

# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## ODYSSEY FAMILIES



*I am blessed to be in the Odyssey Project. This is my bridge towards breaking a horrible cycle of poverty. Everything that I learn I come back after class and teach my children about. My hope is that they retain this amazing information so that they recognize how amazing they are and how much they are loved. ~Charlienne Cotto*



*Without Odyssey I would never be able to become the type of person I want to be for my son. It's truly a process that touches my life and will live through the lasting impact it has left on myself, my son, and everyone else it touches. ~Tracker Dunn*

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*The Odyssey Project is a rock. In the daily swirling madness that I find is my world, it helps me find myself and holds me up. It's inspiring how a collaboration between people who truly care can turn into something so big and strong. I know I am not just learning about the important humanities subjects, but rather about the right way to live. I hope to master this state of being so that I can truly become a rock for my son. I hope I can carry that knowledge and pride with me for the rest of my life and pass on the fruit of this experience to my son and others. ~Tracker Dunn*

*This is why I chose Odyssey  
and why I appreciate Odyssey choosing me:  
so that I can be successful for me  
and also for my pride and joy,  
my family.  
~Toshiana Northington*



*I would love for my daughter to be  
able to have this experience going  
through Odyssey as I did because  
there will be no other opportunity  
like it. It is hard and frustrating at  
times, but if you put your mind to  
it and try and get help when you  
need it, you'll be just fine.  
~Kelli Green*



# WHO SAID IT?

*Find out the authors of these quotes in the Oracle of January 15, 2014, when all students make a case for continuing with the Odyssey Project for second semester.*

Every Wednesday when class is over I cannot wait until it is time for class again. This is the place where I want to be; this is the place where I belong.

This class has made me grow up in many ways and has awakened me. I'm not ready to go back to sleep—ever!

I believe I have not only grown as a student but also as a person and mother. For me a dictionary is like my third eye and stays in my bag.

Before this class, I was somewhat intimidated by art, philosophy, historical documents, and classical literature. I feel blessed to have had so much caring instruction in all these areas. The homework is always thought provoking and challenging. Not only am I learning but often my whole family learns as I am often on fire with ideas inspired by this class.

Getting into the Odyssey Project made me visualize my future. I have learned so much so far, yet I feel I have not learned enough!

I want to achieve my dream and make my family proud of me for once in my adult life. I feel I have a place where I belong in the Odyssey family,

which means so much to me.

I will not stop until I get at least a master's degree, although my aim is for a Ph.D. Whenever I leave my daughter to come for class, she tells me exactly what I tell her every morning: "Have a good time and make us proud."

With the Odyssey Project, my soul recharges like the sunlight directing the rays into existence.

I have gained great knowledge and understanding about reading and am improving my writing in the Odyssey class.

Going on the field trips introduced me to new things I probably would have never seen or done.



I've never participated in a class as much as I have this year. I'm a person who does not like to speak in front of class, but you have changed that about me.

Don't take this wonderful opportunity away from me when I'm half way through.

Each classmate is an important piece. Each instructor, counselor, tutor, and academic staff that is here every Wednesday night to help, listen, and give all of us their time is part of this wonderful mosaic called the Odyssey.

It is the first time I feel I am a part of a class even though I have already finished many credit classes. I found a lot of support in this project and never will be rejected by my teachers when I need help.

First semester helped me realize that I want to put more work into my learning, so I will



be working harder next time. I never knew I could care so much about how I sound through words.

Even though I've been the class clown, this class has given me more than I

expected . . . and I truly can't wait till next semester.

This class really opens your mind to think outside the box. It's exciting to learn about so much. I know I can do better or die trying next semester.

Even with all that's gone on in my life, I have truly enjoyed what I've learned so much.

Not only am I growing as a learner, I'm growing as a person. When you come to class and everyone is ready and willing to participate, it makes for an electric environment. I will not let go until I wake up from my dream to live in that dream.



Odyssey has helped me connect to a lot of useful outlets and inspired me to be the best I can be.

I always thought I hated reading, but I'm now discovering just how much I actually like it. I hope to grow to love it.

When I first began this journey, I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I thought that this was just "school" and I would have "teachers." Boy, was I

fooled! What I got instead was a wonderful team of inspirational “leaders” who care in an amazing way about education, enlightenment, and seeing people succeed.

The Frederick Douglass writing struck a side of my mind that I didn’t know existed.

Being surrounded with so many driven people is a great energy to have while learning. I don’t know what I would do if I wasn’t in the Odyssey program next semester. The people have become family, and the education has truly become second nature. I love Odyssey!!!

I have learned so much about myself this semester. I’ve learned how creative I really think. I’m now interested in history, writing poems, and looking at different art works. Through Odyssey my whole world is changing. I learned that I can learn.

I appreciate this second chance, and I promise from here on out I will give my all.

This class has been overwhelmingly interesting. Literature always seemed hard, but this class made me discover . . . I am actually interested and fascinated by it.

