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ODYSSEY



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CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY



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ENVISIONING EIGHT YEARS FROM NOW



It is March 2030, spring and the weather is mixed; sometimes it's sunny, sometimes it's raining, but today it is snowing. I woke up early and made and ate breakfast with my son, Henry, and then we made our lunches. He is a senior in high school; he is getting ready to go to school. I drive with him to his school. We listen to music on our way. We listen to Romeo Santos; it is bachata music that we both love.

I work at Middleton High School as a bilingual teacher. Since I started here, I have noticed the need for bilingual support in the school. I enjoy the time here supporting students from diverse backgrounds. It is afternoon and it is time to go home. My son and I go to the gym together and then we go back home to have dinner. We video call my daughter, who is in her second year of college. We are planning summer vacations in Mexico. Also, I am planning for the weekend because I own my event design business. **(Jessica Saldana Ortega)**

It's the year 2030. I'm 31 years old, I'm married and successful with two kids, a boy and a girl. However, today it's raining. It's a cool, hard, wet storm. With heavy drops of rain falling from the sky, the rain's so loud you can hear the drops on the roof of my home. It's one of those gloomy days where we eat comfort food, watch movies, and snuggle up together on the couch! Everyone's napping and nodding off, but still, being able to hear the rain

sounds from the window and me exhaling, I'm taking it all in. That peace has met me; it's here to stay, and happiness, because I made it there all along! **(Zaria Hunter)**

My life in Spring 2030: a typical day would consist of me waking up to a beautiful cozy home where everyone will have their own space. My mornings would be so much easier than they are now because my kids will be more independent. We'll wake up to make breakfast – blueberry and strawberry waffles and bacon will fill the air, as well as laughter and joy. Shortly after, we'll get ready to conquer the day and prepare our set ups for our pop-up shops. I really hope to make my kids business owners of things they are passionate about. I will spend the day out with my family networking with our community and finding new friends along the way.

After our successful day of hard work, we'll choose a fun place to go to and burn off some energy, and I will be sitting back watching my kids enjoy luxuries I was not so accustomed to while being a kid. My main goal in life is to provide my kids with long lasting fun memories so they know Mama tried. My evenings will consist of my self-care and reflection. I hope to have an area in my home where I can meditate, read, exercise, whatever it is to just reflect on how far I have come and how I stuck it out throughout my journey. **(Yasmine Dobbins)**

Eight years from now, I hope it will be enough time to be done with school. My daughter will be nine by then. I hope to maybe be married by then; God, I hope I am married by then.

I hope to be a mortgage loan officer at Summit. I'm currently a universal banker, so I'm about a quarter of the way there. I hope to have a house, three bedrooms, two and a half baths, somewhere in the country so that I can have chickens in my backyard and eat fresh eggs every morning. Hopefully my account is looking fat, call it Norbit. **(Cynthia Gonzalez)**

Eight years from now... It's morning, kids and grandkids everywhere since it's the weekend and they always wanna hang with me for our weekends of fun.

I have a strict rule of no business on the weekends, BUT that doesn't include emails. Moore Books n' Mugs is a thriving business, and to make sure it stays that way, I reply to a few emails. Business is business.

Kids being kids, they all want pancakes, so I have the chef prepare breakfast while we debate this weekend. By the time we're done eating, our day is planned: Great America it is. This time, we're gonna make sure the grandkids get to ride everything in sight.

It's set. Breakfast, African Museum, and finally, Great America. Hopefully I'll be inspired because I have a book deadline approaching.

Loving life, I have the driver pull the big SUV up so we can leave. The weekend begins.

(Reginald Moore)

Eight years from now, I just hope to be alive, for starters, but honestly, I just want my children healthy and alive, and to be financially stable. I will have had the few ideas in my head come to life; I would like to be fully booked out six months with my barber/cosmetics clients. I'd have my credit score to an 800 if possible, and I'd be a

homeowner. I'd just have more time with my children, attending more sports/gymnastic events, and having great smiles and energy around. COVID-19 is gone and out of this world, but that is a very long time from now, so I have to keep living day by day.
(Ontario Frazier)



In eight years, I see myself with my little family and my dogs. It will be great if I have a career, but if not, I wouldn't mind. I just want to be happy, in a good place where I feel safe and loved. I want to go to work, do my thing there, come home, and spend time with my children or just myself. In the end, I just want to be happy. **(Erendira Giron Cruz)**

Eight years from now, I'll be 41. I see myself living the lifestyle of being my own boss, living every day fulfilling my passions. Absent of work, my days will be filled with things that I love to do. Of course, all of the things I love to do will be monetized. Income struggles will be a thing of the past. My "work day" will consist of waking up and checking my email while on a vacation or whatever I decide to do for the day. I see myself teaching in some sort of way, teaching about life experiences that I have been through before, guiding adolescent youth into adulthood by creating resources and support systems in the community. I see myself being able to be a light or an example for anyone looking to keep pushing through. Eight years from now I see all of us in better positions. I see all of us helping in some way, shape, or form. **(Will Nunn III)**

Eight years from now, I will be 50 years old. Reagan will be 21 and in college, working toward her law degree. I will be married with a 6- or 7-year-old, LOL. My mixed drink business would be prospering on a major level, and my nonprofit organization would be in full effect. A typical day would be waking early to make breakfast and get the kid

ready and off to school, walk the beach (our backyard) with the husband, chat about my businesses and his stocks, then do some work, go to yoga, and then meet with my girls. I'll grocery shop on the way home, then start dinner and wait for my family to arrive to sit, eat dinner, and reflect on our day together.
(Crystal Johnson)

Eight years from now I can see myself in many different places; it's like every day there is a different viewpoint. I really see myself finally in a place in life where I can call life stable. I will be working as a new pediatric nurse in a facility that specializes in End of life / Hospice care, located in Houston, Texas. I will have a 12-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son (OMG that sounds so crazy).

A typical day for me eight years from now I can say will be unbelievable. Not only will I be busy with caring for patients for 8-12 hours a day, but also when I get home my job continues. I think I will call nighttime my "break hours" eight years from now. After a wild day from the hospital setting to home, having to cook, help two teenagers with homework, and make sure everyone's ready for the next day, I see me enjoying mimosas on my back porch while I think about how far I've come. I'm smiling ear to ear as I look at my perfect-sized family house. **(Talaisha Goodwan)**

Eight years from now. I will be in the hospital getting ready to give the CNAs their assignment. I will be debriefing the last shift on their assignment and briefing the oncoming shift. I will be wearing yellow scrubs to commemorate the deaf. My grandmother died so close to spring. It affects me day in and day out. I carry around her obituary. It's purple and cloudy white. I love to read it on my 30-minute lunch break.

I love to ensure that I have a great day by saying affirmations. "I'll Rise!" I yell in the mirror. "Black lives matter!" I say in a mellow undertone. "I will ensure a safety mechanism for my children!" I exclaim. "I need to get a house and become a homeowner! I love to do the right thing!" I exhaustedly let out a screech

When I'm done yelling those, I leave the car—the Grand Cherokee truck, that is. I lean back in the car and yell, "Thank you, God!"

Now I'm back at work and a resident yells, "Help!" I immediately run and help. "Miss Harwell, how are you?"

"I'm doing well!"

"Well, as you can see, my legs hurt!"

As I look over, I see her knee has a blood clot. I immediately gather the team and see that we are ready to prescribe antibiotics. We are ready to handle business. In my tense moment of working, I've got a feeling in my gut for greatness.

I'm going to school to be a doctor. I let the staff know I'm going to better my future. I want the best for my now 10-year-old. We expect greatness at all times. Now when I come home, I will take my daughter to a home ownership program, just to see the qualifications needed. While at the home ownership program I will have a bright turquoise clipboard. I also will have the turquoise pen mixed with yellow to jot down great points. Once I receive the information, I will start the daily sleep routine.

- First: Use a bonnet
- Second: Take a shower
- Third: Brush your teeth
- Fourth: Put your face mask on
- Fifth: Take your face mask off
- Six: clean the living room, dining room, and bathroom
- Seventh: Relax

This is what a spring day will look like eight years from now for me. **(Cinderria Harwell)**





It's March 22nd, 2030. My 14-year-old son and I are getting our Saturday started. We are in Memphis, Tennessee. I have a beautiful two-bedroom condo with a furnished basement that I sometimes let my 20-year HBCU college student use when he is home from school. My 14-year-old is in 8th grade, on his way to high school next year. My oldest son is an offensive lineman for Jackson State and will be coming to visit us for the weekend. Me, I'm a certified nursing assistant M-F and work at the Juvenile Jail in the girl pod. I love making a difference in those girls' lives. My boys tell me all the time that I'm crazy for working at the jail, but it's always been one of my dream jobs since I was a teenager. Here I am, finally living the dream. My mom would be so proud of me.

Today we are having breakfast at our favorite restaurant, which has the best pancakes. My son, he loves them, and it's the only spot he will eat at. I'm glad that he's at the age where he still wants to hang out with me because his brother at this age never wanted to go have brunch with me on a Saturday morning. **(LaRonda Morris)**

Ah, 2030. I will be 33 and married to Giselle with a house on the north side of Madison. Inside the house, the floor will be carpet because I don't like hardwood floors. It will have four bedrooms and two and a half bathrooms with big tiles because the small ones make my skin crawl. There will be a two-car garage with a small yard, so I won't have to do much yard work. **(Jermaine Booe)**

I will be 33 eight years from now. In due time, physically my dreams will be longer, flowing past my

waist. Also, I will have met my weight-loss goal of 220. I will be a ball of energy because of my weight loss. Mentally, I will be wiser and more confident in everything I pursue. Happiness will come naturally, flowing out of my being every day. I picture myself finished with my studies of business school. After four years of being in business school, I am an entrepreneur owning my own cleaning business. I envision me with my significant other owning a home.

(Kimari Rogers)

It is spring and the sun is shining bright. I am about to start my morning by going to get me some breakfast and coffee and then head to my real estate office. I am the owner of my own company for real estate along with running a homeless shelter as well. My typical workday normally ranges from 8-10 hours a day. I now have six kids and am married, living in a house that I own. I return home after doing work all day such as showing houses to multiple people almost every day because the real estate business is doing great in sales. I'm finding homeless individuals housing so that they won't be on the streets. I now have two private properties to rent out to families who are not receiving the adequate services and funding that would be needed for security deposits and other necessities. I provide hot meals or cold meals three times a day for people who don't have food at the time. After my busy workday, I go home to my beautiful family and prepare dinner, or sometimes we order out. Family time for a few hours, and then I do it all again the next day.

