

DECEMBER 2022

ODYSSEY JUNIOR

ORACLE



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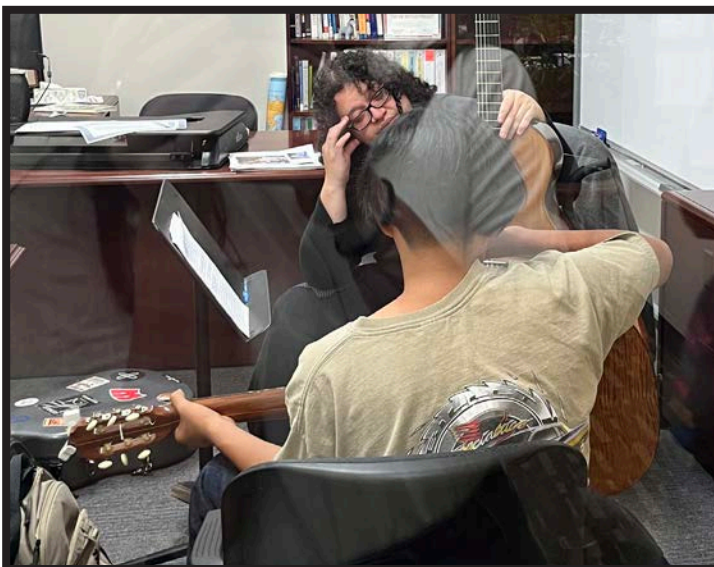
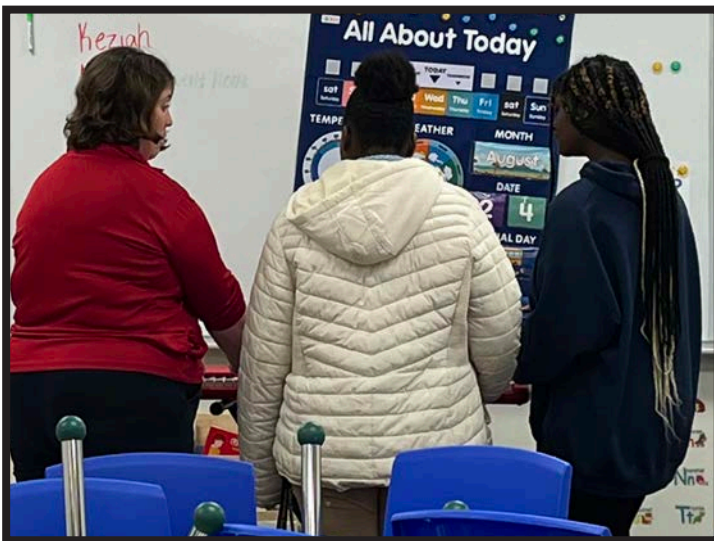
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www.odyssey.wisc.edu

MUSIC LESSONS

WITH THE UW MEAD WITTER SCHOOL OF MUSIC!

Beginning in November, Odyssey Junior kicked off music lessons with the UW Mead Witter School of Music on Tuesday nights! Our students were able to sign up and meet for violin, guitar, piano, tuba, and voice lessons with our wonderful instructors: Karen, Leo, Carrie, Kevin, and James. Music fills the halls of the UW South Madison Partnership Space while adults and youth enjoy the drop-in tutoring hours (5pm-8pm) every Tuesday evening.



ODYSSEY JUNIOR COLLEGE WORKSHOPS

On November 8th and 15th, Odyssey Junior hosted two College Workshops for parents and teens to come learn first-hand about college applications, essay writing, and undergraduate advising. Guest speakers from UW Madison, Madison College, Odyssey alumni, and MMSD staff visited to discuss everything from application help, recommendation letters, out-of-state college information, and more. Our very own Adventurers lead teacher, Leigh Button, also introduced her virtual office hours and Junior Success Coaching, which can be found on the Academic Resources page of the Odyssey Project website.

Two of our star interns and Odyssey Junior teens, Zawadi and Jay, attended our workshops and conducted interviews on Odyssey Junior students' thoughts on college and their future goals. When it came to their experience and thoughts on college, Jay and Zawadi had this to say:



My thoughts on college are that it's something that everyone should try to do or at least apply for a scholarship for it. Like if you get a good scholarship for it, and you're going to do something that will get you lots of money and experience, or even get you something that would help you get a good job in the future, what's the harm in it? Although, I do think colleges are pretty expensive, so it gets me kind of nervous just thinking about it since it's a lot of money, and you're going to be doing this one thing for the rest of your life. There's no going back on it: it's kind of scary not knowing whether you're making the right choice with which college you want to go to. **(Jayvon)**

When I attended the college workshop, it opened my eyes to all the opportunities my generation has. For example, 9th - 11th graders are able to take college courses at Madison College for college credits! I really appreciate the work that was put into the workshop. As for my future goals, I would love to have a science related career! UW Madison offers a neurobiology major, which is a topic I am really interested in. I find the human brain very interesting, like how the amygdala is responsible for our emotions! My dream is to someday become a neurologist, neurophysiologist, or registered nurse. Truthfully, I want to help others! Thank you to everyone involved with the college workshop and those helping me with my college journey! **(Zawadi)**



INTERVIEWS BY JAY:

What are some of your future goals?

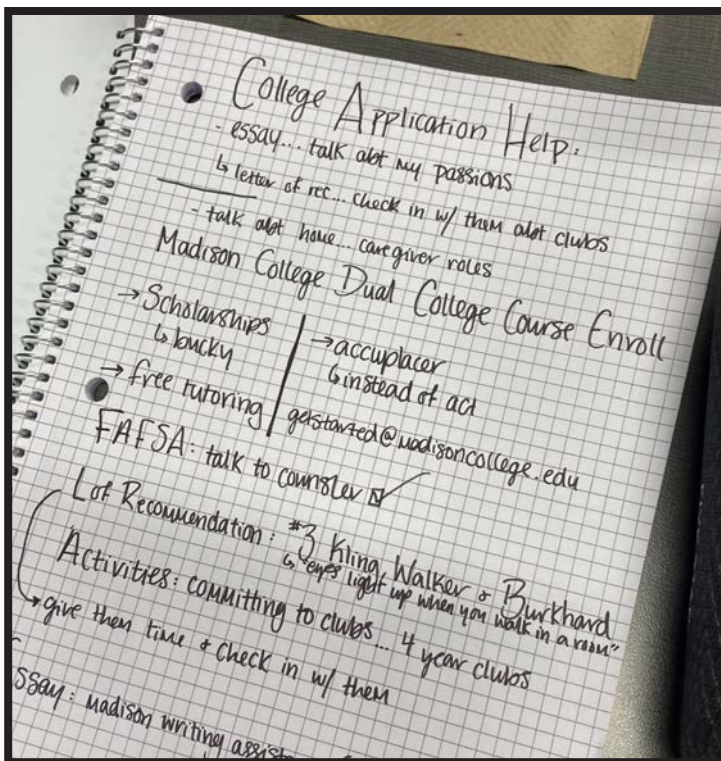
I don't know yet. Basketball. **(Zion)**