I expect to remember this journey for the rest of my life. I have more self-worth because I have been blessed with this opportunity to know people who believe in me and want to remove obstacles in my way of getting an education.

I have learned how to open up and be more outspoken. Before the Odyssey Project, I had never heard of William Blake, Socrates, or Romare Bearden.

I wish to continue because the journey is life to me. I find myself hungry for what this program offers me: knowledge, support, friends, a new lease on my life, and a newfound joy to learning information. I adore this class.



# NOVEMBER 9 BADGER FOOTBALL GAME

Review by Derick McCray



Intensity was high in the mighty Camp Randall Stadium. It's been a while since I've been to a college football game. With the pregame festivities going on, I knew when kickoff came it was going to be electrifying.

In the first quarter, James White scored the first touchdown of the game. BYU marched down to the Badger 18 and stalled out with 2:40 left in the first quarter. They had to settle for a field goal.

The second quarter was a see-saw battle between defenses, but the Badgers' defense came out with a final stand and the offense

went to work, scoring a field goal. Later in the second quarter, the Badgers moved the ball down the field, and with 14 seconds left in the half, Stave scored a touchdown on a four-yard pass to James White. The score at the half was 17-3.

Half time was great as we heard the band play its rendition of "Phantom of the Opera." The choreography was amazing. The Badger fans were so amazed when the Phantom stood in the northern students' section and blew his trumpet as the crowd cheered on.

The Badgers opened the second half with a field goal. In the third quarter, BYU marched down the field and scored a touchdown to make it a three-point point game, but Stave passed to James White for another touchdown, making the score 27-10.

In the fourth quarter, I saw so much enthusiasm from the crowd. "There's no fan like a Badger fan," said one fan. Another was so wound up over a wrong call but felt a lot better when the flag was taken back. James White seemed the work horse of the game to me. It wasn't the win they wanted but it's a win, with a final score of 27-17.

I would like to thank Jeff Russell (Dean of Continuing Studies) and the Odyssey Project for the opportunity to attend this Badger football game.



# MOVED TO TEARS:

## A Madison Symphony Orchestra Review

By Starr Miles

The Madison Symphony Orchestra concert on November 17, 2013, with guest violinist Augustine Hadelich was wonderful. He is truly gifted. The music he played was moving, exciting, and spiritual at times. I was filled with so much emotion by his playing along with the orchestra that I felt moved to tears.



My daughter Zowie recognized one of her former classmates from Middleton High School: she was playing third violin in the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Zowie said that she was a very talented musician while in high school.

It was hard not to clap in between segments of his number. You have to wait until the piece is entirely completed. It's a little odd at first because you want to show your appreciation and enjoyment, but the applause is distracting to the artist and musicians and disconnects the flow of the piece.

After Augustine Hadelich's first piece, he was given a much deserved and long awaited four-minute standing ovation. Then the renowned violinist gave the audience a surprise: an encore solo performance which was exquisite! This young man is truly gifted and at one with his instrument.



John DeMain is a very powerful conductor. He had full command of his orchestra, and they played precisely to every stroke of his baton. He conducted a variety of musical pieces from classical to jazz. The orchestra held your attention through their score and made you feel the music.

During the intermission I took a few pictures.

That Sunday was a rainy, windy day outside, but you would never have known that by the joy and the beautiful aura we experienced inside the concert hall. Our spirits soared with the glow of lights, the connection with the audience, and the sounds of music we heard and enjoyed. It was a wonderful afternoon. Thank you!

Program: Kernis, "Too Hot Toccata"; Lalo, "Symphonie Espagnole" with Augustin Hadelich, Violin; Rachmaninoff, "Symphony No. 2"

Tickets donated by Carroll Heideman

# CHANNELING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Dear *Southern Quarterly Review* Editor:

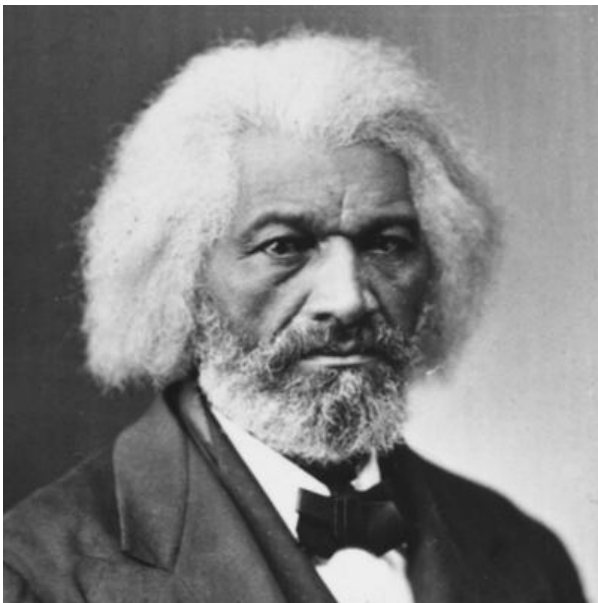


I abhor your editorial statements and am compelled to denounce the aggravating injustice and cruelty of slavery. Slavery is not for man, and man is not for slavery. Slavery has proven its ability to divest us of the human rights which God

has given each and every man. There is no liberty in slavery; there is bondage in slavery. There is no comfort in slavery; there is grief in slavery. There is no such thing as Christian slavery; only man's slavery. Slavery is blasphemy and should be abolished.  
(**LaPrice Black**)