I am no longer homeless and struggling like I was eight years ago. My life changed drastically, and I finally have my own homeless shelter. I followed my dreams and never gave up because while in Odyssey Class of 2022, I thought things would not change, but oh, was I wrong. Odyssey was the best thing that came into my life and changed it for the better. Eight years later, I am doing great, and I am loving life and helping others better theirs. I help families because I know what it is like being homeless, hungry, not having money, and at your lowest point in life. I started real estate because that's what I chose to do after I graduated from Odyssey in 2022. **(Amanda Bell)**

When I see myself eight years from now, I want to envision myself as being successful, emotionally stable, and a wonderful mom to my son. I envision myself in a field of healthcare as a physician assistant helping minorities, single mothers, and the LGBTQ+ community with sexual, physical, and emotional health awareness. I want to own my own free clinic so people in Madison who don't have the means to pay for healthcare can come in and still get checked out. I see myself being a healer to my family and my community. I see myself being a soccer mom or a basketball mom and never missing an event for my baby boy.

I see myself owning a beautiful house that may need a lot of work, but I wouldn't mind turning it into something so beautiful. My house will have such a beautiful white fence with beautiful dahlias, tulips, and other wildflowers. In my backyard I see myself having a beautiful vegetable garden with greens, potatoes, green peppers, green tomatoes, and a lot more. I will also have a huge, beautiful stone patio with a firepit so my family can come over and have wonderful conversations under the stars.

In eight years, I envision myself happy and spreading love to everyone who needs it. I envision myself with a huge smile on face. I envision myself being free and loved. **(Helena Lee)**

In eight years from now, I will have finished my esthetician school and medical assistance school. I will have my own salon going so I can make money for psychology school. I will hopefully have also found the proper investment for my nonprofit dreams. It will be an all-around safe haven for the community, with etiquette classes, how to be gentlemen and ladies, financial education, generational wealth builders, husband and wife classes, and many more. All while in the background, the safe haven is a one-stop shop for sex traffic victims. They will be able to feel secure, tell their story once, and get examined all at one time. The safe haven will provide 24-hour, 365 day year-round care. **(Cylinthia Olle)**

Eight years from now I will be close to getting my bachelor's degree in Accounting at UW. I will have a part-time job in my field. By now my life will be different. I will be taking trips seeing more of this world, putting myself first, also owning my own home and living in a better neighborhood.

By now the butterflies in my stomach will be gone. I will have better study habits and as I take on more classes my goals are becoming a reality. An average day for me would be exercise, healthy eating habits, going to a quiet place to take time to study, and hopefully having a job that is flexible so I can work at home, a job that I love doing and take pride in.

I will be 57 years old in July, so at this point of my life, I do not want to waste another second. My family is everything to me, so of course I will always have time for a healthy relationship with my loved ones. I will also be looking forward to making some new goals for myself. Through this entire process I want to always put my lord and savior Jesus Christ first. Anything is possible.

(Mashell McCarter)



Eight years from now I will be 38 years old. I figure on a typical spring day I'd be waking up and making breakfast. The breakfast would most likely consist of sausage and bacon, pancakes because my daughter loves pancakes. There would be orange juice and coffee also for drinks, and I would have the sports news channel on the digital flatscreen TV. After eating breakfast, I take my daughter to school in my red 2028 Mustang, cruising down the Beltline singing Drake's 2025 hit "History of the Lover." I'd be enjoying the drive with my daughter.

After dropping off my daughter, I'd most likely go to the gym for an hour, work on my cardio and upper body. Then after the gym I would hit up my best friend Lobo's and go to the bar for a couple hours, play some pool, and drink a few beers. Then I'd go get ready to pick up my daughter from school. After picking her up, I'd stop at the grocery store on the way home. At the store we would grab ingredients to make spaghetti and meatballs, or chicken and rice. Then my daughter and I would go home. I'd make sure she does her homework while Daddy cooks. Then after the food is ready, we would enjoy our meal while watching basketball on TV. After eating, I would tuck her into bed, give her a goodnight kiss and hug. Then I would go down into my man cave, make me a mixed drink, and turn on NBA 2k30 on the PS6 and play video games for like three to four hours until I got bored. At this point I would most likely turn on a movie to fall asleep to. **(Brandyn Bess)**



The spring of 2030, I will be 57 years old. I will have thick and gray hair. I will weigh 180 pounds. I will feel great because I have made huge life changes. I will have my diabetes under control.

By that spring, I will have gained a bachelor's or master's degree in social work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison so my name will now read Ericka Booe, BSW, or maybe Ericka Booe, MSW. I will be employed as a social worker through a state or county job and working my way up to management. I will have a six-figure savings account. I will have investments in the stock market. I will be starting to plan my retirement.

By that spring, I will be married to a very kind and accomplished man. I will have taken a trip to Jamaica with my husband. I will be raising another child or children. I am a parent to even nonrelated children. I would have attended all my sons' weddings and the births of my grandchildren. I will be planning to take my grandkids to Disney Theme Parks and Universal Studios. I will have started taking girl trips with my friends, including Vegas and Florida trips.

By that spring, I will have purchased my first home. That home will be in Texas. It will be a nicely sized house surrounded by a picket fence. It will be white and blue on the outside with a wooden deck. It will have a playground set, a firepit, patio furniture, and a barbeque grill in the backyard. It will have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a dining room, and a basement in the house. The basement will be part mancave for my husband.

Also, by that spring I will continue a connection with the Odyssey Project as an alumnus. I will be encouraging the new Odyssey Project participants to follow through and to not give up on their dreams and goals because that is the encouragement that I receive as a current Odyssey participant. I will donate money to the Odyssey Project because it is a worthy program. I will help to build an "Adopt an Odyssey Project Student" program that will focus on Odyssey alumni mentoring other Odyssey alumni, students, and their families. **(Ericka Booe)**

Hey, you! You didn't think you would make it this far, did you? I know. With prayer and hard work, you did. It was a tough ride, but worth it, right? I know your girls are big and doing great things. It's 2030. I'm living my life, working my dream job, driving my dream car in good health and being the best mom I can be. After being a student of the Odyssey Program, I never gave up on myself. I kept going until I reached my goals. I fell down, but I got back up every time. It's now 2030 and I'm still here living life the best way I know how.

I'm working at this hospital as a nurse, helping people and doing what I enjoy. It took me longer than people my age, but I kept chasing my education because I knew it would count in the end. I bought a house, something as a kid I always said I didn't want. Having kids changed my view on that. I had to give my kids a place to call home. I have spent many years since being a part of the Odyssey Program getting to understand me, my life, and my purpose. If it wasn't for Odyssey, I wouldn't be here today in 2030 to share my story.
(Kayanna Branch)

Eight years from today I will be a very successful social worker. I will have been at my career five years by now. I am married to my lovely husband for seven years now. We bought our home five years ago, a beautiful four-bedroom home, large back yard, large kitchen with an island. We have two children that still live with us and four dogs and one cat. We have the ability to travel so we do this often. I am enjoying the life I set for myself.

- Married
- Own home
- Have my associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and my master's in social work
- be working in the social work field
- Travelling two times a year

(Mechele Williams)

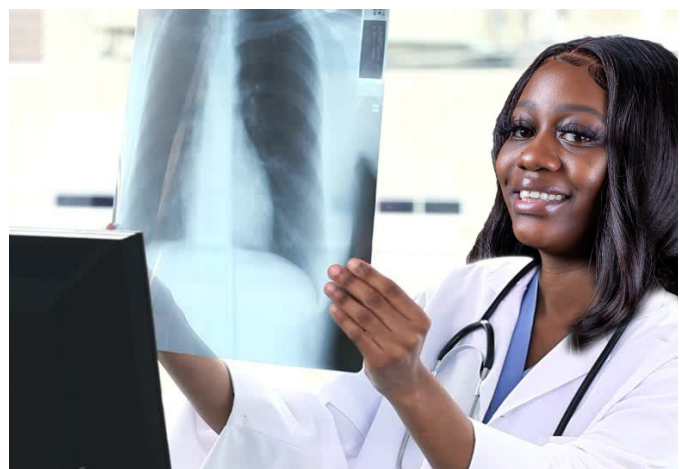
It is spring 2030. The world is still intact. I am successful. I have graduated from Nursing School back in 2025. I have started my own practice, and I own a Residential Assisted Living Home. I am

married, and I have a big, beautiful dream house with a huge backyard to host plenty of family BBQs. My backyard will also have a big, beautiful pool that turns "Indigo Blue" and glistens at night. I will have two dogs, one big and one small, a boy and a girl. I will have found peace all around me with the relationships and the career I chose.

A typical day for me that I would like to think of would be me being on family vacation and working from my five-star resort, a full-time mother and a full-time businesswoman. A typical day would be very busy but a good very busy. I will still be working on other goals such as purchasing land, owning more properties, and attending several different seminars to find more ways to gain knowledge and create generational wealth. I am living where it is warm all year around. I am living by my own rules; I am not working for anyone. I am creating more career opportunities for others, and I am living my best life while doing so.

(Naquila Taylor)

In eight years I can only pray God has me and my family in a better position, but I know with hard work and dedication it will be just that! I hope in eight years I am a homeowner, whether it's here or in a new city if I ever get the courage to move somewhere new! I also want to finally finish school with my Radiology degree so my family can see I can do anything I put my mind to. I can't wait to be able to spoil my kids and take family trips with my husband and our friends and their families. I hope I'm very comfortable in life and get to enjoy the fine things life has to offer. **(Mariam Maiga)**





The ambience is alive with the melodies of life. And after eight years I can finally hear and enjoy each distinct note. The mellifluous cadence of birds chirping, the contagious raucousness of my children's laughter, and the ageless smile of my beautiful wife that says a thousand words. I'm free to be fully present. The only things that matter are the things that matter. Financial freedom has liberated me from the mechanical prison of obligation. Time is a graceful friend that allows me to enjoy the beautiful gifts it bestows. The lord has given me back the years that the locusts

have eaten. **(Jonathon Adeyanju)**

It's spring of 2030 and the cool fresh air is lingering through the comfort of our home. Coffee and breakfast await as my children and husband gather to get ready for the day ahead. Earlier (the crack of dawn), I sat in my quiet space to pray, journal, and give my mind some space. I use that time to meditate on what my intention for the day is. I usually give my body time to stretch so that I can feel balanced and aligned. My body is getting stronger, and I feel filled with life and energy. My family and I usually talk about what we are thinking and what we're grateful for before beginning the day.

After furthering my education in the past four years, I currently have a career in mental/emotional health. I work in a community where we provide safe and attainable support to families who are in need. Our goal is to build strong relationships and to also provide resources that help families with their needs. We often have friends and families over for dinner. Our organization often volunteers for non-profit organizations to help support the local needs.