To move out of my mom's house. **(Talaya)**

Play football in the NFL. **(Quone)**

To play college soccer and graduate from college. **(Juan)**

Buy a car and get into UW Madison. **(Chris)**



What do you think about college right now?

I want to play basketball in college. **(Zion)**

I want to go to college. **(Talaya)**

It could get you to so many more places and might be easier than high school but brings more distractions. **(Quone)**

It's going to be hard to get in, and expensive, but I'll make it through. Also I want to party. **(Juan)**

It's worth it if you pick the right major. **(Chris)**

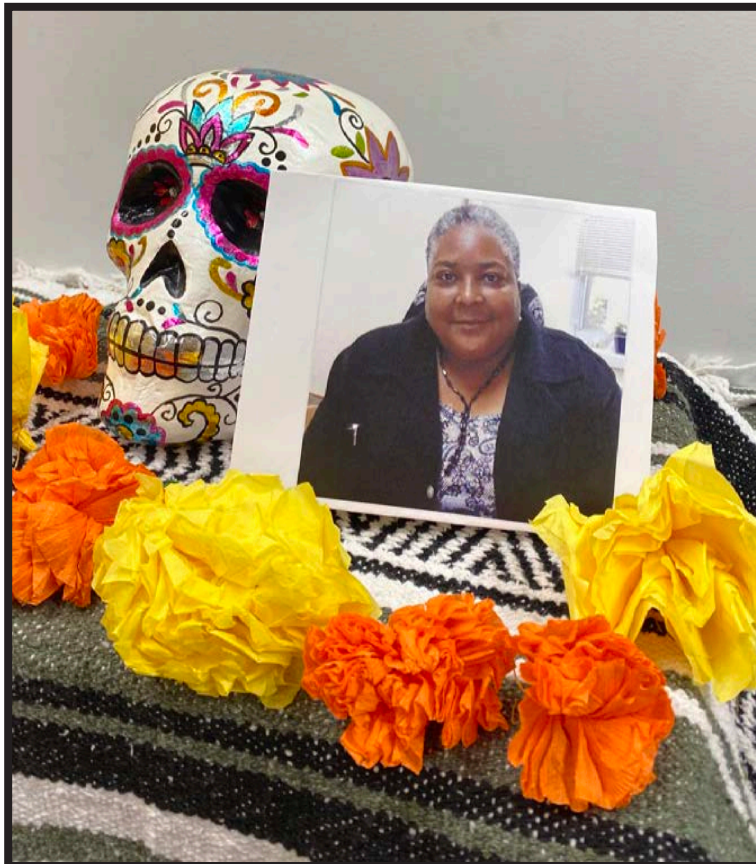
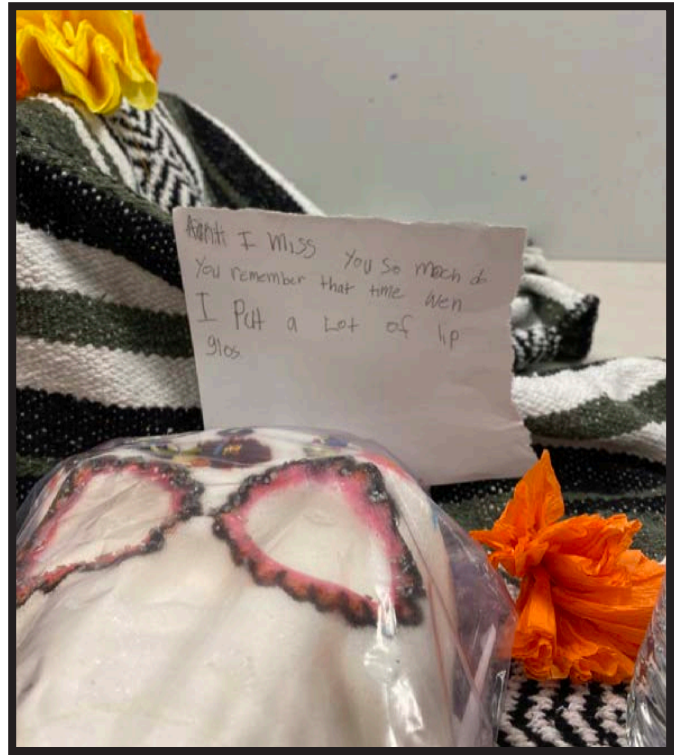


DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

*What does Día de los Muertos mean to you?
Is there anyone close to you that you like to
celebrate on Day of the Dead?*

So, it's my grandpa. I wasn't born when he was alive so I don't remember anything about him. My dad's dad. **(Alex)**

Day of the Dead is for people that passed away. I celebrate it every year because I'm Mexican. You put an offering – candy, drinks--but you have to open everything so they can come, and also marigolds so they can smell. Somebody that passed away is my abuelo, my grandpa. My grandpa Ignacio passed away from cancer and he owned an indoor soccer field. Now his ex-wife has it, but he owned it. When I was little, I would want candy 'cause they sold candy, and I asked for some, and he told me I had to pay for it. And so then I went in there and got it myself! **(Cielo)**



My nana passed away, and I don't know, my mom just got a text from my papa's girlfriend. And she was like, your mom passed away, and then... we went to the hospital. It happened a long time ago. My nana used to yell for no reason! Another person is my auntie. She had passed away from a car accident, and then before the car accident, I remember this one time I was in the car and Princeton was like five years old and I was like three and I asked for auntie for lip gloss and then it spilled all over my face! **(De'Zariea)**