Just because we are slaves doesn't mean that is our destiny, nor does it make us happy. You think we sought pleasure in receiving those harsh blows to the shoulder blades, one by one, from the thick cow skin drawing heavy, dark red blood down our backs, or being



snatched away from our parents before age one, or having to watch our backs at all time to make sure we weren't going to be whipped, or being kidnapped in the lonely dark, not knowing what was going to happen? Having to endure all those conditions was far from enjoyable. (**Kelli Green**)



What does your dream of liberty look like? What greater man are you than I, a Negro? I read from the same Bible and pray to the same God as you. Could you imagine how different your life would be if you were simply born a couple

shades darker with curly dark hair? Would you be able to stand the pain of the beatings or the heartache of possibly losing your family? What if your wife were taken away from your protection to lie with your master and to bear his child? How would you survive? How many intelligent thoughts would you put together without the opportunity to read or write? (**Isis Bernard**)



Your benighted slaveholder's soul—bereft of spiritual buoyancy—uses the cruel tool of the Christianity of this land to cut like a saw, drawing blood with sharp teeth, dividing white from black. It holds no benevolence toward the Negro who plows your field in the scorching sun. The only basking is in brotherhood—the beatitude of blackness that weeps in belittled men, women, and children who are forced to swallow swill as if they are swine! We are suffused with an impenetrable spirit of hope

for freedom, which is the brightest sunbeam of our existence. Without dissimulation, I will endeavor to disturb your barbaric, devilish ideal of entitlement—a propensity belonging so naturally to the white man—and torment your mind with the most miserable, most dehumanizing reality which is the tragic abyss of slavery. **(Jamie Hanson)**



The God I serve is understanding, so please do not use his name in vain. All my life I was a slave. I do not even know my age, but I was smart enough to teach myself how to read and write! Mr. Editor, write what you want to write, but you will not take my soul from me! **(Latrice White)**



There is nothing Christian about slavery; putting those words together is the essence of hypocrisy. Let me make something clear to you: we dream of liberty, we want freedom, we deserve freedom.

We have the right to it in this land, for the Declaration of Independence clearly states that every man is created equal and has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Slavery falls into none of that. **(Zeynab Ahmed)**



What are the principles of Christianity—acceptance or rejection, love or hate, good or evil, morality or immorality? Authentic Christianity is giving—not robbing; it is life-giving—not killing; it is rescuing—not oppressing; it is entertaining—not torturing. “Christian slavery” is only the cloak of hypocrites used to justify slavery and cover their sin—atrocities, deceit, and greed. No

one is willing to be beaten for minor mistakes without a say. No one is willing to be treated as livestock by being fed like a pig. No one is willing to be regarded as a commodity to be bought and sold. It is inhuman, brutal, and merciless to allow this dehumanizing institution, slavery, to continue forever. **(Milli Lau)**



In all my years of slavery, I have never basked in the sunshine with happiness. Christian slavery is a mockery of God and of all things that are good. How can you say that the Negro does not dream of liberty? Were Negro slaves not once free men? Were

they not in their homes leading honest lives until the white man kidnapped them, took them from their homes, and robbed them of the freedom that they were born with? Christian slavery is evil. Christian slavery is a false Christianity. I have had pious masters that would have a whip in one hand and a bible in the other. They would recite scriptures from the Bible while beating a man within an inch of his life. We must rise above this dehumanizing system of slavery and empower ourselves with truth, love, and justice for all! **(Nyagoya Hoth)**



# RECOGNIZING PREJUDICE: AFRICAN EDITION

*"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."—Nelson Mandela*



## **A Tough Skin for Ignorance By Nyagooa Hoth**

My family came here as refugees from Sudan but grew up in the United States. Throughout school, the black kids would make fun of me because I was from Africa.

It really got bad when I started middle school. I remember a time during class at the beginning of the year there was a group of black kids that just made fun of me unrelentingly. They said things like "She lived in a hut and bit off heads of chickens," and they would make reference to the Lion King song, all the while laughing. I was very hurt by this, although by that time I had developed a tough skin for such ignorance.

The main thing that I did not understand is why black people showed such prejudice towards me. I think back to just 40 or 50 years earlier when black people suffered similar prejudice from white people. I felt I was not accepted by black people. That would leave me to feel like double the prejudice that a black person felt.

Although it would be great if people could move past race and be "color blind," I realize that racism is still around. Not only did I feel that there are some racist white people still around that will never accept me, but I also felt that there are some prejudiced black people that also might never accept me. I felt that this was unfair.

