NOT give up, push through the end, and ask for help. The finish line is within anyone’s reach. I did it with two jobs. You can do it; I believe in you. (**Henry Irisson**)



First off, I want to say that you made a great choice in applying to this program. It has truly been an unforgettable experience for me.

I learned things that I never knew would be a part of the experience.

If you like deep, meaningful topics, then you are in the right place. Be ready to explore other ways of thinking. Be ready to see things from different perspectives. Be ready to challenge yourself and others as well.

This program helped me realize wholeheartedly what’s important and what I plan to do with the rest of my life. I hope you find that same benefit for yourself. Enjoy! (**Jessica Jacobs**)



Welcome to Odyssey. Some of you may be wondering is this the right class for me? Well, I can tell you firsthand—if you’re in this class, you are in the right place.

There are going to be days you may be scared to speak or to raise your hand to read; believe me, that was me. But you learn to break out of your shell because if you think you’re going to hide, think again. You will be shocked how this class pulls you in. Just know you are not alone—you and your classmates will be there going through the reading, homework, and journey together.

One thing about this class—if you ever feel like your voice is not being heard, know this is the time to speak freely. So don’t be afraid, hold your head up high, have fun, know that everyone’s got a purpose in life, and you’ve got to start somewhere. And if you’ve got kids, great—they can take the journey with you. There are going to be good opportunities for you, so take them and run with it. There may be a time where you’re behind on homework or need more time. Speak up, and you will get the help you need. I’ve never been so comfortable in my life until now, so say you need help.

You will like the things you learn, from the art to the poetry, and it will light your spirit. The flower will grow, so the rain must fall. You got this, so all you need to be is the sun. The sun doesn’t shine every day, so when it’s your time to shine, take it and lead with it. This is a journey waiting for you, and now you can take this journey together. Remember you are not alone. **(Yvonne Johnson)**



This *Is* Going to Be Your Year.

In Jan 2020, I was sitting with my dad and my sister in a restaurant in Chicago. They’d come out from Ireland to visit me, and after a week of eating, drinking, and good times I thought: “This is going to be my year.”

Well, the universe had other plans, as it often does.

Coronavirus hit, and I found myself without a job, visa, or future. For a while I put a brave face on it, but I was struggling, and the cracks soon started to show.

Now I sit here in April 2021, a few weeks from graduation, and I think it *was* my year. It wasn’t the year I asked for, and it wasn’t the year I wanted, but it was the year I needed.

Some of you will view the Odyssey Project as merely a stepping stone towards something more, and that’s fine. It is a stepping stone, a helping hand, and more.

The Odyssey is a beautiful group of people who are honestly trying to better themselves and the communities around them. They are a corrective to the atomization of society and a cure for cynicism and hopelessness. The Odyssey doesn’t ask you to memorize a bunch of boring dates or regurgitate canned answers to questions. It asks you to look inside yourself and find the answers that were always there.

And that’s where you have to meet them. They can show you the way, but you have to walk through the door. That’s the deal. So even if it makes you feel uncomfortable, even if it makes you look ridiculous, even if it straight up hurts, go with it, lean into it, speak your truth.

Nobody knows what’s next, and what comes after Coronavirus could be worse. We live in an unstable country, on an unstable planet, in an unstable universe. But come hell or high water, finish this program.

Regardless of circumstances, time is what you make of it. I learned that in the Odyssey, and anyone who faces their challenges with an honest heart can’t be considered a failure. With that strength any year can be your year, and any future is up for grabs.

Before you know it you’ll be writing this letter, and you’ll be a different person.

Good luck, and welcome to the family.  
**(Farren McDonald)**





I know you're thinking: what in the world did I get myself into? Can I back out?? I know those were my thoughts when I found out I was accepted to the UW Odyssey Program. Well, relax, you are in good hands. The UW Odyssey staff is here to make sure you succeed. This is a journey that is going to change your life for the better and push you outside of your comfort zone. You will learn but have fun in every class.

Take advantage of the tutoring—it really helps, and all the tutors are wonderful. They walk you through the assignments and help you understand some of the challenging ones. Make sure to keep up on homework. If you fear an assignment and get stuck, ask for help. The staff is always available to help you.

Get to know your classmates. They all have amazing backgrounds and can be a wonderful support system. All of you were chosen because you have something special in you. I know I loved to chat with my classmates during tutoring and hearing them read their assignments. Do not be shy in class—take this opportunity to help you overcome shyness.

Go and have fun. This class will be over before you know it, and you will miss it! **(Michelle McKoy)**



You did it! You made the decision to set yourself up for success by enrolling in this course; now it is time to commit to it and your future. This requires discipline and dedication because you will encounter challenges, and your life outside of this course will not stop. Do not get discouraged; you can and will do this.

Read your syllabus at the start of the semester and make a class and study schedule and stick to it. Stay ahead of your course work, as it will be easy to fall behind, especially if you have other obligations such as family or a full-time job. Come to class prepared, ask questions, and make the most of

your time with the professors, tutors, and peers. Share your ideas, thoughts, and talents; you have so much to offer the course, and your participation and contributions makes the class all the more interesting. Communicate with your professors if something unexpectedly comes up, and make arrangements with them so that you do not fall behind. Know that your professors want you to succeed!

Odyssey is more than a class; it is a community where we all look out for one other and root for one another's success. Stay focused, stay committed, and ask for help when you need it. **(Stephaney Obi)**



You are probably nervous or anxious; so was I on my first day of class. That feeling will begin to disappear as you become familiar with your classmates. The most important thing to remember is you are not alone! You are on a journey with many others. What may feel like new territory to you is new territory to them as well. At times it may feel like the workload is heavy, but Kevin and Emily work overtime to make it as light as possible.

Odyssey has become a part of my family. I look forward to the writings from my classmates and interactions with them. You may have moments where you doubt yourself and your work. I have had many of them. Remember there is no right answer. Your experience is based on you and your unique interpretation. Here in Odyssey your opinions will be needed and valued. You will be surprised by all the things you accomplish if you just believe in yourself. Remember: change occurs once we step out of our comfort zones! **(Asia Pearson)**



I welcome you with open arms. Congrats on becoming the chosen few who made it in. The Odyssey has been both rewarding and challenging for me. If you're like me and have two jobs, trying to run a business, single mother, taking two

other classes, then you're in great hands. Odyssey can help.

It's important you stay in communication with Emily, and please, oh please, go to tutoring and request Nidia; she is the best. Drive deep in, pull out that inner writer; you will discover words and a voice you never knew that you have. Good luck; happy Odyssey. **(Thedora Smith)**



If you're reading this, just know you came to the right place. This class is an awesome learning experience, and you are meeting great people. I've learned a lot during my time of being a part of the Odyssey class. My advice to you is if you're stuck on something, always visit Tuesday's tutoring session and take advantage of that time. Take in every part of the experience and all the teaching. Try not to get behind because assignments will still

be rolling in. The number one thing is don't forget to enjoy! **(Keyanna Wilson)**



I know some of you are excited, nervous, or a little worried about what's ahead for you guys. Well, I'm here to tell you that you're going to have so much fun getting to know your classmates. The instructors are very helpful and resourceful. It is definitely a great opportunity to further your studies. I myself was nervous and didn't know what to expect at times, but everyone is so welcoming and encouraging in a time of need.

I'm very thankful to have been a part of the Class of 2021. It was challenging at times, but stay strong and you'll be just fine. I wish you all the best. **(Shiquita Woods)**