It's originally from Mexico, and the flowers are for Day of the Dead. And they make an ofrenda all the way to the entrance of the house for like the spirits to go through. I have two people, actually, three people, actually, eight. But one person, there's this really famous singer called Selena Quintanilla, and she's like really famous in Mexico. Her parents were from Mexico, but she was from Texas. I really like her! **(Emily)**

It's where you celebrate the people who passed away and try to do lots of stuff for them, like see their favorite foods and remember them. My godmother's sister, she was only in her 50s, and she passed away in a car accident. I only got to spend a little bit of time with her because I'd only seen her when I was four and five. She really liked hockey and she celebrated Diwali. **(Irie)**

We put the picture to showcase and remember who's died. One person that has passed away in my family is my great-great uncle. **(Kai)**

It's about sugar skulls! And people that have passed away, and we eat food on Day of the Dead! For Halloween I got 68 pieces of candy! I can eat one a day. My cousin passed away in September or October. Her name was Queenie and she took me to Sky Zone and Urban Air. She took me to a basketball game! It was fun! I saw Michael Jordan and LeBraun James! She was nice. **(Legend)**

My grandpa's name was Severo. He passed away last year. I used to watch TV with him because he loved boxing, so we would sit together and watch boxing together. Those were fond memories because he would give me a little money to go get a Gansito at the store, one of my favorite treats in Mexico. And I would buy him a coca cola and we would sit together and eat the Gansitos and cola together. **(Marisol)**

My mom's dad passed away, my grandpa. I never met him. **(Omarion)**



READ TO A DOG WITH GO TEAM THERAPY DOGS!

The Go Team Therapy Dogs visited Odyssey Junior once again! Kids of all ages got to meet Go Team's wonderful canine squad: Sully, Max, Ace, Patton, Cody, and Shiloh. Odyssey Junior students were able to read, sit, or play with the furry, vest-wearing professionals intermittently throughout the night. Here's what some students and teachers had to say:

I feel calm when the dogs come because they are therapy dogs. All the dogs are beautiful! I feel good about the cards because I can read them. **(Cielo)**



I really like dogs, and I really like reading, so I like reading to the dogs! THEY'RE SO FLUFFY! **(Emily)**

I like how the dogs run around. I am looking forward to reading to the dogs! I am going to read to TWO dogs! **(Emprizz)**



The little small black puppy is cute.
(Omarion)

I really like them because they help with emotions. When life gives you lemons, you use them! When life gives you dogs, you play with them! **(Irie)**

It's fun! And cute. I like when the dogs are calm. **(Fabian)**



I love them! They are so cute. **(Bri)**

Research shows that reading to a dog is therapeutic and provides many benefits and emotional support. **(Brian)**

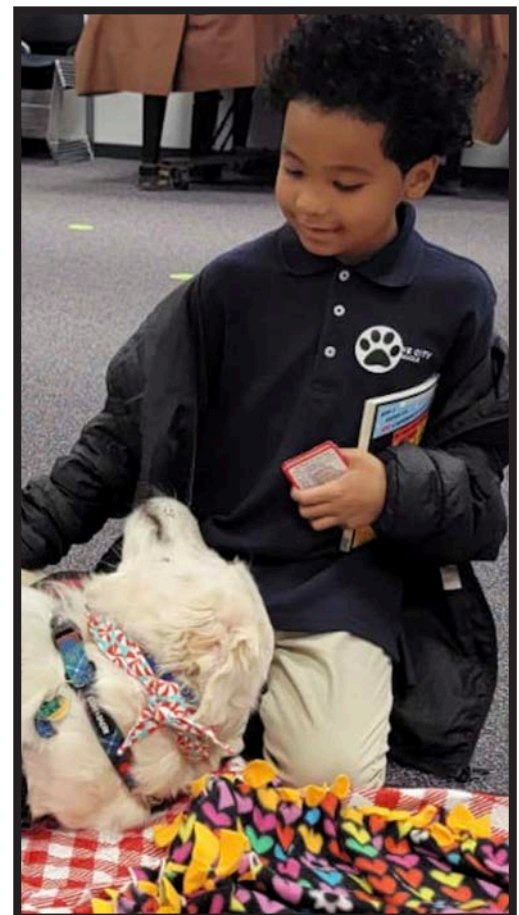
Read to the Dog nights are my favorite nights! I especially like Ace because a rottweiler attacked my dog, but Ace has showed me that rottweilers can be kind and cuddly. **(Karen)**

I love dogs because they are very good listeners. **(Marisol)**

I look forward to seeing the dogs, all the shapes and sizes! **(Mary)**

The cards are very cool and nice. I like dogs. They're cool. They're very cute! I really like dogs because they have unique features. **(Kai)**