I wonder about this still to this day: do the black people that are prejudiced towards African people make the connection between the way they treat Africans and the way black people were treated about 40 or 50 years ago here in America?



## **Not Just a Tribe By Lucia Chikowero**

I would like to point out a few things. In South Africa there is no "Bantu tribe." Bantu means "people" in the Zulu language that is spoken in South Africa. Bantu specifically refers to a group of over 600 closely-related languages spoken in Central, East-Central, and Southern Africa. . . . We find languages like Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Zulu, Xhosa, Shona, Chichewa, Nyanja, Oshiwambo, etc. . . .

Bantu people have a lot in common, although they also have some cultural differences. So when you talk of Bantu people, you are referring to people who speak these languages, and they are not just a single tribe. A tribe is a comparatively small group of people that are generally in the same area and have common ancestry, language, customs, character, and so forth. The word "tribe" itself is viewed negatively by most Africans because of its roots in colonialism. It conveys a negative connotation of a timeless, unchanging past, so people would rather use "ethnic group" than "tribe."

# EXTREMELY BUSY, BUT GOOD BUSY

## MEET TINEISHA SCOTT (ODYSSEY '04)

Tineisha Scott remembers running out of the house in the middle of the night with no shoes on, scared, hiding to get away from the abuse and drug use overrunning her home. Today, Tineisha works helping families in similar situations.

A single mother of three who identifies herself as African American, Caucasian, and Native American, Tineisha was one of the 30 students accepted into the very first Odyssey class in 2003.

“When I was at my lowest,” Tineisha writes, “and had no one to turn to, no one to support me, the Odyssey Project picked me up and provided me with the tools I needed for a brighter future. It was the key to the door of a new beginning.”

Tineisha combined her six Odyssey credits from UW with coursework from Madison College and went on to Edgewood College to earn a bachelor’s degree with honors in Psychology.



“Both my parents were addicted to crack cocaine. My father was in and out of prison,” says Tineisha. “I was born in Madison, and I wanted to change the cycle of poverty in my family. I became the first college graduate in my family and out of all my friends.”

In December 2011 at Edgewood College, Tineisha became the first Odyssey student to earn a master’s degree. Tineisha is a licensed marriage and family therapist, a social worker, and a former coordinator at a shelter for women and children.

At home, Tineisha’s eldest daughter is in ninth grade and talks about college in her future. “My educational success has already had an impact on my children,” Tineisha says. “The Odyssey Project helped me build confidence in myself, gave me inspiration, and offered me a support system—something that was so foreign to me.”

After working for a few months for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare as an Initial Assessment social worker, Tineisha was offered a new job as a social worker for Child Protective Services in Dane County. She also does Anger Management Therapy Groups through Community Psychological Services as an independent contractor.

Of her current life Tineisha writes, "I am blessed. I absolutely love it! I have been extremely busy, but good busy!"

From being a scared child running out of the house to get away from trouble, Odyssey graduate Tineisha Scott has become a professionally trained social worker assisting families in crisis right here in our community.

## FREE TO LIVE MY LIFE IN VICTORY

### MEET ALUMNA FELICIA JONES '09

The Odyssey Project in 2008-2009 is where I got my feet wet in pursuing my educational goal to become a Social Worker. Prior to Odyssey, I had not been in school in 22 years outside of getting my GED in December 2007.

After Odyssey, I started at Madison College September 2011 as a part-time student in the Liberal Arts Transfer Program. My first semester at Madison College I held a 4.0 G.P.A. My second semester I earned a 3.8. I have remained on the Dean's List ever since. I also was nominated to be inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, Beta Beta Psi Chapter, in September 2012. I was also nominated by my instructors and advisor to become a Student Ambassador as well as a Board Member for the Vice President Student Advisory Board.

Before all these wonderful achievements took place, I had quite a few struggles, very hard life-threatening challenges. Although we had our differences, my mother and sister stood by me during hard times.

To describe some tragic, life-altering events that I had to overcome to be where I am today, I will be using a poem I wrote that won a prize in an Odyssey Project sonnet competition.

My sonnet called "Restoration" begins like this:

*I started off having a pretty good life,  
Being a dedicated mother and a loving wife.*



My husband and I grew up together. We had two lovely children and got married before our third child was born. I was a postal employee, and my husband was a brick mason. We both made good money. I left my husband in 2006 and moved to Madison. I transferred to the Post Office here in Madison and made a good living as a single parent up until 2004.

*Then I turned from that familiar road,  
I never knew how my life would soon unfold.  
There was so much pain misery and strife.  
All I tried then was to end my life.*

I became chemically dependent upon alcohol, crack cocaine, and marijuana. I lost my home, gave my children to my mother-in-law, and sank deep into the world of an addict. That November of 2004, I took 175 triazadones 200mg, drank a liter and a half of vodka, and smoked over a half ounce of crack cocaine. A friend found me unconscious and called the paramedics. I woke up three days later in the ICU of Meriter Hospital. The doctor had stated to me it was medically impossible for me to be alive. I did all that because I did not know how to stop getting high, and I did not want to be an addict.

