

## Don't quit!

By Joe Robinson

My advice to the new Odyssey class is don't quit. No matter how hard it gets, don't quit.

When you get off work at 5:30, and you only have 30 minutes to get the kids situated and get to class, don't quit.

When you get stuck in the middle of writing a paper or doing a project, don't quit.

When you find out that your father has cancer and has to have surgery and treatment, don't quit.

When you have circumstances that occur that make you miss a class and you get behind on your work, don't quit.

When you feel as if you're not getting anything out of a particular subject, don't quit. When people tell you you are wasting your time, don't quit. When your car breaks down, and it's twenty below outside, and the only way to get here is on the city bus, don't quit. When your spouse is complaining that your five children are driving her crazy every Wednesday night, don't quit. When one of your classmates makes you feel stupid for voicing your opinion, don't quit.

When your boyfriend or girlfriend accuses you of cheating on them because you had to turn your cell phone off during class, don't quit.

And if you get to the point where you just can't find any more motivation to force yourself to keep coming to this class, my advice is to call Emily, and I guarantee you that she won't let you quit! There were many times that I wanted to just give up, but Emily would not let me. She believed in us more than some of us believed in ourselves.

Finally, I would like to say that, the first couple of weeks, I was in class trying to figure out, what is the catch? Why are these people offering us this course for free? There must be a catch. I found out what the catch was. Each one of the teachers was trying to trick us into believing that our lives would somehow be better if we completed this Odyssey class and then go on to graduate from college. I guess I must be a little naïve, because I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker.

*Joe Robinson is a graduate of the 2003-2004 Odyssey Project.*

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### Quick quiz

What does "manuscript" mean?

## It's never too late to learn

By Pamela Holmes

Hello, new Odyssey students.

When I first started the Odyssey program, I got a really warm feeling from the new professors and students. It seems like in about two weeks, I had been coming to class for a month. I was out of school for about 12 years before I came here, and things were a bit rusty for me. I needed improvement in some areas. I had a hard time writing a paper because I didn't know how to properly use pronouns and adverbs and punctuation. At times I felt like I was out of place, being the second oldest person in class. I thought I wasn't going to keep up with the young kids, but it's never too late to learn.

The professors gave us confidence. They gave us their cell phone numbers if we were having any trouble with our homework. The library tutors they provided were also very helpful.

I would say to the new students—stay positive and focused and try to make it to all your classes. You will get a lot of new knowledge and skills and even a new sense of being yourself when you are done with this project. Good luck to all of the new students and welcome!

*Pamela Holmes is a graduate of the 2003-2004 Odyssey Project.*



# Words have power!

*“Even a person who can’t speak out can shout their voice loud and clear by telling his or her story on paper. I learned that day words have power if they are written down the right way.”*

By Denise Maddox  
Hello!

My name is Denise Maddox, and I had the privilege of being one of the 24 graduates of the 2003-2004 Odyssey class. I remember walking into the classroom and seeing my fellow classmates and teachers for the first time. I was scared and nervous. My hands were clammy, and my heart was racing in my chest. I was about to leave, but a friendly voice said, come in and take a seat. That voice was Professor Emily Auerbach. The other teachers were standing up along the back wall.

Professor Emily did something that made us feel welcome. She looked at each individual, smiled, and said his or her name from memory. We were amazed! This helped break the silence in the classroom. Soon after, the other professors introduced themselves to the class.

We started with 30 students, eager and hungry for knowledge. On that first day we talked about William Blake, author of “Songs of Innocence” and “Songs of Experience.” Professor Emily read to us the “Chimney Sweeper.” The poem was about a little boy whose parents sold him to be a chimney sweeper. As she read the poem, my eyes became watery, and I felt sadness. This is when I found out the words became alive. Words can help a person express emotions, such as fear, happiness, sadness, excitement and joy. Even a person who can’t speak out can shout their voice loud and clear by telling his or her story on paper. I learned that day words have power if they are written down the right way.

What helped me to better understand the assignments were:

1) Reading all the material the teachers gave for homework.

Also, some of the books we read were on audio or video tapes. Listening to the assignments out loud helped me to comprehend the lesson better. Also pronouncing the words I couldn’t understand helped improve my vocabulary and spelling.

2) Asking the librarians for help and asking the professor for help when I didn’t understand the assignments. Use the people from the writing center, located in the library, or call them for appointments.

3) Keeping up with all the pass-outs in class and taking legible notes; forming study groups with classmates and exchanging phone numbers.

4) If you plan to go to college next year, have your financial aid forms filled out in January or February, so you can have the money available in the start of the fall school year. Talk to an advisor about what classes you should take or are transferable to a four-year college.

*Get ready to board the ship Odyssey. Enjoy the voyage with Professor Emily and the other teachers. There will be some stormy days ahead; this is when you need to come together as a class and help one another. I promise it will get better. But most of the time you will enjoy the new and exciting places that the ship Odyssey will take you. And I will see you at the end of your journey in May, 2005. Good luck!!*

## ***Odyssey Oracle***

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Karla Sandoval, Odyssey 2005

Corina Brown, Odyssey 2005

# Meet the class of 2005

## Learning to love and fear God and respect others

by James Robinson, Odyssey '05

I came here to Madison to seek out education and a better job to better myself. I am James Robinson. I am a 26-year-old black man who was raised in a house with five sisters and one brother and whomever else my mother opened up her doors to. I was raised by a strong black woman who taught me how to love and fear God and respect others, especially women. I enjoy writing about my experiences and things that I can see in the world that trouble me. I keep an open mind and love being around people that I can learn from. My family is the most important thing that I could have in my life because without a strong family structure, another child is lost.

## Helping to change somebody's life

by Karla Sandoval, Odyssey '05

I am a 20-year-old mother of a little four-year-old. I work in a restaurant as a server only three days a week, and I just started to work at Headstart as a teacher assistant. I love kids, especially from different cultures.

I am from Mexico City, I came to Madison about seven years ago, and I am used to Madison now. I am not sure if I will like to go back, but I know I will have to do it sometime for my son.

My plans for the future are: to graduate from college, get my social worker degree or anything else like it, so I can really help change somebody's life for good and for better.

I will love to learn to be a better reader and writer and better understand poems. I want to be able to write whatever I think, because sometimes you write things that sound or read different than whatever you think.

## Finding that better place to raise children

By Corina Brown, Odyssey '05

I am a 37-year-old African American female with three bright children. My oldest is twenty, the middle child is fifteen, and the youngest six. I come from a big city, born and raised, and decided to leave because of the drug dealers and watching others around us struggle. I thought to myself, "There has got to be a better place to raise my children." So I decided to move to Milwaukee. I stayed there for four years, then decided to move to Madison.

I worked in the medical field for years, then decided to go towards education, where I work in Special Education.

Tonight's free word is:

# PERSPICACIOUS

Per-spi-ca-cious

Adj: Of acute mental vision or discernment, shrewd.



Who is the most perspicacious person you know?

Classic  
**PEANUTS**  
featuring  
**"Good ol'  
Charlie Brown"**  
by SCHULZ