They're so fluffy! **(RJ)**



BABY BADGERS

She is such a loving big sister to baby Ocean! **(Dream)**

She loves looking at books and playing with the rattle toys! **(Ocean)**



"Big truck! Wee woo, wee woo" **(Ozzy)**



"I like my rice, my chicken, and my momma" **(Dynast)**

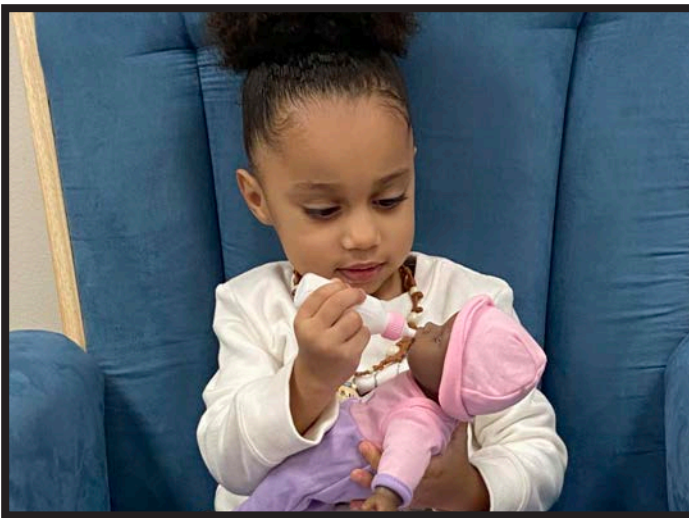


Ramzi: "What's this?" Teacher: "Peas." Ramzi: "No." **(Ramzi)**

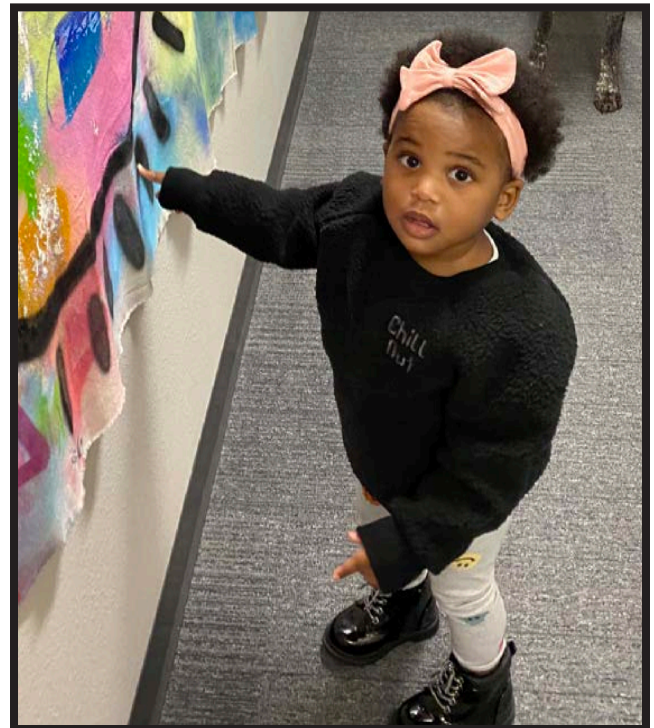
He loves playing with our sorting toys!
(Bear)



She always makes sure all of our friends are taking turns playing! **(Priya)**



She loves to listen to and make music!
(Narai)

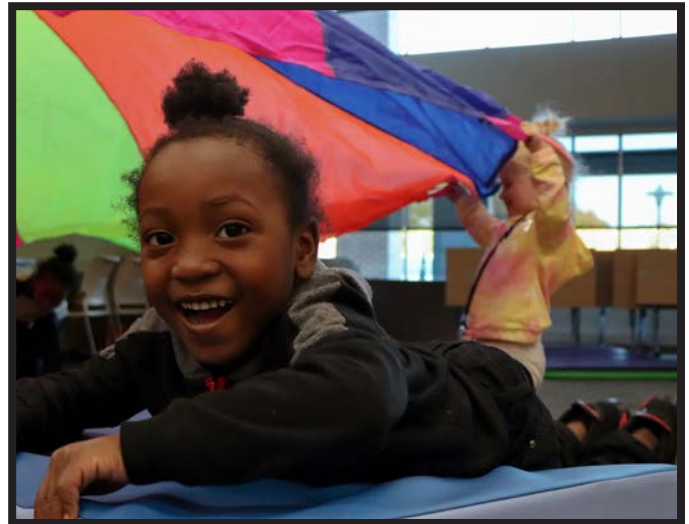


"It's the baby!" **(Keziah)**

SCOUTS

The chicken is spicy but it's not for my tongue. **(TJ)**

I know this book! The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats **(Zola)**



Why does this fox have a funny face?
(Majesty)





I want to play! **(Aiyanna)**

Can I see my brothers? **(Rexley)**



I like the chips! **(Kaliana)**





WATERMELLOOOON (Antwon)

Me too. (Camilla)



I want to paint. (Azelea)



EXPLORERS

WOMEN OF COURAGE

Who is a woman of courage in your life?

My mom had the courage to quit one job and move onto a new job she really liked. It felt good to me because she makes more money. It made me happy to see her able to buy things she really wanted and me too. She also inspires me to do more things like take a trip to Miami like she did. **(Cielo)**



I choose my mom as my woman of courage because she loves and takes care of me. She is also cute and that's on period...She is my bestie and I will stick with her. **(De'Zariea)**

My mom. She's great at not burning her hand on the oil! She's brave cooking. I'm a scaredy cat. She's gone for a lot of hours because she's a doula and she takes care of people who are having a baby. She works really hard. She helps me and is throwing me a party! **(Fabian)**



My mom is brave because she's also a doula and she helps people give birth. She makes me read a lot to make me learn. She's brave being a mom. She's nice. **(Kai)**

A woman of courage in my life is my mom. She is a woman of courage because she works hard and follows her dreams. She takes care of people's houses and buys me lots of clothes. She said she wants a big house when we move. She likes Odyssey. **(Omarion)**



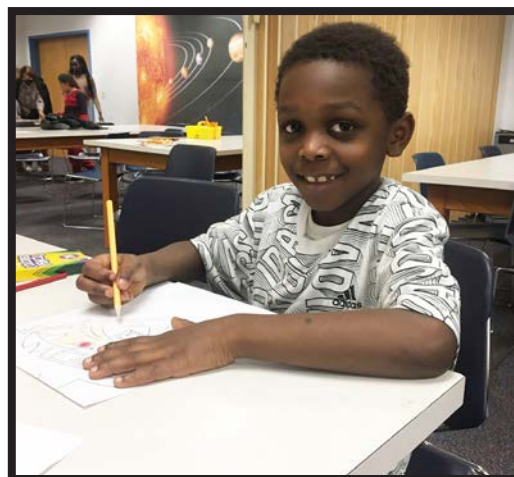
A woman of courage in my life is my mom and my little sister. My mom has courage because she works really hard to take care of her kids. She puts us in programs like Odyssey and Boys and Girls Club. She works really hard in Odyssey. It makes her happy. **(Princeton)**

Brave is like you're 20 years old and you're scared to go to space, but then Jupiter is there so you go anyway and face your fear. My sister Zawadi is really brave. She can do anything! She does really hard stuff. She can do a one-hand cartwheel. My friend Elyse is also really brave. We had a big rainbow at our school. It has a bunch of bars and is 20 feet from the ground. I went 8 feet from the ground and then I asked her, "Can you go 20 feet from the ground?" She said yes. She was shivering a little bit, but then she went and did it. I was really proud of her! She did it even though she was a little scared. **(Zaria)**



My big sister had the courage to leave her comfort and home in Madison to follow her dream job and moved to Brooklyn. She inspired me after we talked about it and she actually follows through. It made me feel sad but happy at the same time. **(Irie)**

My cousin is brave. She died. I have five cousins. **(Legend)**



SUPERPOWERS

What's your superpower?