As a family we try to take at least one vacation a year. During our free time we spend a lot of quality family time. We often explore the outdoors and the beauty of nature. My husband and I are currently working on building our dream home and establishing a secure future for our children. We plan to establish our own family business soon.
(Michelle Mack)

Year 2030, I'm hoping to have accomplished a list of goals: cosmetology, massage therapy, esthetician, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social work, dream housing, marriage, and, lastly, maybe Jamarion will have a sibling.

I imagine a fairly set-up day just because Jamarion will still be in school getting physical therapy, OT, speech, etc.... I will be helping other adults and children like Jamarion through multiple spots in their lives in a beautiful park with bright green grass with multiple tents set up with different things available. Whether it's hair problems, facials, needing to talk, or maybe even just offering my company, not only will I be available to others I've learned with in school, hospital settings, and Walmart, but I also will be engaged giving services to people who are less fortunate. A typical day will always be me helping someone, whether it's my child, husband, or a stranger.

I will go home every day happy to be alive and able to put a smile on someone's face, watch movies with my family, cook dinner, and do last minute therapy, bath time, and healing, so my family and I can start the day fresh, excited, and ready to tackle any problem that we may receive on any day. I imagine myself well put together, better than I am now. By then, everything in my home should be my last because it will be my dream home.
(Capri Booker)

DEAR ODYSSEY CLASS OF 2023...



You feel that nervous energy? Excitement fused with uncertainty? Embrace it! As time goes by, you'll miss those moments. Just do me one favor. Whenever you're unsure of yourself, just remember that there's beauty in the process. You have what it takes, and you're here for a reason. The torch has been handed to you guys, and we do so proudly. I look forward to seeing you all graduate. Knock 'em dead. **(Jonathon Adeyanju)**



Congratulations to all 30 new students who have decided to go to college and make a life-changing opportunity with the Odyssey Project. You are beginning a new chapter in your life and have so many great opportunities waiting for you.

Class of 2022 wasn't easy for me personally, but I am proud to say that I made it. Coming into the program, I was nervous and really didn't know what I was doing at the time of me becoming an Odyssey student. I had mixed emotions when I first started class, but then everything changed. I got to know my wonderful teachers and other individuals within the two semesters of class, along with my classmates. The Odyssey Project was the best thing that came into my life while I was dealing with depression and homelessness. Odyssey became my family and, most of all, my support system. Our social worker, Mr. Brian, was a great person to get to know and communicate with. He helped me with resources I knew nothing about. Christina and Em worked hard with keeping students on track and making sure everyone was on the same page and had all the tools we needed for class. Mr. Kevin got me back writing poetry and eager to learn new writing techniques. Char also made sure we all got food in class. Ms. Emily gave me an opportunity to rewrite the story of my life, and I thank God for that every day. Odyssey has changed my life, made

me see light, and helped me feel that things can really change in your life if you are willing to accept that change.

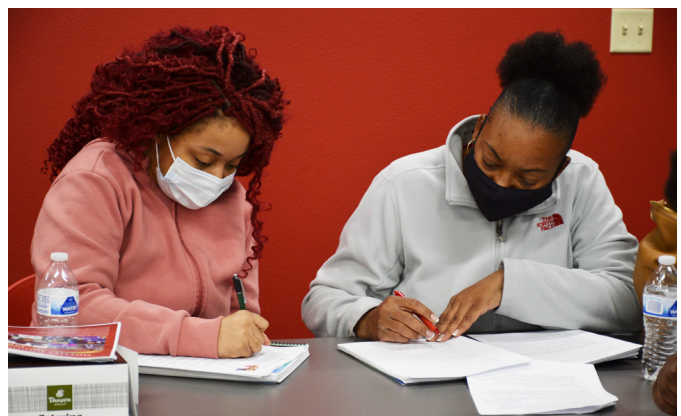
You come into Odyssey empty-handed and graduate with a whole new state of mind. Class of 2023, have fun, learn new things, try new things, and, most of all, go all the way and push as hard as you can to complete all your work. Everyone works as a team, so never be afraid to open up and ask for help.

Good luck, and I can't wait to see everyone walk across the stage for graduation. Class of 2023, **YOU GOT THIS! (Amanda Bell)**



Hey, welcome, new Odyssey members! Congratulations on being picked to join this family. Honestly, you are going to have to work hard in Odyssey, but it will be so worth it. There are plenty of people here who have your back and that will help you along the

way. I was very nervous I wouldn't be able to complete Odyssey when I first started, but with the help of Emily and the Odyssey family we all made it through. I want you guys to think about who you are as a person now when you start this class and think about who you want to be at the end of the Odyssey journey. Take notes each class and show up to class ready to participate and you will do great! **(Brandyn Bess)**





I'll tell you ahead of time that this experience that you are about to embark on will leave you feeling honored and privileged to have been an Odyssey Project participant. Understand that this experience will be not only good but great.

Allow Odyssey to take you out of your comfort zone. We don't know if we like something until we've tried it. My advice to you is to just let it happen for you. Don't let anything get in the way of exploring yourself and learning more about yourself. Whether you are old or young, take this trip of self-improvement. When you know better, you do better.

Allow Emily and other Odyssey staff to help you overcome barriers you face that can possibly prevent you from completing the Odyssey Project. That has to be the most unique quality of Odyssey Project to me. You won't fail because they won't let you fail.

Know that you are as good as anybody else. Even during the bad times of your life, you are worthy of knowledge for self-improving, no matter what your situation may be. Know that any obstacles you face you can overcome. Know that if you are still here that you are still here for a reason. Your mission is not accomplished. There is more work for you to do. You are needed. You are worthy of empowerment. **(Ericka Booe)**



The first thing I want to say is welcome to the beginning of a fresh journey. Everyone you believe wants the best for you should go through this journey with you. No one who wants you to succeed will watch you drown.

For the beginning to honestly be the beginning, you have to drop dead weight. Stop creating long heartbreaks, struggles, and depression. Odyssey may be hard. At your worst, you have to keep going. I gained 30 pounds from stress because my son had two seizures. Doctors



weren't listening—but that didn't stop Emily from calling. She can be a headache, but she means well. Rest on her when you need help. Make it well-known what tutors you need! For me, it was Kevin. Never fall apart when you can change the outcome. Believe in yourself even if death comes in your family. Remember they wanted you to make it. You are your biggest supporter. Become who you need to be, want to be, and dream to be with Odyssey. Good work and congratulations on the start! You can contact me. **(Capri Booker)**



If you are reading this, you have been accepted into one of the best programs in Madison. This program opened my eyes and gave me the motivation and support I needed. I hope to be joining a college right after our graduation. Take advantage of

this opportunity. Use the help and resources they provide for you. My best advice is to take time out of your schedule and set aside time to complete your homework and ask the staff questions. They are all here to help you and push you to achieve your goals. This program is only the beginning. After this program, you will be able to continue your education if that is something you want to do. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and come to class even when you're having a hard time completing your homework. This program is a judge-free place, and every staff member a part of Odyssey will be here for you with open arms. They are here to help you get to the finish line. **(Kayanna Branch)**



You are the Odyssey Class of 2023! You are amazing! You are amazing because Mrs. Emily and her staff choose amazing people. Just don't stop, don't quit! You will learn so much quality information. You will find yourself saying, "I want to learn more about that." The Odyssey class is fun, and you will learn amazing things. **(Katrina Collins)**



Welcome to the start of your new future! That sounds corny, right? You have probably heard that before when you were going into school or work sometime in your life. Well, here this is no joke: I have not experienced before the lessons and doors that will open for you upon taking this journey. You are UW students, and don't let any tell you differently. For most of us, attending a big four-year college would only happen by playing sports, being super smart, or us having that perfect family with parents who can put us through school. It seems like a TV sitcom, but in

our worlds with the diverse backgrounds we come from, we deal with hardship, whatever that may be. So, if you are serious about breaking barriers and family curses, you are in the right place.

Odyssey won't come easy; it's going to test you, in the long winter months, with depression, fatigue etc. Every emotion will hit you. Don't fold because the reward is so much better. Strangers become family and if you are honest and a decent human being, the people in the class will become people you need to embrace over the two semesters. Homework will make you think this isn't just a small experience; the staff is going to work and bring the best version of you out. Ms. Emily and the staff that you will meet are one-of-a-kind, so if you are somebody who is wasting time and not going to take this seriously, do me a favor and let them know ASAP, because that spot you are wasting could be used for somebody who is in need and is on a mission.

The individuals involved are the few people in the world who are breaking barriers and trying to really shape the new future where minorities have a chance. They will break their backs to help you

succeed. Most importantly, they will help you with whatever you need and will stay on top of it and find answers/resources. Please take this seriously. Nothing but best luck to you all, and I hope to meet you all, future UW alumni. In the words of somebody this world lost too early, "The Marathon Continues" (Ermias Nipsey Hussle Asghedom). Your Victory Lap is closer than you know, Blessings and Love to you. **(Ontario Frazier)**





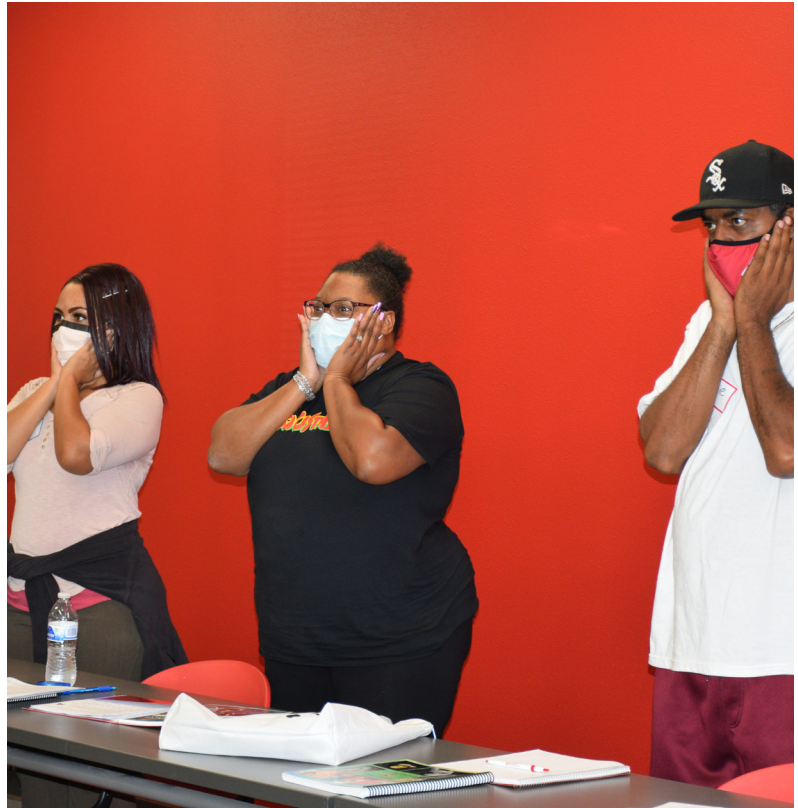
Hello, classmates from another class year. You will be fine in this classroom setting. The teachers, tutors, and everyone involved in Odyssey are understanding. In the beginning, it will feel like a classroom setting, but as the class goes on, it becomes close. It's a great setting for anyone who is looking to move forward with their studies. Don't be afraid to ask for help and open up, and share your experience and your struggles. Show how much of a wonderful human being you are. **(Erendira Giron Cruz)**



You can do this. The Odyssey Project community is amazing. Everyone in this class has grown and grown a relationship with one another. You did the hardest step. You signed up. You got accepted. You can do this.