In 2005 I went to jail for the very first time. There I met the jail chaplain who would later become a good friend and a very influential mentor in my recovery process. I also became part of the criminal justice system, where I was placed on probation. My addiction continued to rapidly progress. I made the news three times in 2006. I was beat unconscious and sexually assaulted. I was almost the third victim in a double murder in which my friend murdered two people. I showed up after he had murdered two people, and I left immediately after seeing all the blood in his apartment. I later found out the bodies were in another apartment. I went to jail again, and that is where the healing started to begin that August of 2006. I went into treatment from jail, did fairly well. but again that April through September of 2006 my addiction resurfaced greater than before. This time I sought help immediately and returned to treatment.

My Sobriety date is my daughter's birthday: September 21, 2007. I have not relapsed. From that day forward, I have been sober and reaching out to others who struggle with the same issues I faced.

*I soon found out that wouldn't be.  
God had something better in store for me.  
With God's mercy grace and love I am now free,  
To live my life in victory.  
There are many things I have yet to do,  
One thing I know God will see me through.  
I know He watches from Heaven above  
Showering me with His unending love.*



# PROFILE OF SUSAN TIERNEY

## CASE MANAGER/SOCIAL WORKER

While I was not born and raised in Madison, I can honestly call Madison “home” now after having lived in the community for over twelve years. Twelve years is the longest I have ever lived in one location, and I love it. The community resources available in Madison and Dane County are phenomenal. Having worked in the Gary, Indiana/Chicago land area and in the Raleigh/Durham NC area, I can say without hesitation that the services offered here are vast and superior to other areas in the country.

With that being said, the “Race to Equity: State of Racial Disparities in Dane County” report just came out and shows that Dane County has a LONG WAY to go before ALL citizens are treated equally and have access to similar resources and opportunities. Data like this remind me why I chose the career of social work 17 years ago. I wholeheartedly believe that every person deserves the same opportunities and access to resources.

As the daughter of an English teacher and a licensed clinical social worker, I was intrigued when I first learned of the Odyssey Project several years ago. What an amazing program Emily has spearheaded! I can say both from personal and professional experiences that I have seen firsthand the enormous impact this program has had on both graduates and their families. That is why I was incredibly excited when the opportunity presented itself for me to serve in the role as Case Manager for the program.

I am hopeful that through our work together, I am able to connect students and alumni with resources and help them overcome barriers so that focusing on their studies becomes easier. I enjoy getting to know students of all ages and helping to find strategies that work for each person in reaching academic goals, personal well-being, and healthy relationships. College is an exciting, unique time in people’s lives when students have the opportunity to challenge themselves, explore, and grow. I find students have great insight into their own needs. It is a privilege to help students reach their personal and educational goals while connecting them to services and support networks that will support them.



# PROFILE OF KYRIE CALDWELL

## VOLUNTEER WRITING TUTOR

I am a Madison native, and I have lived in several different parts of the city. When I was growing up, my father was an engineering professor at the University (now he's at Purdue in Indiana) and my mother was (and still is) a writer who studied Christian theology. I went to a great public high school near Atlanta before I came back to Madison to attend the UW. I graduated in May of 2013 with Art History and Religious Studies majors. I did a lot of writing while in college (including a really long thesis!), and I found that being able to write passionately and adaptively, based on what both you and the audience need from a piece of writing, is one of the most valuable skills that I have gained in my education so far.

This is my first year working with The Odyssey Project. I joined because education is incredibly important in the fight against prejudice and poverty, and I have seen too many friends and community members slip through the cracks in our educational system. In the future I hope to get a PhD so



I can get involved with educational research, studying how art and culture can extend a love of learning to all.



When I am not tutoring at Odyssey, I am either spending time on campus reading, writing, or trying to learn how to program computers, or I am playing video games or baking desserts at home. I also have been competing in the sport of fencing since I started at the UW; I fence sabre.

I love talking about everything around art, religion, and video games if you'd ever like to chat! I am also happy to work with you on getting your writing to sound, look, and, most importantly, feel better.