My talents are karate, making noise, and scaring people. Maybe I could save people with my karate. I like Captain America and Iron Man. Iron Man can shoot from his hands and stuff! And he can also fly too. I'd like to fly too. Spiderman is my favorite. He has the power of my favorite animal--spiders! Well, actually, a tarantula. **(Alex)**



I'd want invisibility. I would sneak away! From anything! I could help people get away from stuff, like bad guys. My superhero name would be...I don't know!!! I'm good at sneaking already. I'm also good at video games! I like Pokémon and Legend of Zelda; I haven't owned it yet, but I played the demos and I liked it. In Pokémon, I have Pokémon attacks for superpowers! My Charizard helps me fly. **(Kai)**



I would choose super strength and fire. I'm good at helping. I help people by being nice. My real-life superpower is climbing! **(Legend)**

I'd want my superpower to be speed. I'd run fast and play football and make all the touchdowns! My superhero name would be Sonic. **(X'Zayvion)**



ADVENTURERS

THANKSGIVING

Thinking about Thanksgiving, what is your favorite tradition, food, or memory that you have around the holiday?

I like to eat greens on Thanksgiving. My favorite food is maybe egg rolls. A cool memory I have is going out of state to visit my dad's side of the family. **(Antanasia)**

Barria tacos and Auntie Della. **(Cheyene)**

My favorite tradition is having a family dinner and going Black Friday shopping. **(Juan)**

My favorite tradition is a family dinner. **(Andy)**

My family makes food and we enjoy that. **(Chris)**

I don't really do Thanksgiving, so I don't have one. **(Symone)**

Favorite tradition: Inviting family. Favorite food: Cabbage. Favorite memory: Nan. **(Talaya)**



Eating dinner with the people who are important in my life and going Black Friday shopping. **(Avery)**

I would always go to my grandpa's house and eat with all my family. We ate pozole every year. We don't do that anymore but we still all get together. **(Alejandra)**

My favorite tradition is going to my auntie's, and my favorite food is mashed potatoes with gravy. **(Michael)**

My favorite Thanksgiving food is the collard greens! My mom makes them so good. On Thanksgiving, my family always plays "Heads Up" and "Uno." **(Yahmor)**

My favorite tradition is naming off all our family, even all the aunts and cousins. **(Zinedine)**

My favorite Thanksgiving food is the mashed potatoes. **(Zion)**

My favorite food is watermelon on Thanksgiving, and turkey. **(Miguel)**



GIVING ADVICE

What is one piece of advice you would give to others, or you wish you had known? Why is it important to you?

To do what you need to do. **(Antanasia)**

Don't do drugs, they're bad for you. **(Chris)**

Don't be afraid to fail, or else you will never try! **(Juan)**

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take. If there is something you really want to do, go for it! It's important to me because there are a lot of things I wish I did in my past, but I was too scared or shy to do it. **(Yahmor)**



WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO?

Who is someone you look up to, and why?

Lebron James because he does stuff off the court and has the best work ethic. **(Quone)**

There are two people. I don't know their names, but one is a really good artist. I look up to them because art has always been my number one thing to do. The other is a very good volleyball player. She is very motivational and she's one of the best I know. **(Antanasia)**

Myself. 'Cause I love me and I'm just better. **(Talaya)**

My mom. She has gone through so many terrible things and has to raise two children all by herself, and she still manages to keep me fed, clean, and educated. **(Yahmor)**



COURAGE

What does courage look like/sound like to you?

To me, courage is bravery and honesty. **(Symone)**

Courage is standing up to people that are bigger than you. **(Zion)**



CREATE A HOLIDAY

If you could create your own holiday, any time of the year, what would it be and how would it be celebrated?

My holiday is the day of my birth (May 17th) and it is a day off from work and school. **(Andy)**

I'm not sure, but I would want it to be so important that school will be closed the following day. **(Antanasia)**

If I could create a holiday it would be in the fall and it would celebrate my extreme intellect. **(Juan)**

I would make a no school holiday. **(Miguel)**

September 2nd. No School Day. **(Quone)**

I would make my birthday a national holiday. **(Symone)**

Talaya day. People would put portraits of me up and celebrate me. **(Talaya)**

Oct 17th. Play Soccer Day. **(Zinedine)**

If I could create my own holiday, we would celebrate music. **(Chris)**



GIVING GIFTS

It is better to give than receive at the holidays. If you could give a gift to anyone you wanted and money was no object, what would you give and who would you give it to? Why?

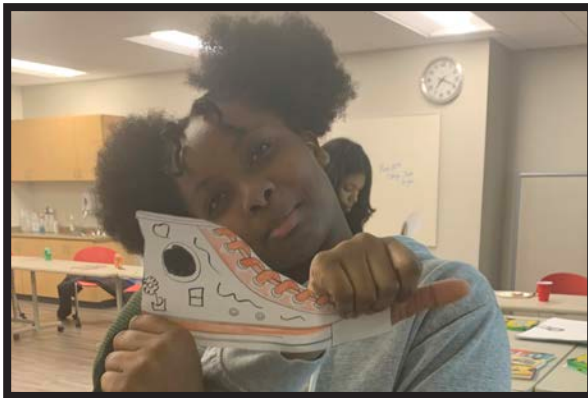
It is better to give, and I would give my mom an Olaplex shampoo kit because she loves it. **(Alejandra)**

I'd give 1 million to each of my parents because they are the best. **(Andy)**

I would give my best friend Bath and Body Works, a teddy bear, candy, and a couple dollars because she's my best friend. **(Cheyenne)**

I would give Juan the number to my barber so he could get a cut. **(Chris)**

I would give Chris a new hat because he looks goofy. **(Juan)**



I would give a hoodie to my stuffed animal because we have to be matching. **(Talaya)**

I would give away a house because people should always have a place to call home. **(Quone)**

I would give my mom a dream vacation to anywhere she wanted. The reason behind this is because she works really hard at work and drives me to all my sporting events. **(Zion)**

HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Finish this sentence in 5 different ways: This holiday, I hope...

I hope I have a good time. I hope I get what I need. I hope I get something for my room. I hope I get anime stuff. I hope I'll be happy. **(Antanasia)**

I hope it snows. This holiday I hope I'm happy. This holiday I hope everyone is warm. This holiday I hope people are healthy. This holiday I hope people are safe. **(Zion)**

NEW HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Create a new holiday tradition for your family. What would you do and why would it be important?