My first day, I was so nervous. I hadn't been in a learning environment in over 18+ years. I hadn't studied for a test, read a chapter book, or sat in a class to learn and focus. Can I do this? was what I thought to myself. Luckily, I knew a few people so that made it a little easier. But throughout those two hours, I met 30+ new friends.

Odyssey staff are the best. They're very dependable, kind, and helpful. You made a great decision joining the Odyssey family. You're going to see so many changes in yourself, your reading, speaking, and writing. I see my growth in my job; I actually read my emails and articles that are given to me now. Stay focused, and stay on top of your homework assignments and reading. Ask for help no matter what; help is what got me through a lot of my procrastinating. I just had someone in tutoring go over my work with me to get their opinions or to help if I was just stuck and didn't know where to start. Definitely take advantage of their wonderful vibes. I did it, and so can you! Believe in you. **(Crystal Johnson)**



As you embark on this new journey of self-discovery through literature and a community of 30 of your peers, I want you to be open to the possibility that you're already a good writer. You were never a bad writer to begin with, and all you need will be a little push in the right direction.

The Odyssey Project is a judgment-free zone. You don't have to worry about having the proper grammar, sentence structure, or the correct pronunciation. All you need is the willingness to learn and the willingness to be open minded. No matter what you're going through, it will never get downplayed or ignored. You can always ask for help because help is never a negative word in the Odyssey class. Help can just mean you need a little push, you need a shoulder to cry on, you need help with time management, or you just need a support in life. You're always welcome, no matter your color, sexual ordination, gender identity, or religious background, because we are all a huge melting pot of diversity and love. I hope you find the Odyssey Project to be your wildest dreams. Welcome, Class of 2023! **(Helena Lee)**



Please be ready to bring all of you as you embark on an internal journey. Get ready to unpack what you thought was

the truth and see a new reality. The Odyssey Project will bring you to a new awareness. You will laugh, be enlightened, and also get into your feelings. The people here have soul, compassion, and so much to give. You'll be a part of a community that keeps the weary growing and going. You're a part of a chain of change.

(Michelle Mack)



Get ready to meet new people and learn so many new things. Coming into Odyssey I did not know exactly what to expect, but I am happy I chose taking the steps for a better future. Through Odyssey I gained the confidence I needed to

further my education, and now I'm more motivated than ever to continue until I'm where I want to be! I'm so proud of the woman I'm becoming, not only for me but for my daughter as well. Don't be scared to participate, ask questions, or give your opinions. Odyssey is a judge-free zone where everyone is welcome to be themselves! I wish you guys the best of luck and pray you enjoy Odyssey as much as I did.

(Mariam Maiga)



Welcome to the next chapter of your life. You're here for character development, and that's absolutely true because this class will definitely develop your character.

The plot twist is even though it's class, trust me, but the time it's completed you will love yourself for completing.

The future is yours. Let Odyssey help you create an amazing ending to YOUR story. **(Reginald Moore)**



You have just done a good thing. Odyssey was one of the best decisions you could ever make; at least, it was for me. The best advice I could say is believe in yourself. You are your biggest cheerleader, and so is everyone here at Odyssey. They are here for

you no matter what. The teachers here at Odyssey don't ever judge you on anything, no matter what you are going through. They are here for you. If there is something you need help with, they will help you or try to find a resource on whatever it is. Even the classmates help you; Odyssey is like a big, blended family.

I met a lot of different people from all walks of life at Odyssey; even some people I went to high school with. Just know that Emily will do anything in her power to make sure everyone is successful in their journey at Odyssey. It's definitely going to be a journey, but don't worry. Everyone at Odyssey is rooting for you, and so am I. Congrats!

(LaRonda Morris)



WOW, you did it, Class of '23! You took the first step in your new journey. How did it feel? Was it a wobbly step? Was it full of uncertainty? Were you nervous the night before the first class?

If the answer is yes, that's good. We all felt this way. You are not alone. In fact, you will never be alone again throughout this journey. Odyssey is a family. The instructors will always be available to you. The support is endless. Life might get crazy throughout the journey, but please trust the process. There is no judgment. The reward is great. The skills you will learn will unlock a power you didn't know you had in you. Some days will be harder than others. Some days you will have to dig deep. Do not quit because a better you waits on the other end. You've already taken the first step. Now take the second step. You are in motion. Welcome. **(Will Nunn)**



This is it, the beginning. This is the start to your journey, to want more, to do more. Like many of you, I was nervous my first time in class: new

people, new surroundings, new challenges. But, you see, this is more than just a humanities course! This is a family; I have gained the best group of supporters in this program. I have truly gained a new family, a new opportunity, and a new life in this program.

Although I did not give all of me as I should have, even with my trust and commitment issues I have a new outlook. I have a new way of expressing myself. I have a new way of learning. I have learned so much about myself,

pushing barriers I could never see myself crossing before. I express my opinions openly without judgment, and I let my writing skills come to light. Even with the toughness of my pregnancy and childbirth, I was still supported and loved. I was weeks behind because life caught up. But with tutoring and hard work, I was able to get things done. No matter the situation, Ms. Emily, the sweetest woman I know, was always screaming, "GO, CYLINTHIA, GO!" Give your 100 percent effort, and do not hold back. Express your fears and insecurities and conquer them; you have made it this far.

They receive hundreds of applications. This program is not for the weak, only for the strong. I do not mean in the way you think either. I mean the strength of the ability to face your fears and challenges, making them come to pass. So, congratulations! You walked into the first step of changing your life forever. Have a great year. I am also here for support! My number and email will never change! Here's to the long walk!

Welcome to the family! **(Cylinthia Olle)**





Are you nervous? Do you feel less than capable of completing this program? Well, don't be. There are plenty of staff members and alumni to help you along your journey. Whether starting your education or continuing your education, this is a great place to

start. This course not only will help you get a fresh start to get your feet wet, it will follow you throughout your educational journey. For example, if you have to write a science thesis or even do public speaking, this course will help you flourish. As a student in the Odyssey Program, you can look forward to certain scholarship programs or even funds to start your own business. This is a wonderful opportunity and a great start with the six college credits that you will gain in the end.

(Kimari Rogers)



Hey, guys! Welcome to Odyssey. I know how you may be feeling, nervous or excited, just praying to make it to the end? Ask me how I know: because I was you! Odyssey is nothing to be afraid of. There will seem like lots of work to do, but with Emily, Char, Kevin,

and the gang, you've got this! You can do it and when you do, you'll be proud of the person you have become. You'll love all the people you have met, and the fun family events help bring us all closer together. If you are shy, they will help you overcome that; you will be encouraged to use your voice.

I would like to say congratulations on getting into the program, don't give up, take it one day at a time, and remember your instructors are there to help and support you. Odyssey is a great opportunity and the year really goes fast, so enjoy the journey and good luck! **(Naquila Taylor)**



This FAMILY is for EVERYBODY! I call this a family and not a class because that is what you will become with your classmates. You will form a bond with some of them that will be unbreakable.

Upon walking into class the first day, you will feel like maybe you shouldn't be here. There will be people in the class from all walks of life, and therefore you SHOULD be there. You will find out in the duration of this class that you have much more in common with your classmates than you could ever realize, and that is how they will become your family. Remember that your family is much larger than just this class because alumni are here for you as well.

All of you are here because you wanted this, so I congratulate you. You have just chosen an Odyssey that will change your life. Now don't get it wrong, you will work for this wonderful journey, but it will be well worth it. There will never be a time that you can't ask for help, please remember that. Every professor that you have is there for YOU. Their goal is for you to complete this Odyssey. **(Mechele Williams)**



FINDING A VOICE: PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS



Teach Financial Literacy

Never before in modern history has financial literacy been more important. Inflation is at an all-time high, the housing market is primed for a market correction,

supply chains are breaking down, and kids graduate high school not knowing how to identify correctly an asset or liability. The implications of these realities are catastrophic for those who don't have the financial competency to navigate this harsh economic landscape. It's a fundamental failure of the school system that's ultimately allowed a vacuum to be created where the top 10% richest people in the world own 90% of all wealth. How, as Americans, do we celebrate capitalism yet fail to teach the youth the tenets and concepts that underpin it? How is credit card debt so devastating to Americans, yet the benefits and implications of good and bad credit not taught?

Even more so, the tax code is structured in such a way as to incentivize and reward those who produce and create in the form of tax breaks, credits, and subsidies. Conversely, Americans who mostly consume are taxed much more heavily. On top of that, the world is shifting to crypto currency, which has its own impact on the dollar. The time is now to equip people before it's too late because you're never truly free unless you're financially free. **(Jonathon Adeyanju)**



homeless shelters, and other resources to help and not lucky enough to receive help.

I am a mother of three children trying to get out of poverty. I was once in a shelter program that I thought would benefit my family and me. When you aren't on the outside looking in, you see how much chaos you have to deal with to get a stable apartment for your family. You have to struggle feeding and clothing you and your kids. You have to wake up every day wondering what the day will bring. You have to wipe your own tears and constantly tell yourself that better days will soon come. Getting by in life seems so tough and difficult when you have no support system, especially when the people who are supposed to help fail you.



Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover: Help the Homeless

In the city of Madison, think about how many homeless families or individuals are sleeping outside or in their cars, calling around to churches,

With that being said, Madison needs more programs for the homeless, especially mothers with kids. We need programs that truly have dedication in their heart to end homelessness and poverty. One day, I will have my own homeless shelter to help families and other individuals in my city. I had to experience it myself, but it was all a learning process as well. **(Amanda Bell)**



Offer Preventive Services to Young People 16 to 24

Where are our young people and what are they doing? They are on the local news with video footage of them in high-speed chases in stolen cars performing dangerous activities on busy interstates like the beltline. They are stealing, driving, and sometimes crashing what they call “steamers” (cars) that we worked so hard to own. This is a sight I’m tired of seeing and fear that someone will get hurt due to their behaviors. As a result, they are gaining criminal backgrounds and becoming the new Dane County Jail residents.