# CALL AND RESPONSE



Reading **Michael Martin's** response to Plato's Allegory of the Cave about his stages of life growing up in Detroit truly moved my emotions. He was stuck in a cycle made up by what others believed to be his destiny. They stereotyped people's failure due to their skin color. However, despite all the negativity from others, Michael has learned that if he works hard anything can be accomplished. Go Michael!!! Never let others be an impediment; make the stones that might come across your way be turned into stairways to climb towards your dreams. (**Vanessa Lopes Maia**)

I really enjoyed reading and connecting with a lot of stories about people's caves that they've been in. The one that I felt the most was **Jamie Hanson's** story. I believe we've all had a tough childhood in our own way, and it seems hers made her go down the same path in her adult years instead of changing it and breaking the cycle. I've been in an abusive relationship as well very young, and it does break you down on many levels. It has the ability to make you feel different things you don't want to feel as far as not believing in yourself or having no self-confidence to help yourself out of the situation. I definitely know the feeling of giving everything you have into a

relationship and getting nothing back in return but showing our young kids how NOT to treat someone. I'm glad she found her way out of her cave. It feels so good to be out, I'm sure. (**Kelli Green**)

I connect to **Toshiana Northington's** response to Plato's cave because I was dealing with depression for a long time. I know the battle and the struggle it is to deal with it. I also know about turning things into a cycle of starting and stopping and starting again. (**Jaquan Fleming**)

I love the fact that **LaPrice Black** was able to see that her cave was something she was able to break free from. I was beaten to an inch of my life with a child who was born not breathing, and still I felt it was my fault. I know such freedom comes to you when you become freed in spirit and body. (**Nafisa Davis**)

**Charllienne Cotto's** words in Finding Plato's Cave were honest and heartfelt. . . . The main abuse I felt was pain I brought to myself. I went out all the time, and I would tell myself it was OK because I put my son to sleep with a bath and bedtime story. But I slept half the day away as he watched cartoons and spent time alone. I was so involved with myself and being stronger as an "independent woman" that I wasn't true to being a "good mother." So yes, I can relate to Charllienne's honesty of self-abuse. I am glad for her words because most people can't admit that the abuser is themselves. (**Simone Lawrence**)

**LaTrease Hibbler's** reflection of drug use spoke to me personally. I have a very dear friend of mine dealing with an extremely

serious addiction to prescription pain medication. I have a reason to believe our government is the only one giving my friend his pain medication. This is a nationwide epidemic, and our country, with our corrupt politicians, money-scheming Congressional lobbyists, greedy health care providers, and almost all of those geniuses at the pharmaceutical manufacturers will continue to profit from the helpless people of this country suffering from this terrible illness. . . . This continuing process of force-feeding my countrymen a life-threatening addiction is inhumane and immoral and should be illegal. (**Michael Martin**)

I love how **Milli Lau** took Allegory of the Cave and applied it to a traditional story from her culture (Frog in the Well). It shows that this is an important lesson to all of us, no matter where we are from. I also like how she connected the lesson to current and controversial events. (**Tracker Dunn**)

I connected to **Christopher Bester**, **Zeynab Ahmed**, and **Lucia Chikowero**. They all basically said how the Odyssey Program kick started something in their lives to not only make them better students but also more positive persons to get out of their shell and explore new things. (**Derick McCray**)

I can connect to the way **Vanessa Lopes Maia** is feeling when she states, "We'll explore, learn, and enrich our knowledge. We will have the opportunity to discover many unknown places of ourselves and become acquainted with our fears, desires, and potential to succeed." This particular piece was easy for me to connect to because I absolutely agree. As we continue through this odyssey, the knowledge

we will have obtained will be more enriching than we can even fathom right now. Being and having this voluptuous opportunity gives us our voices back. It gives us our right for higher education. The right to learn, discover, and become more acquainted with education will light a spark in our souls that will lead us to discover ourselves without fear or self-prejudice. (**Janet Shelton**)

I enjoyed **Janet Shelton's** thoughts on the alumni because I also felt a piece of myself in many of their stories. I sometimes felt like I was in a movie starring me! I appreciate that everyone recognizes that it's going to be a challenge and take lots of hard work. I just feel so inspired and determined when I hear other students' thoughts and views. (**Alisha Taylor**)



**Kunga Chokten** wrote about how his parents went to a temple in India so that Tibetan Buddhist monks could choose his name. I thought that was a very unique story about how his name was chosen. I'm glad Kunga likes his name; I like it, too. (**Jamie Hanson**)

I relate to **Simone Lawrence's** response to Blake's poem "On Another Sorrow." This poem

appeals to the parental instincts at the deepest level. Knowing myself as a mother and my husband as a father, there is no way we can sit back and see our children suffer and do nothing. Just as Blake is asking himself “Can I?” our response, like Simone’s, is “we can not.” There is also a saying that goes “an injury to one is an injury to all.” Seeing another’s sorrow and grief, I “seek for kind relief.” (**Lucia Chikowero**)

**Zeynab Ahmed** reminds me of me. I love my father, and he is a big part of my life. He taught me things that not the average father can teach his son. I’ve done things with him like fishing. He’s come to my games, and he’s my number one fan who knows my every move. My dad is like the best big brother, but he’s also my father. I know the boundaries that I can and can’t cross with him. (**Christopher Bester**)



I agree with **Mallory Carter** in her response to Blake’s “Infant Sorrow” when she said that infants are so very helpless that they depend on and need their parents. Your parents are

your first teachers. Infants look to adults for food, sleep, shelter, clothing, language, communication, and everything else. (**Isis Bernard**)