Eating frosted cupcakes the day before Christmas. **(Alejandra)**

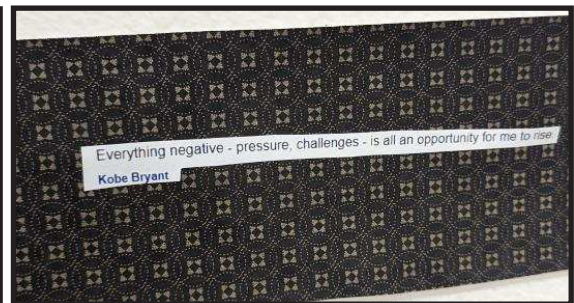
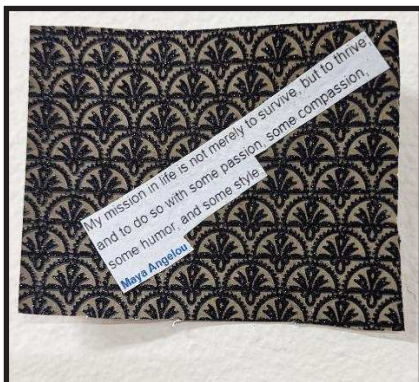
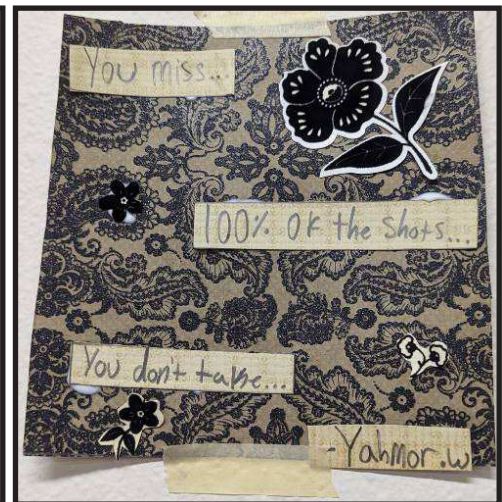
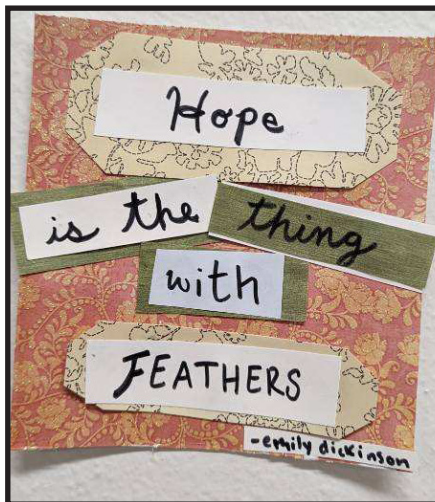
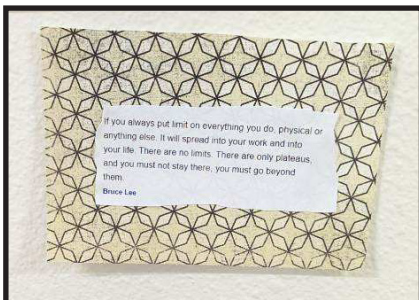
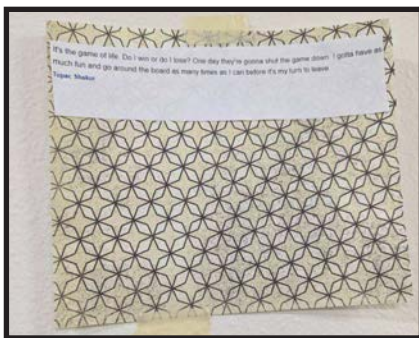
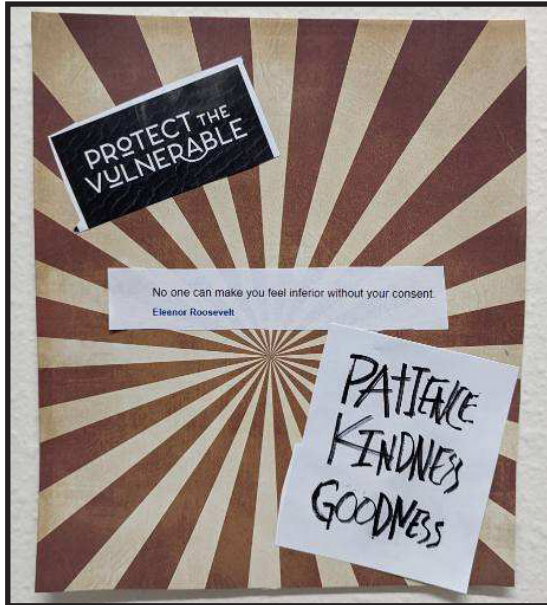
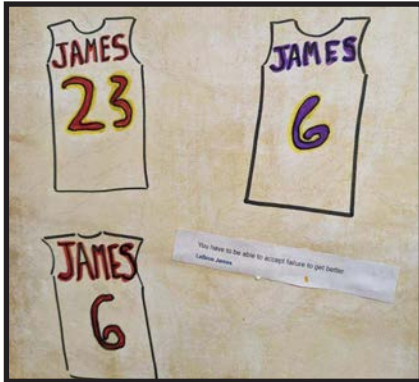
Quality time day? **(Antanasia)**

Hold hands and think of the people we love, dead or alive. **(Zinedine)**



SCRAPBOOKING QUOTE ART

Students created their own quote poster to add to our back wall of inspiration. They either created a quote or saying of their own, used one of the ones printed out for class, searched the internet for a quote that is meaningful to them, or found a quote by someone they admire. Here you can find their creations!



LETTERS TO OUR ODYSSEY JUNIOR KIDS



My dear children, thank you for being a part of this journey with me.

To my nephew Zay, thank you for turning your act around and being a good leader to your cousin and other students in the classroom. I know times can be rough and ants can be in your pants, but please be patient with me while on this journey.

To my daughter De'Zariea, thank you for being a part of this journey with me also. I know there's a lot on you by being the bigger sister but thank you for always having my back and your siblings' backs. You're always excited about Wednesday's class. Thank you for being such a leader and inspiration to others.

To Dream and Ocean, I know you don't know much about what's going on but thank you for being a part of this journey.