Why do they steal cars? They steal cars because it’s fun. There’s nothing for young people to do if they aren’t bookworms or good at sports, or don’t have money to pay for an activity to keep busy and entertain themselves. While parents are working, young people are often unsupervised, and this can lead to trouble.

I am a program coordinator at Operation Fresh Start who coordinates the Drive to Succeed program that provides mentoring services, assistance with attaining diplomas, and assistance with attaining driver’s licenses to justice-involved young people ages 17 to 21. We must provide these services to anyone ages 16 to 24 who needs this assistance and not only justice-involved young people. We shouldn’t wait until the crime is committed before we help. Let’s try to offer preventative services to prevent intervention services. **(Ericka Boeey)**

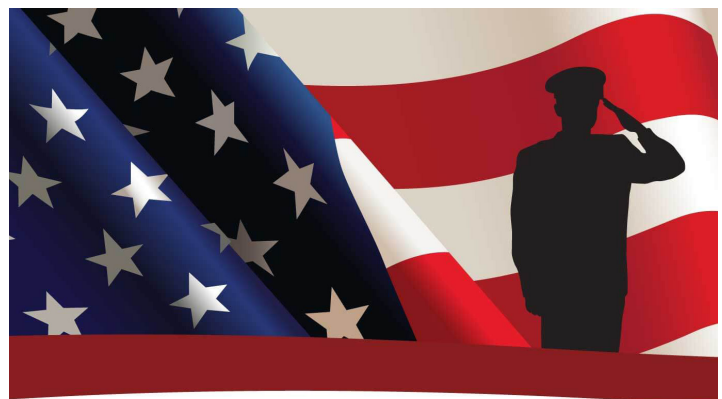


Give Veterans Free Dental Care

Veterans should have free dental care because they protected our country. Without them, we might not be here. Also, dental care is very expensive. This world needs to do a better job of taking care of our veterans. Did you know 11% veterans are homeless, and that’s just what we know of? We really have to do better with the people who used to serve and protect our country. This is one way

to help. I should know: I had some pretty bad/crazy thoughts when I had tooth pain. Tooth pain is some of the worst pain, if not THE worst pain, that some people will endure. I get nervous thinking about it. Show of hands, how many people had to deal with tooth pain. and did you cry? Didn’t it make you want to rip your head off or even the person next to you? Not their fault: it feels like someone tied you down and is repeatedly drilling you in the head. It’s really not their fault at all. The pain gets so bad sometimes it turns from tears to anger back to pain. It’s really no joke.

Did you know a national survey found that roughly 1 in 7 children ages 6-12 had suffered a toothache in the previous six months? Children with poor oral health were nearly three times more likely to miss school due to dental pain, according to a North Carolina study. Also 51 million hours of school are missed due to tooth pain, and these are children with some type of dental care insurance. Imagine what it might look like for the people/veterans who don’t have dental care insurance or can’t afford it because it’s so damn expensive. In the last eight months, I spent around \$2,700 in cash, maybe more, for dental work, and this is with insurance. I just really think we could change a few lives with free dental insurance. Please just think about it. If you have to, call a friend or two and ask them if they’ve ever dealt with tooth pain and ask how it made them feel. On that note, I really hope I can become wealthy enough someday to open a free dental clinic. **(Jermaine Boeey)**



**SERVING THOSE
WHO SERVED**

at Partners
In Dental Care



out of trouble and away from drugs, yet they can't find a decent-paying job because no company wants to hire a "felon." Companies don't want to look past what they did and give them a second chance. How will they break the cycle of unemployment and drug dealing? Give them a chance to make a difference. They need good money to survive and to take care of their kids. We will not end the death and jail rates in Wisconsin without offering realistic opportunities to the felons in our community. It is better to try and see the outcome than to never try and let our convicted felons sink into the system with no way of getting out. We all make mistakes; that doesn't mean we don't deserve to live a decent life.

Build More Playgrounds for Disabled Children

you see the green grass and bike path leading to the park. You look next to you and see you are holding the hand of a little human who smiles at you. You grab the handle of his wheelchair and make your way to the park. Once you are there, you see the stairs are too narrow and the ground has tire chips, which don't do well with wheelchairs. Tire chips are rubber mulch that protect kids from injury. Children with disabilities have disadvantages in the public when it comes to their interests. It's very limited what they can do outside. Wisconsin needs more playgrounds for children with disabilities.

built for them. There are only 13 playgrounds built in the entire state of Wisconsin for children with disabilities that are only meant for them, and in Madison there are only 18 out of the 174 playgrounds that even have a small inclusive component. Why are we not funding more inclusive playgrounds meant for children with disabilities? It seems the society wants to advance, but we are not including everyone.

(Erendira Giron Cruz)





Gain Generational Wealth

There are four key financial bites to generational wealth: financial education, investing, real estate/business, and life insurance.

Financial education teaches one how to budget monthly expenses to better understand how and where one's money is being utilized day to day, month to month, and year to year. Having a calculated agenda for all your rent, mortgage, utilities, car payments, etc. will keep you better organized.

Investments can be small; for example, start an Edvest a college savings plan in Wisconsin, or a 529 college savings plan, or even start an IRA for retirement. All of those investments are meant to help you in the big milestones of life.

Real estate is a good way to earn more income. Fourplexes are a great investment for beginners, depending on where you buy, and can bring in a good amount of cash flow; they are easier to manage and can be purchased with an FHA loan.

I would suggest for everyone to have life insurance. Depending on your policy, you can leave your family some peace of mind after you are gone. Expenses like funeral arrangements and payoffs on debts will be taken care of by the insurance company and the rest goes to the beneficiary on the policy. **(Cynthia Gonzalez)**



Step in to Help Children

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a quote that annotates this paragraph and creates an eight-word summary. When you're riding by and see a bunch of children running from a

convenience store while an angry store owner follows behind screaming for them to stop, do you stop and tell the boys to go back? Many people would keep going and comment on the situation as if they knew the boys personally, but no, you don't.

That five seconds it would have taken you to stop may have gotten laughs from some but also gives the feeling that someone cares to other people. 90% of toddlers become naughty or cry when they want the attention of an adult; by time they're five, the crying gets old and being naughty is their own resort.

I grew up with a girl who hardly went home. We would always get in trouble together. My mom cared, but hers didn't worry one bit. One day when I finally felt like it was enough and time to grow up, I then asked her, "Why do you keep getting in trouble?" She looked at me and said, "Why do you care? My mom doesn't." Those words stuck with me still today, raising my own kids.

Spoon fed or surviving on state assistance, you deserve to feel like you matter. Adopted or birth child, you deserve to be loved. Newborn or teenager, you deserve to be noticed. No matter where life takes you, the feeling of knowing someone cares goes a long way. So, next time you see the boys running from the convenience store, stop your car and let them see someone cares. When there's a hurt child, the moment you step in to help, you become a part of the village that raised them. Your words can help their future; your gentle gesture can improve their social interactions. **(Talaisha Goodwan)**



Let Ex-Offenders Vote

I am furious and outraged, and I would like to change the law so that ex-offenders can vote. I feel like we all are equal. It's part of the Constitution to have the right to vote. How does the criminal

justice system get to determine when and where a person is able to vote? They served their time, so why are they still being penalized for a crime they paid for? Why are we getting used to a criminal system hurting us that was made to defend us, hurt? In conclusion, I believe that we should treat people the way we want to be treated. Ex-offenders are regular citizens who served their time. **(Cinderria Harwell)**



Make Housing Affordable

Rent on average is about \$1,000 for a nice apartment, but minimum wage is still \$7.25. It's hard adulting right now; everything is so expensive, with inflation over the last couple

years! Whether it's from COVID-19 or from the war with Ukraine and Russia, it's definitely hard out here! A fear of being homeless due to not making enough money or qualifying for credit, rental history, etc. in general is hard! But it is especially hard for young people that are just starting out their lives. Having a home is a basic necessity of life, and if it isn't, it should be considered one! At least it is by me!

Not having a stable home to live in is detrimental to a person's well-being—the feeling of not being able to survive or have the peace of mind by having a safe place to call home. Being able to cook your own meals, shower, and bathe with hot/warm water is a blessing many take for granted, yet I wouldn't wish homelessness on my worst enemy! There are so many obstacles and things to overcome, but having a safe place to call home shouldn't be one of them! **(Zaria Hunter)**



Seek Mental Health Help in the Black Community

You need to talk to someone other than your family and friends. Mental

health problems are at an all-time high. I'm black. We don't go to any therapist or psychiatrist. We deal with it, talk to our family and friends, pray about it, and assume it's going to go away. Mental health problems are being passed down to our children. **(Crystal Johnson)**



Stop Healthcare Injustice

There is a troubling mask hiding healthcare issues in the minority community. Many minorities go uninsured without access to healthcare for long periods of time. They face the hard choices

of going without the medical, physical, and mental services, and that can be so detrimental to the growth and development of their body and minds. Instead, they choose survival and different coping mechanisms to deal with the pain and emotions of not feeling normal.

Living without healthcare can be an emotionally and physically draining crisis, like someone looking in the middle of a circle of trap doors. This is something that is faced every day. Between living paycheck to paycheck, paying bills to survive, and working 40 hours or more a week, we have little to no time to check on ourselves and our mental health, or to take care of ourselves physically until life becomes very unpredictable and an unexpected accident occurs. This can send a hard-working lower class minority student, parent, or young adult to the hospital with medical fees reaching from 5,000 to 10,000 dollars. This can be extremely stressful for one person. They try to get help from the government with public healthcare but are

denied because they work more than 20 hours over the required limit and make 500 dollars over the average income, while going through private healthcare can cost you deductions up 1,000 dollars on top of taxes, giving them no money to survive. Every day, minorities are fighting—fighting for survival while fighting to take off the mask of healthcare oppression and mental oppression that these healthcare trap doors have circled us in.

We hear it all the time that affordable healthcare problems don't exist. We hear from a family standpoint

that mental health isn't real and we're just acting out for attention or "we let the devil lead us into temptation." Or we hear it from a school standpoint of not being focused enough or being the class clown. It can reach a criminal standpoint, where you're standing before the judge being charged with a crime for months or years because upholding the law and making an example of a minority person is more crucial than finding the underlying problems of why they are doing it. They see the behaviors. What they don't see: chemical imbalances, bipolar disorders, PTSD caused by traumatic circumstances in their life, or just stress and depression. Many people in our society are taught to believe mental health is only circumstantial when a person is white, but mental health in the minority community is unobtrusive until proven obtrusive for rebelling against laws that weren't created to protect us.