I like **Robert James**’s response to William Blake’s “Holy Thursday.” I connected with this because I grew up in the projects, too, not far from where he grew up (37<sup>th</sup> and Wells), and I experienced the same and a little more. Yes, it was an “eternal winter” there. (**LaPrice Black**)

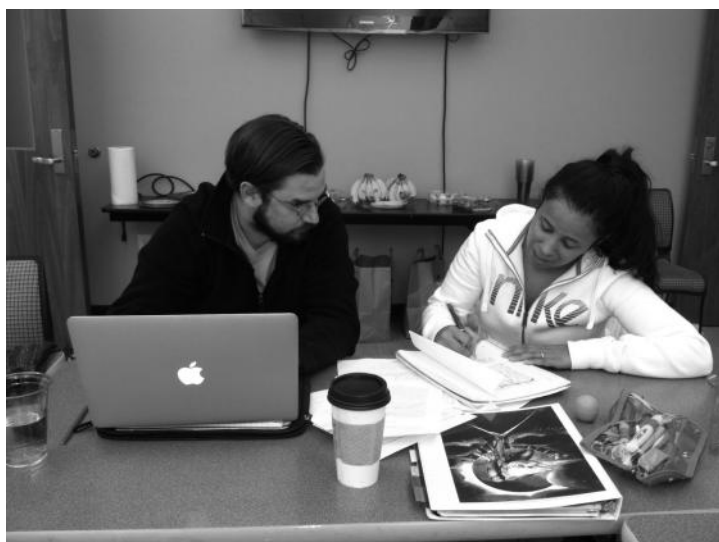
I enjoyed reading and getting to know more about our tutors. I feel that their contributions show that there are still people willing to help with no reward or without wanting something in return. **Carol Poore**’s article interested me a lot. Although I have yet to attend a session outside of class with Carol, I’ve had the pleasure of speaking with her in class. I can relate to her being the first person to graduate from college in her family. It says a lot about her character and determination. I noticed that she received her Ph.D. in German. One of my goals is to someday get a Ph.D. from UW-Madison as well. I can see it in the article that she loves what she does and, best of all, she’s genuine! (**Shiquille Ward**)

I am interested to know about the tutors who may help me finish my assignments and study because I have many negative experiences related to the tutors in the Writing Center and Learning Center of Madison College. There was a tutor who treated me as a learning disabled person because I cannot speak fluent English. There was a tutor who thought I misunderstood American culture and wrote something that offended America since English is my second languages. There was another tutor who requested that I should cross out all the words which related to my culture since Americans would not understand them.

I am glad to know that **Kevin Mullen** and **Carol Poore** [and our other tutors, **Cathy Rasmussen, Sagashus Levingston, and Kyrie Caldwell**] are tutors who have experience and are willing to teach non-American students. I know I really need help improving my English and critical thinking. Education in my country only trains us to remember something instead of to think independently. I hope the tutors in the Odyssey Project can help me accomplish my goals. (**Milli Lau**)



**Sagashus Levingston** was kind enough to share with us her personal life and personal struggles she went through to get to where she is now. I am amazed that she is a Ph.D. student and a mother of five children. I have three children myself and it is challenging, so I can imagine how much more challenging it



would be with five. She also wrote about her past life experiences, her educational background, and the violent drug-infested neighborhoods she had lived in.

At the beginning of the article she describes her struggle as a “beautiful struggle” quoting

Talib Kweli. This is a wonderful way of looking at it. She made me think of my struggle of being a single mother of three kids trying to start a college education as a “beautiful struggle” because I am learning new skills that will allow me to do amazing things in terms of transforming the life of my family. My life can be challenging, and at times it can feel like things are falling apart. But I am slowly picking up the pieces and building a brighter future out of them. Thank you, Sagashus, for allowing me to see my struggle in a new light. (**Nyagoa Hoth**)

**Kevin Mullen** is a fellow Illinoisan, and he grew up in Evanston, Illinois, where I was born. It has long been known as a very diverse community and still is. He could also see the disparity between the rich and poor communities, which formed his academic and career decisions early on. He is working on his Ph.D. in American Literature at UW-Madison. He did not limit his education to this country. He has traveled to Italy, Turkey, and Japan while tutoring for the Odyssey Program. I have always wanted to travel like that. It makes you appreciate creation, life, and your family.

# STUDYING SOCRATES

*"For if you kill me, you will not easily find another like me who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by the God, and the state is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions and requires to be stirred into life."*

If I die, it's going to be hard to find someone like me who will help people who are in slumber awake. God sent me to wake up and stir up the slumber of those in ignorance. If God sent Socrates to speak of truth and wisdom, then I believe in my heart that Socrates is almost like Christ. The only difference is that Socrates was being punished for speaking the truth, and Jesus died for our sins.