I appreciate all of you. If it wasn't for you guys, then I don't know how I would be able to do the things that I'm doing to better our lives. You guys are my inspiration and my team. **(Tameia Allen)**



To Amir, Akeem, Jr, and Nymir, I owe it all to you guys. You four are what keeps me going. You all made me the strong woman I am today. I know I'm not the perfect parent and there are many things I need to work on and mature in, but I promise I will get there for you. I wish I could spend all my days with you, and I wish I could be around more, but everything I am doing is to make sure you all will never have to feel a struggle. I thank God for your grandmothers and fathers. They are every bit of support I need while I get everything in order for us. You guys keep me going. No matter how hard it gets, I am so

grateful to be your mother. I love y'all the most, and I will forever stand on doing what I need to do to make sure y'all are taken care of always. I love you. **(Antoneah Armour)**



This letter is to my oldest child, Emprizz. What makes you special is your beauty inside and out and the way you light up every room you step into. The way you entered this world is bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, and ready to conquer. How positive, sweet, and gentle your spirit is. Your eagerness to learn and intelligence at six years old is unmatched, plus the way you care for everyone

around you but still don't forget about yourself. Even through you are the child, I look up to you. I aspire to be so mighty but so gentle at the same time. I always joke and tell you, "I want to be just like you when I grow up," and I mean it. Your femininity and multitalented gifts are something to be proud of. I want you to know I am extremely honored and proud to be your mother. I pray to the bottom my heart that you never allow this chaotic world to dim your light, my pritzzy pri. **(Jekeiria Booker)**





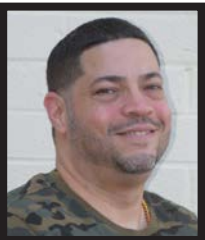
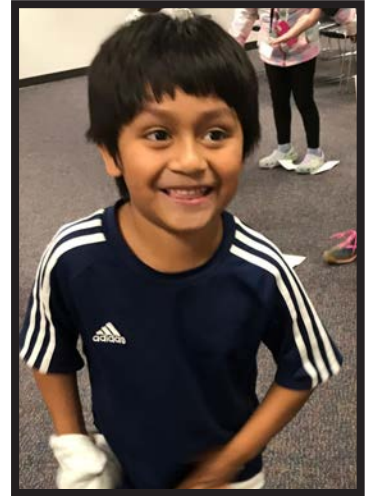
To my children, I want to start off by saying thank you—thank you for making me the woman I am today. Being your mother has been the biggest blessing I’ve ever received. You all gave me the courage and strength that I needed to keep going, to never fail, to always get up and keep going. Thank you for never judging me and loving me unconditionally. I promise to never let you all down and to be the best mother I can be.

(Gabrielle Brown)



For my children, I would like to tell you how proud I feel of you. I want you to know that you are my inspiration to continue studying. I am very happy that you are coming to Odyssey Jr. because it is a good program that will help you to have the key to knowledge and finish your goals. I want to thank you for coming to class and being part of my dream. Thanks for all the support you give me. Together we can finish our goals. Thank you!

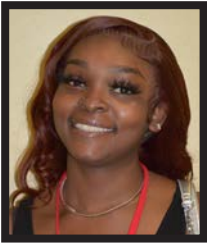
(Fredy Carcano)



Dear Son (Irie), I am beyond proud of the growing man that you are. The kindness and love that live in your heart pours out through your smile, and it is infectious

to me in a way that gives life to my heart. You inspire me to be a better person every day. I am lucky and honored to call you my son, and it is with great joy that I say that I am beyond grateful that you are having this Odyssey experience with me. This is a moment in our life history that we will be able to share with each other, and the moment will only be ours. Today, tomorrow, and always, this moment will forever live in my heart. I love you forever, butter. Always, Dad. **(Mark Español)**





To my Ozzy... you are one of a kind! Something tells me you're my little star. You're so smart, sweet, and creative. You've made me feel ways that I'd never imagine feeling ever. From breast feeding you, to you learning to walk, to running and even running away from me now, I don't want you to grow up too fast. You'll be my little baby even when you're taller than me. You are teaching me to be patient with emotions and learning new ways to communicate.



My sweet baby, I wish I could go to school with you. Be the best, most loving, caring, smart, and handsome brown boy you can be. I'll always be here, no matter what. I love how I can do handshakes with you, even wrestle you! You're so tough but a pure marshmallow for mommy. Keep being true to you, and I'll show you the way. You just have to make the right choices for you. **(Geresa Homesly)**

To my dear sister, Antanasia ... I want you to know that you are an amazingly strong person. Living this life that has fallen into your lap with you brings me so much happiness. You aren't living the ordinary teenage life. I'd say you're like a super woman, so strong and beautiful. I love to look at your art. You're so talented, unique, and original.



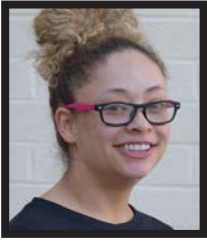
I want you to know that you will always have me on your side, right or wrong, and of course I'll guide you to be right when wronged. I want to see you flourish into that of a beautiful sunflower, so bright and vibrant! You'll be very successful at whatever you put your mind to. I love you to the moon and back. You're teaching me how to be nicer, even how to not scream. I love that you are not boy crazy. Instead, you're art crazy, anime crazy. Keep being true to you, something no one can show you how to be. No one can be a better you than you, my love. **(Geresa Homesly)**



Kai, knowing that you are coming to our life was the most beautiful gift that life gave me. You are the sunshine in my days that sometimes might be dark. You're my inspiration on the days when my mind might be blurry. You're always so perfect for me no matter if it is rainy or sunny, no matter if it is day or night. You're the best company I could have all the time and in every adventure we undertake together.

Coming to Odyssey class every Wednesday and running after each other in the parking lot and before every class is fantastic. What else should I ask for in life if I have you by my side, my lovely son? What else should I ask for in life if you light my days with your smiles, with your favorite rock music, with your favorite dances, and with your marvelous songs that you sing that even the birds in the trees follow your rhythm? My lovely son, keep being the person with the beautiful heart you have. Never stop being the smart, happy, joyful, caring person you are. love you forever, my beautiful son Kai. **(Aida Inunca)**



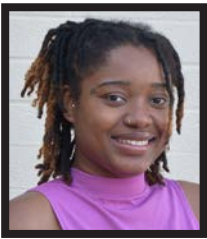


Rylan, I am so happy you enjoy coming to Odyssey with me every week. I look forward to learning with you. You are so talented and a lot smarter than you think. I believe you can achieve ANYTHING you want to in life. I love you to the moon and back.