What if there is a simple solution to solving the mental health crisis as well as providing free or very affordable healthcare to people in need in our minority community? Just like Plato's Apology, we must think of the "affordable" government healthcare insurance system like a lazy thoroughbred horse that uses all these strict and outdated rules to trap minorities in the circle of mental health and depression, while barely making ends meet to survive. The government affordable healthcare system continues to remain ignorantly blind to the dire situation that all people need affordable healthcare. We need to introduce and protest, to provide free clinics in minority communities who really need these resources to survive living in borderline poverty situations. Just like the gadfly, the free clinics will help minorities escape some of these trap doors of struggling with mental illness, getting the medicine that they need to live a more fulfilling life, as well as uncovering the mask people live with day to day trying to cope with not feeling normal.

This free clinic can provide classes to the minority community talking about different mental illnesses and health

conditions, while finding solutions and resources to cope with them. Clinics can provide free X-rays, MRIs, and labs to find the best root cause of why and how we can fix it. They can offer free flu workshops, TB test shots, and COVID shots and can provide mentorships with physicians, residents, and nurse residents to help provide a more empathetic bias while learning the struggle many minority people face while going through the healthcare system. They can create safe places for all communities of color, LGBTQ+ people, and anyone else who would just need a bit of support here and there while surviving everyday life. Nobody deserves to make the choice of living without healthcare or not living at all. **(Helena Lee)**



Offer Better Meals in Prisons

We treat our people who are incarcerated as if they are less than human. Prisons spend anywhere from \$1 to \$3 daily on meals for inmates. That's less than a 10th of what an average person eats a day.

Correctional institutions are more concerned with their budgets/profits than they are about the welfare of those in their care. Jails are often understaffed and under-trained when it comes to caring for incarcerated people's lives.

Nutrition should be a simple yet prioritized issue when it comes to any human being. Prison food has been shown to be high in refined carbohydrates, sodium, and sugar. Many prisons compensate poor food quality with supplements. The problem with synthetic supplements and fortified meals is that they are difficult for the body to absorb since they are not in natural form. Due to the lack of essential nutrients, deeper issues can arise such as malnutrition and chronic health issues. Correctional inmates are 6.4 times more likely to get sick from food-related illnesses than members of the



general public (Brown/Fassler 2017). The University of Michigan's research on labor has shown that prisons do not use proper sanitation methods in their kitchens and that they are known for serving outdated/expired food. This is a manipulation of the Eighth Amendment legislation. It's mal-nourishing prisoners, a population that is completely dependent on their correctional facility's food—either prepared food in the chow halls or purchased foods in the commissary. In effect, inadequate diet followed by inadequate medical care is systematically degrading the health of the predominantly low-income, Latinx, and/or African Americans behind bars. In order to fully address the complexities of incarceration and food justice, public health must be considered in the fight against structural oppression. I encourage you to look into the condition in which incarcerated individuals are forced to live.

If we really try and focus on solutions of supporting those who are behind bars, rather than just allowing the spiral to continue, we could make some correction in the system. Helping people to focus on education, employment and their connections with loved ones could shift us as an economy and society. We are all people that have a truth behind our story. Not all people that are behind bars are ruthless; some just happen to fall short and get mixed up in the system. I have had many loved ones who have suffered a great deal and have been behind bars. They suffer alone most days, unless they have been fortunate enough to find support. This could be any of us, I just ask that you choose to help and not hinder the problem. **(Michelle Mack)**



Lower the Cost of College Tuition

Imagine going to the college of your dreams, then BAM! Your dreams are crushed, and you are hurt because the college of your dreams is way

more than you expected. Even with a scholarship and grants, it still seems to be out of the question. On average, a college's tuition

costs from \$5,000 a year all the way up to \$14,000, and there are some that are almost \$29,000. Those numbers are crazy. You can probably purchase a house with that price. An education is free when you're in grammar school, so why when you get to college is it up to almost 30 Gs? Your dream school and dream job should not be put on hold because you can't afford it. Being able to do what you dreamed of doing shouldn't have to cost so much. **(LaRonda Morris)**



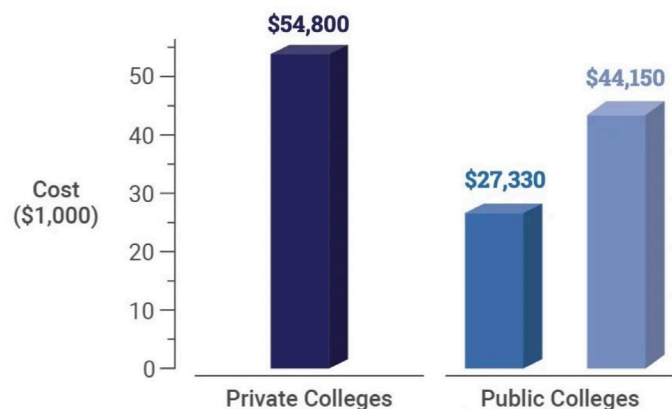
Reevaluate Money

I believe we need to eliminate the status of CLASS and rethink the "value of money." In general, everyone wants to be "rich." However, what most people mean is comfortable. The upper

classes don't understand that most people don't want the things they want. They don't care about the materialistic things they cannot have. Most people just want to not have to rob Peter to pay Paul. Most people don't want to have to choose food over lights.

The value of money can be so many things, and quite frankly the trade system seemed to work better. If the modern "value of money" changes, then truly what do people have? You have yachts and boats. Can you have meaningful conversations? do you feed the hungry? Can you help educate the uneducated? Or are you too busy trying to protect the meaningless things you hold onto and value? **(Cylinthia Olle)**

Average Cost of Attendance





Give Schizophrenics More than Medications

Imagine being out of touch with reality. When you look at the world around you and the people in it, things aren't the way they seem. In your perspective or understanding. Because of your state of mind, you can't communicate with others and others can't communicate with you. People around you notice that something is wrong so they seek help. This help can alter or change your life forever. Commonly or 100% of the time, you will be prescribed a strong medication. Scientists have developed medication for schizophrenia but still have not found a cure. These numerous strong medications have several side effects and can lead to long term health problems. Scientists haven't discovered everything about the human brain. Some of the medications aren't safe. So who will they test it on? a human? In the world we live in today, some scientists and doctors just want to be compensated. This is the reason why there are so many medications and why people are not being heard or understood.

As a society, I believe everyone should spread more awareness about this condition instead of prescribing medication. Doctors and psychiatrists should work with the person long term to figure out their needs. Once we figure out their needs, work with them to find the road to recovery with their mental health. **(Kimari Rogers)**



Treat Women's Rights as Human Rights!

If you have a mother, sister, or daughter, this should interest you. Women's rights have been marginalized the whole time. These include the right to live free from violence and discrimination, to enjoy their sexual and reproductive life, and to earn an equal wage. In 2022 in the United States many women still face discrimination, and it is still affecting women around the world.



Women should be able to live without fear of gender bias violence, including rape and sexual assault and non-consensual sex. Women are in high risk to be victims of sexual violence and are always called victims instead of survivors.

Women should have the right to decide about their sexual and reproductive life. They should be able to make decisions about their own body. This means they are entitled to equal access to health services like contraception and safe abortions, and to decide if they want to have children and if so, how many, when, and with who.

Women should have the same pay as men doing the same job. Sometimes, women are the subject of gender-based discrimination in the workplace. According to "Women's rights Amnesty International" the gender pay gap illustrates the inequality in salary that exists between women and men; the figures show that women currently earn roughly 77% of what men earn for the same work. Equal pay for the same work is a human right, but time and again women are denied access to a fair and equal wage. This leads to a lifetime of financial disparity for women, it prevents women from reaching independence, and it means an increased risk of poverty in later life. So, if you have a mother, sister, or daughter, don't be part of the problem: support and respect women's rights! **(Jessica Saldana)**



End Racism in Dental and Medical Care

I would like to discuss systematic racism and the fact that I can't get proper dental care for myself or my child because of the type of insurance that we have. I can be

wrong, but I believe telling someone they aren't allowed into a certain place because they don't meet specific criteria is indeed discrimination. I have personally experienced going to the doctor and leaving feeling like they did nothing to really help me. I have held many jobs, and I have never been told "treat this customer differently because they are spending less." There are some jobs where you must always do your best work, you must always present your best self. Why is this any different?

Why should my children leave the dentist being told they don't have any cavities when they really do? Why did they change the rules from all clinics accepting all insurances to only a select few accept "low income" or "state" insurance? Isn't it a given that once the rules changed those buildings would treat each state insurance receiving person less than a private insurance person? Why would they even make a state insurance or no insurance dental building? Why does that matter? And doesn't that make you wonder about the care you receive in the hospital because they are to accept all insurances? I can still always tell the difference. More African American people are dying in the hospital than other races, and this MUST be looked in to. We must do something about it! **(Naquila Taylor)**



Create New Mental Health Programs

You know that one family member that everyone said is crazy, they have lost their mind, they do not have it all together. I have yet to hear they are very

intelligent, knowledgeable, kindhearted. This is how mental illness was characterized amongst a

family, amongst our friends even, in conversations with strangers. It is sad that we have labeled those that are mentally ill as being crazy. The textbook called *Psychopathology* states that 50% of adults in the United States will develop at least one mental illness during their lifetime. This number was established in 2011, so what do you think the number is now in the year 2022? A mental disorder is like Medusa: her outer image is so very ugly, yet she once was a gorgeous woman. There is an entire beauty hidden inside the people that are called mentally ill. So don't you think we should change how we perceive the mentally ill?

Psychopathology defined a mental disorder as a syndrome characterized by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. While you could have any one of these affecting your lifestyle, there are few that get help for many different reasons. I had declined help for many reasons because I didn't want a diagnosis of mental illness in my medical report. I was a mom and college student looking into a great career. Who is going to hire me knowing that I was mentally ill? Just having a label made me think I had destroyed my life forever. I didn't feel that there was any place for the person that I would be able to talk to.