**(Charllienne Cotto)**

*"Now is that a truth which superior wisdom has recognized thus early in life, and am I, at my age, in such darkness and ignorance as not to know that if a man with whom I have to live is corrupted by me, I am very likely to be harmed by him, and yet I corrupt him, and intentionally, too?"*

Through all these years of living, am I that stupid that I would intentionally corrupt a man that can turn around and harm me? I believe Socrates was saying no matter what they thought, he was not corrupting people. He was not that stupid. **(Jackieta Fairley)**

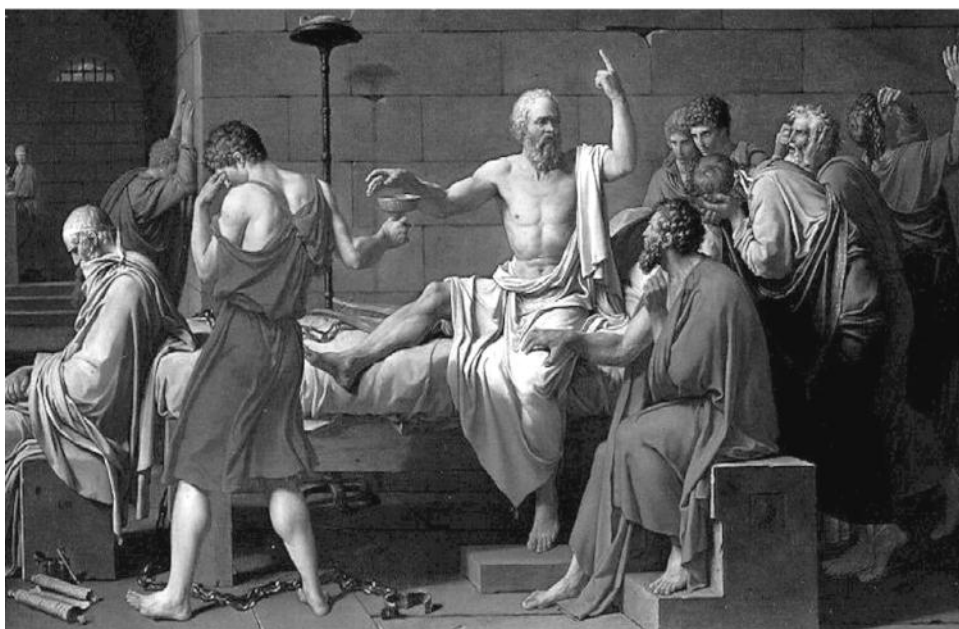
*"This sign I have had ever since I was a child."*

Teaching and preaching to others is Socrates' calling, something he was meant to do. It's not like he got up one day and decided to do this. It was God's will and plan for Socrates to teach others the truth and give them knowledge. Knowledge is power. No one knows everything there is to know. **(Mallory Carter)**

*"In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians . . . do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just?"*

There were three reasons for Socrates to reject Crito's suggestion to escape to another country. First, the laws represent a form of social contract between an individual and a country. People have to respect and obey them; otherwise, the laws will lose their function, and the country will fall into confusion. One should only correct the mistakes of the laws instead of degrading or undermining them. Therefore, his escaping from death will cause great harm to society. Second, Socrates thought inner integrity was very important for a better life. A person's deeds and words should be in accord with each other. Running away from prison would not be honorable and just. It was contradictory to his inner unity. Lastly, inconsistency of behavior would prove the charge of "corrupting the young" was valid. If he violated the laws and escaped from imprisonment, he was polluting people by teaching them to "do evil in return for evil" and ignore the state's laws when they please. This was opposed to his will of guiding people towards goodness and improving justice.

Theoretically, Socrates made the right decision to obey the verdict of death. However, it is also an unintelligent loyalty. . . . Death means the end of his effort to improve social justice, while life implies the continuance of work, which he had already started, to advance social justice. How many people have the courage to forfeit their lives to question authority? How many people have the power to help others understand reality? **(Milli Lau)**





*"To teach is to learn." This Chinese proverb consistently reminds me of how this journey through Odyssey Project has enhanced, enlightened, and encouraged that knowledge which I choose to filter through to my very little one, Soraya Ali. She warms the heart and the earth with vital beams of light, as she teaches folks on the way, magnifying information with her reassuring words. As a gifted child, she shows consistency in one absorbed imagination. On my quest to comfort our financial stability, I especially thank the profound professors for puissance towards the truth. ~LaTrease Hibbler*

*I love my family and children with all my heart. Each day through everything I do, I strive to be their best role model. I teach them all the personal and cultural values my ancestors passed on to me; the true meaning of faith and to love one another. I will do everything I can to help my children succeed and obtain the most education that they can get. I want my children to know that I will always be there for them. My children are the little stars that brighten my night every evening and the sun rays that brighten my day every morning...and I love them to pieces.*

*My daughter is very proud and happy to see me go to school, and we both do homework together. Odyssey has been a wonderful blessing in many different ways in our lives, and I am very thankful! ~Vanessa Lopes Maia*





*My true loves are my girls. They are the reason I thank God on a regular basis. They are the reason for me to live.  
~Latrice White*