Yet, I have found a program that is located in Milwaukee, WI. Tosha Wiggins has built a program called "Speak Wellness, Behavior Health and Counseling"; she calls it trap therapy. She uses urban music to drive meaningful and dynamic conversations around various behavioral health therapy. She says her primary 9001 is for people to experience a fun laid-back environment all while driving home how important mental health is. The sessions that she holds are also open to the public. This is a program that I believe that we should pilot here in Madison, Wisconsin. You would be able to speak freely, you would be able to come if you choose to, and most importantly for me, there is no medical record documenting any mental illness for you. **(Mechele Williams)**

FROM TAPESTRIES TO STEWS:

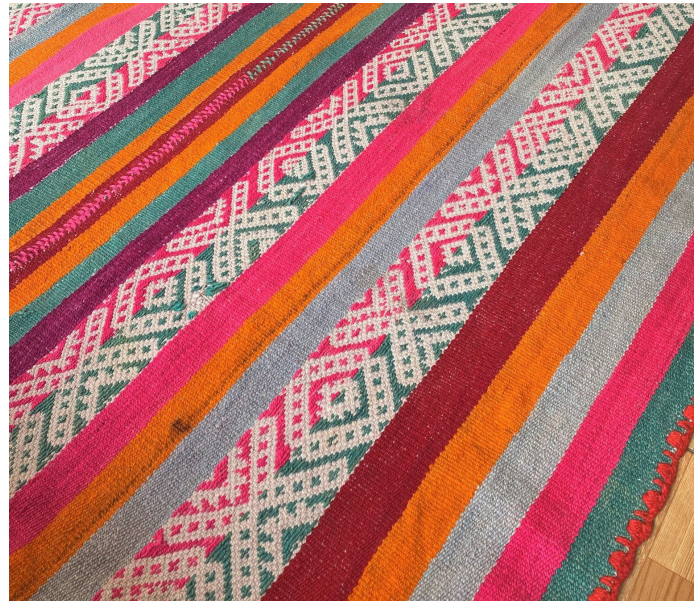
CELEBRATING ODYSSEY THROUGH METAPHORS

After Jonathon Adeyanju wrote in an essay that “Odyssey is a tapestry,” or a heavy cloth woven with rich, often varicolored designs or scenes, we decided to use that metaphor as a theme in our yearbook. Each student created a tapestry metaphor as well as another metaphor (Odyssey is a stew, Odyssey is a marathon) to describe the Odyssey Class of 2022.

Odyssey is a Tapestry

Odyssey is a tapestry
An imperfect mastery
Of beautiful stories woven together
Some who began in tragedy
Before it started, no one truly knew each other
Now we’re the family that chooses each other.
(Jonathon Adeyanju)

Odyssey is a tapestry,
Woven with love and success.
Odyssey is a tapestry,
Threads made up of everyone involved,
staff, students, and teachers.
Odyssey is a tapestry!
Beautiful and unique,
and every single person views the beauty underneath differently.
(Zaria Hunter)



Odyssey is a tapestry.
Odyssey is fun and colorful;
Odyssey is durable and strong.
Odyssey is long-lasting. **(Cynthia Gonzalez)**

Odyssey is a tapestry
We all have stories
We all have experiences
We all have dreams
that are combined
And turned into art

Odyssey is a tapestry
Everyone is a learner
Everyone is an artist
Everyone is performing their ideal perfectness
to be combined and turned
into a masterpiece in the classroom **(Ericka Booley)**



Odyssey is a tapestry
Diversity with different races
Becoming one inside the tapestry
Opening our different colors
And making a beautiful image
That became our Odyssey **(Erendira Giron Cruz)**

Odyssey is a tapestry
There's a thread for each culture
There's a thread for each race
There's a thread for each idea
There's a thread for each of us
Odyssey is a tapestry. **(Talaisha Goodwan)**

Odyssey is a tapestry, decorated to hang on the wall,
detailed to make you dream yourself in another land, so far,
with bright and crisp colors that make you smile.
It's like floating on a Persian rug through beautiful clouds.
(Crystal Johnson)

Odyssey is a tapestry
Holding your back
when life turns into a roller coaster
(Jessica Saldana Ortega)

Odyssey is a tapestry,
Filled with vibrant colors
Heavy enough to always hold us down
Unique in each step
Not being the same for anyone, any place
Never knowing where it began
Or when it will end
Yet continue to look in amazement
as your Odyssey continues.
(Mechele Williams)

Odyssey is a tapestry
It comes in all shapes and colors
and together it makes one beautiful picture
that has a hundred meanings of its own
(Mariam Maiga)

Odyssey is a tapestry, a beautiful cloth
Made up of different pieces from everywhere and different eras.
Each piece with its own full story. Each thread unique.
Each piece is perfect, together creating a cloth
that can provide you with whatever you need.
(Will Nunn)



Odyssey is a tapestry, rich with culture and knowledge
 Diverse in both heritage and experience
 Woven with the fabric of discussion and honesty
 Heavy with information and affluent in comprehension
 Abundant with copious amounts of the colors of history
(Yael Jimenez)

Odyssey is a tapestry,
 Detailed and rich in colors,
 Telling a story about everyone
 From different parts of the world,
 Drapery that combines us all
 Into one beautiful creation. **(Yasmine Dobbins)**



Odyssey is a tapestry
 Odyssey consists of many students from different backgrounds.
 Odyssey is taking heavy weight off your shoulders when you feel like you are falling down.
 Odyssey does not judge us based off the color of our skin.
 Odyssey is colorful and shines bright like a diamond.
 Odyssey is a tapestry. **(Amanda Bell)**

Odyssey is a tapestry, each person representing threads of fabric, being woven together to make up a beautiful story, displayed for everyone to see, each piece bringing its own meaning to the story.
(Brandyn Bess)



Odyssey is a tapestry because it represents a beautiful picture of a community of people striving for one thing in common: education. Each piece of thread represents the people in a tight knit family. The thread is of assorted colors, and the shapes are people from different backgrounds coming together to serve one another. **(Mashell McCarter)**

Odyssey is a tapestry of many people reaching for the same goal, many cultures being represented in Odyssey. We speak on things from decades ago that many may think mean nothing now but they literally mean everything that today stands on. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "Injustice anywhere means justice everywhere" many years ago. That still stands, and he himself quotes people he read about, learned from, took something from, and revised. Odyssey is exactly what Jonathon said—a tapestry—because it's different people, groups, and decades all having the same meaning, which is beauty. It's art all in one place. **(Capri Booker)**

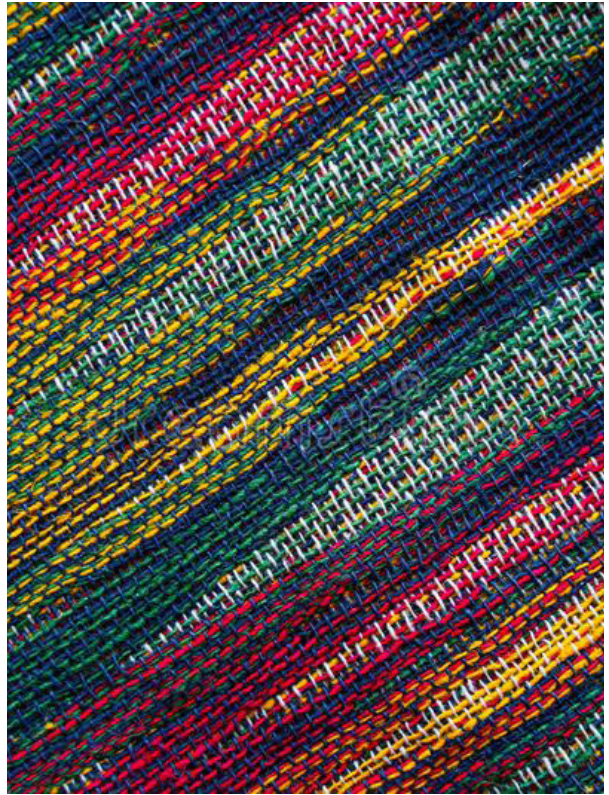
Odyssey is a tapestry like my bed—soft, warm, safe, and comfortable—, but just like my bed, I still sweat in it.
(Jermaine Booe)

Odyssey is a tapestry. It's a collection of beautiful images put together to make a masterpiece. **(Kayanna Branch)**

Odyssey is a tapestry. We are all cut from the same cloth, just different sections of it. We all last longer than others, just like the material we are made of, but when it's time to go, we all have the same destination. **(Ontario Frazier)**

Odyssey is a tapestry, hanging on a wall with an artistic road map of a journey to the final destination. There is a hidden road map through its art, shown entailing the great Odyssey journey. **(Kimari Rogers)**

Odyssey is a tapestry, a woven cloth mixed with different fabrics of our community. Each embroidered, sewed-in piece shows our individuality for what we love. The stitches are the connections that we make that keep us together even when times get hard and we want to quit, while the images others see reflect the journey we took together. We may have some imperfect spots, but when it all ties together it's something we can all call our own. Our adventure. And our purpose in life. **(Helena Lee)**



Odyssey is a tapestry, with so many different people coming together to create one common pattern of success. Young and old, black and white, well off and poor, we all come together to learn together as one. Different colors, shapes, and shades all combine to form a tapestry of hope and victory. **(Reginald Moore)**

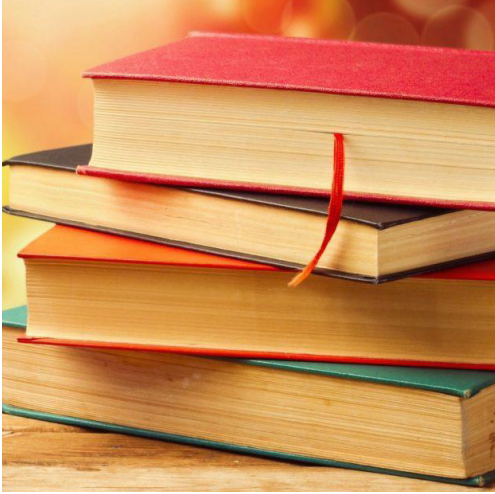


Odyssey is a tapestry, tight as a wool quilt. **(LaRonda Morris)**

Art can have a lot of meanings and interpretations: just like a tapestry, everyone in the class is knit together so differently by their own unique design, or culture. The fact that we're all in this class and working towards a common goal is what knits us together. All these individuals comprise/work together towards creating a bigger picture. In doing this, we bring awareness and strive toward helping our community. Odyssey is a tapestry, part of an ongoing story. As a class, we are one group that is a continuation of this program as moving forward, us moving forward, we'll be able to still be a part of Odyssey but be at a different area of our lives. Taking a step back and seeing the ongoing things that are happening, we see the overall tapestry of the program. **(Michelle Mack)**

Odyssey is a tapestry, filled with many souls, with souls that are strong and imperfect but come together soft and beautiful. **(Naquila Taylor)**

More Odyssey Metaphors

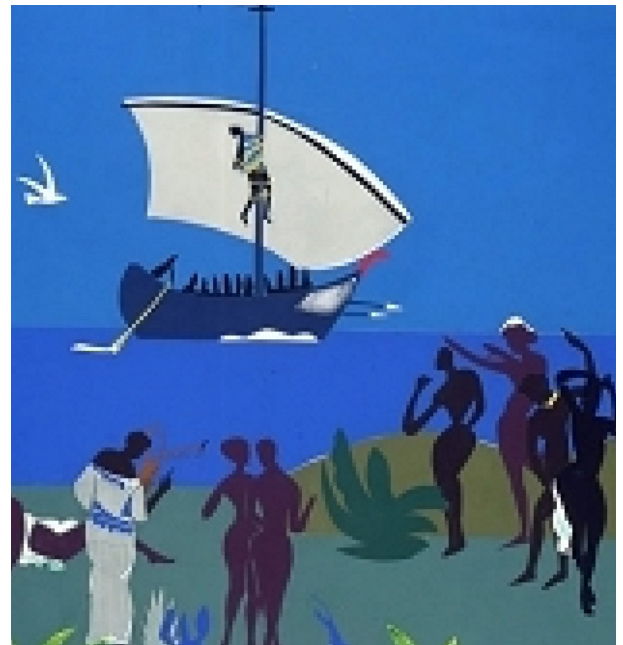


Odyssey is a book
 Odyssey became our introduction when we sat in class.
 Each person who came to the classroom created their own chapter.
 Each person became their own main character,
 and each person read the story of their lives.
 Everyone appreciates the chapter of each one
 and what we have read.
 Odyssey is a book. **(Erendira Giron Cruz)**

Odyssey is understanding.
 Odyssey doesn't let you fall behind.
 Odyssey is family.
 One falls, and we all fall. **(Cynthia Gonzalez)**

Odyssey is a refuge.
 Sheltered from the fear of pursuing your dreams,
 Odyssey is a refuge.
 Safe place to speak your mind,
 Odyssey is a refuge.
 Asylum for new beginners,
 Odyssey is MY refuge. **(Talaisha Goodwan)**

Odyssey is a journey,
 Something like sailing seas, taking day by day
 to find out just how much closer we are to our destination,
 excited to get to where we're going,
 yet noticing just how far we come! **(Zaria Hunter)**



Odyssey is a journey.
 Odyssey is a journey . . .
 A journey through self-discovery
 A journey through self-love
 A journey through reading and writing
 A journey I thought I would never take, after I walked away from a toxic place
 A journey that led me to think and believe there was something more to my purpose of life
 A journey that became an adventure to find validation in myself instead of others
 A journey that taught me I'm not alone and I have 30 brothers and sisters
 A journey that I will continue
 A journey that has opened my mind
 To new possibilities and new opportunities
 A journey I am thankful for
 An Odyssey journey I will never forget. **(Helena Lee)**

Odyssey is a treasure
 You're excited by the thought of what's inside
 And once you find it, you're not disappointed. **(Mariam Maiga)**

Odyssey is a cloud
 When the sun comes up
 Odyssey is as full of colors
 As a delicious Greek salad **(Jessica Saldana Ortega)**

Odyssey is a beautiful mess, an unusual test,
 A flower that bloomed to bless.
 I'm just excited to see who's next. **(Jonathon Adeyanju)**

Odyssey is a convoy
 As a class we take a journey to
 discover our voices, talents, and abilities
 while supporting, watching over, and complimenting
 each other. **(Ericka Booe)**



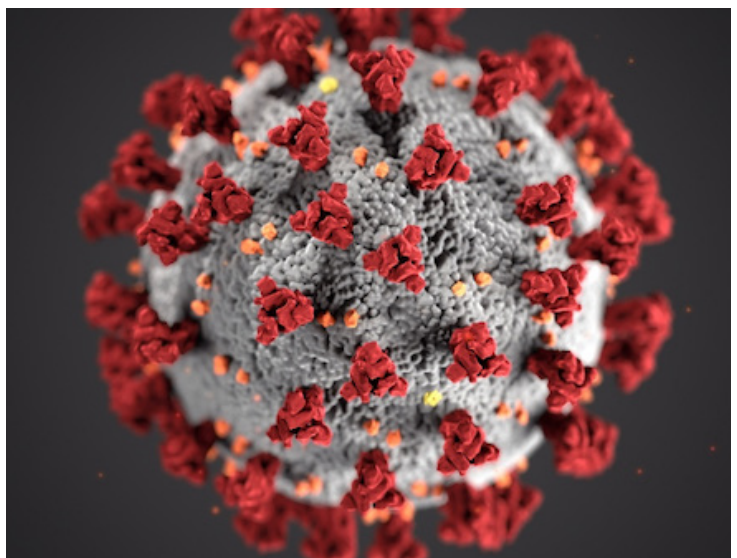
Odyssey is an afghan
 Each piece is different
 Yet comes together gracefully
 To make a larger display for all to see.
(Mechele Williams)

Odyssey is a service fraternity, a group of
 people with the same common interest. The
 service fraternity I am a part of provides me
 with a great social circle of people who are
 there for each other, helping everyone reach
 their goals. **(Mashell McCarter)**

Odyssey is a song; it gives us big visions and
 the ending accomplishments are a melody in
 our ears that will last forever.
(Naquila Taylor)

Odyssey is a virus. Even with so many symptoms
 causing a lot of bumps in the road, Odyssey still
 finds a way to heal and become something
 great. A virus is only temporary; it gets better or
 goes away with medication or vaccine!
(Kayanna Branch)

Odyssey is a marathon. It's going to test you;
 you will feel every emotion in this class. It's a
 journey that seems never-ending. Everyday life
 will keep putting conflicts in the way. Stay ten
 toes down, and I promise the reward is amazing.
 Crossing that victory lap makes it feel like you
 can keep running. **(Ontario Frazier)**



Odyssey is a ball of clay.
At the beginning you don't know what you will end up with,
but in the end is a beautiful varicolored vase,
overflowing with depth and character.

Odyssey is a ball of clay.
It takes more than meets the eye and hundreds of years
to have something that looks simple but is more complex
than you could ever imagine,
being formed in the layers of the earth
and finally coming to the light to become something more,
something beautiful and something unique.

Shaped by collaboration and team work,
a ball of clay can only become a vase with help, patience, and love,
as well as a steady hand that will help guide it and form it
to an elegant vase that everyone can be proud of.
Odyssey is amazing! **(Yael Jimenez)**



Odyssey is a puzzle piece. To me, odyssey is a community. Being in the Odyssey class makes me feel aligned, like-minded because we're in search of overcoming life obstacles and wanting to learn more to do better. Odyssey is part of my own personal puzzle. It makes me feel like I'm where I'm supposed to be and it's a perfect fit. I feel connected to my classmates and their different cultures. I feel I can relate to them in my life because we have had similar life experiences. We connect on the idea that, culturally, our struggles may be different, but we're related in the sense that we're learning about the world and about history. Like puzzle pieces, we all have our different struggles or gaps that make us unique, but it is because of those gaps that we all fit together in the larger puzzle of the course and in life. Other people involved like tutors, coaches, and many more are pieces that make up what Odyssey is all about. **(Michelle Mack)**

Odyssey is a blessing to me. I'm dealing with so much. I'm holding back tears; I'm homeless right now. I'm trying my best to hold it together. I have a three-year-old to fight for. Although it seems hard now, I will fight to be in class and on Zoom. This class is my safe place. They paid my rent even though it might be too late. The school tried; I tried my best. I gave my last and so did Odyssey Project. This soon shall pass. I can't wait to send Odyssey my new keys to a new apartment!!!! Odyssey is a blessing to me. **(Cinderria Harwell)**

Odyssey is a song. You can't touch it, but it can touch you. **(Jermaine Booeey)**

Odyssey is a blizzard of snow
And we the students are the snowflakes
Each one different but unique in their own way
Our journey has had a squall or two

But we all came together to fight through.
Most of us knew this blizzard would
Change our lives, but I had no idea it would be
This way. I am forever grateful to my friends I
Have made on this journey, and know that I am
Not alone. **(Yasmine Dobbins)**

Odyssey is a winter wonderland, a beautiful
scene or landscape, filled with thousands of
twinkling lights, attractions, and joyful elves.
(Crystal Johnson)



Odyssey is a birthing, something you hear about, think
about, then BOOM you've applied, gotten accepted,
grown a bond, and watched everyone grow with you. You
get to watch everyone you met months ago expand into
butterflies, the best they can be, and continue after. It's
never ending, even after you graduate. A group of people
you never knew become a part of you and continue to be
if you let them. **(Capri Booker)**

Odyssey is my life. It has twists and turns that I am happy
to have come across and defeat. Odyssey is raising
children. A journey to learning how not to damage but
uplift your children. **(Cylinthia Olle)**

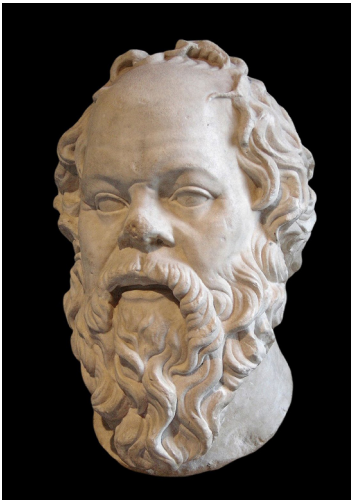
Odyssey is a stew. Individually, the
ingredients won't do much, but
collectively the carrots, onions, bell
peppers, and tomatoes all combine with
potatoes and broccolis, making a delicious
victory feast. **(Reginald Moore)**

Odyssey is a video game: no matter how
many times you fail, you can try again.
Odyssey is a video game because on the
areas that seem unbeatable, there is
always a strategy of how to accomplish the
task. Odyssey is a video game because
even though you pressed pause on school,
you can press play again by attending the
Odyssey Project. **(Kimari Rogers)**



FAMOUS SAYINGS ABOUT EDUCATION

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*
—T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets



“The unexamined life is not worth living.” Socrates

“To be fond of learning is to be at the gate of knowledge.” Chinese proverb

“Wisdom giveth life to them that have it.” Ecclesiastes 7:12

“I am still learning.” favorite saying of Michelangelo

“The doors of wisdom are never shut.” Benjamin Franklin

“I cannot live without books.” Thomas Jefferson

“How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book!” Henry David Thoreau

“Education must enable one to sift and weigh evidence, to discern the true from the false, the real from the unreal, and the facts from the fiction . . . Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” —Martin Luther King, Jr.



“Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great state university of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.”
—Report of the Board of Regents, UW, 1894



“That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you’ve understood all your life, but in a new way.” —Doris Lessing

“Higher education can’t be a luxury; it’s an economic imperative that every family in America should be able to afford . . . Education was the gateway to opportunity for me and Michelle.”
—Barack Obama