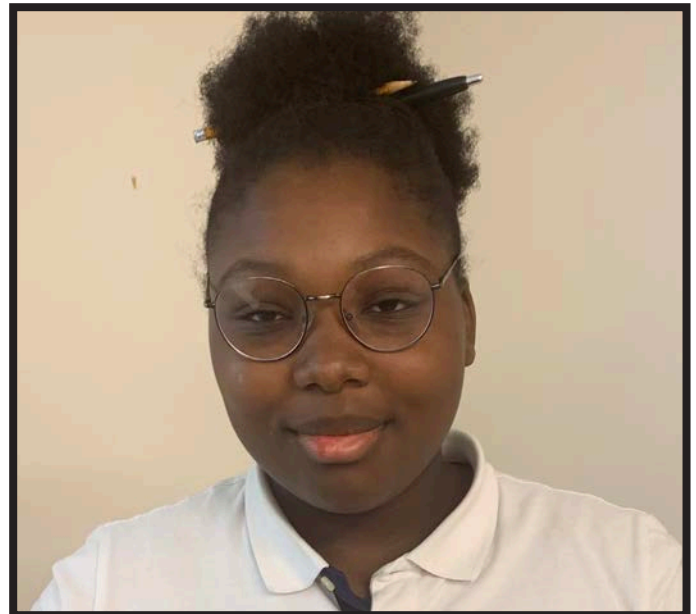
Rexley, I love how much you enjoy learning new things. You remind me so much of myself when I was younger. Loving learning and loving reading is going to take you many great places in life, and I can't wait to be by your side on your journey!

Ramzi, you can be whoever you want to be. The sky is limitless!

Love, Mom **(Tierra Kimbrew)**



I'm so proud of you, Chy Chy [Cheyene]. I'm always trying to learn so I can teach you new things. Over the summer, I sent you to a law enforcement leadership camp and since then, you've told me you want to be a police officer, parole officer, or anything related to law. I'm excited I was able to expose you to a new environment and help you figure out what you're interested in. Continue to be beautiful and never forget every day is a new day. You can be or do whatever you want. Just be you, my love.



Bear, being your mom has brought me so much joy. I call you Bear because you're my cub and I'm the mama protector for you. I'm excited to see you grow and learn new things and have adventures. You are very good at building blocks. I like seeing you coloring. You enjoy the book Brown Bear Brown Bear, What Do You See? And you like playing basketball and doing flips. I would like you to know that I'm a very strong, resilient individual who is trying to learn so I can teach you different things. Everything I do, I'm doing for you and your sister and for your future. **(Monèl Long)**



From Mami to my kids, Eli, Fabi, Isra, and Luna:

Luna, my dear, I know that Wednesdays are tiring for you, so after picking you up from your school (daycare) I bring you with me. While I am in my class, you are being cared for in your Baby Badger room. I know you have made more friends and your teachers speak very highly of you. Thank you forever, my dear Luna, for your patience.

Fabian, my son, I appreciate your desire to always want to come to your classes with your teacher Marisol in the spare room. You have this peculiar way of giving life a look of fun while you learn. Never underestimate your way of being generous and empathetic with others. You have a facility to make new friends easily. I know that sometimes you have had tired days, and even so you have to come to class with Mommy without complaining and without putting butts. Thank you very much for your flexibility and understanding.

Eli, my love, I thank you very much for coming with me and leaving your comfort zone. I know that being around new people causes you a bit of anxiety, but I am also proud of your courage and coming with me with a good attitude. I know that by accompanying me during my classes, you and your siblings also learn something, which adds a lot to our life experiences. You have to stretch without breaking.

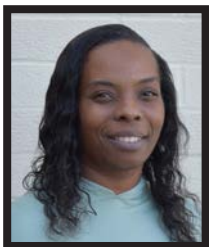
Isra, my dear eldest son, I remember the day we came to register



for the class and meet your teachers and your classroom. You were enthusiastic and I can admit that you always show yourself open to changes. I am very proud of you and your persevering character. Keep your optimism so that you can always move forward one day at a time. I know that many times we are in a hurry to get to class on time. Thank you for your support and remember that every step we take to improve our education always brings rewards. I wish you not to lose your sensitivity to recognize what is honest because it will help you understand the world and bravely face injustices.

To my children, while you continue to grow at your own pace, each day more, always remember that my pride in you increases without ceasing and that I love you to infinity and more.

I am also grateful that in our Odyssey class there is always a delicious dinner that satisfies our palates... Thank you! **(Maricela Martinez Munguia)**

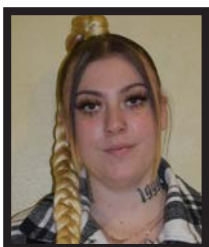


Ricquone, Talaya, and Omarion, I see joy and determination when I look into the future for you three. Coming to class every night is my way of showing you

three my journey for a better education and way of life. I'm happy to be your mother. I'm not only doing this for me but for you three also.

On Wednesday morning Omarion reminds me we have class tonight. It's the way you say it that makes me excited to attend but also gives hope that I will finish and graduate in May. Even though I play so many roles in your life, the main role I want to play is being your important and focused, strong, loving, honorable, and well-respected mother, someone you can lean on for anything whatsoever. You, my children, are my focus, and I vow always put your needs first.

Always remember that to get ahead in life, you have to lean on education. Keep loving me for who I am and nothing less. With you all behind me, there's not a challenge I can't handle. I truly love and adore you all. Put yourself first and everything else will fall in line. **(Lavinia Miller)**



Analia and Azalea, you both have such a bright future ahead of you, getting so big and so smart by the minute. I am so happy you get to experience this Odyssey journey with me. I thought I'd be held back going back to school, having two young children, but in 2020 when you guys were only two and not even a year old, I got my HSED through MATC.

Now here we are two years later, together here at Odyssey. I can't wait to make you both proud and provide you a life I never had. I will be the first family member to graduate from a college program once we are finished. I hope to continue my education further with you both by my side. I love you both so much. It's all for you and your baby sister. We are on the way. I hope we will be in our mansion someday soon.

(Keely Nelson-Gray)





Dear kids, my other halves, I love you so deeply, and I am so proud of you guys. I don't know how life would be without you. As Mom, I get so tired and may scream and need a break, but when I am without you, I feel empty.

Each of you guys carries me in you. Princeton is my royalty prince who has a heart of loyalty. Nobody would ever understand, but you remind me of myself.



Then my Legend Loyal Sims is my walking dictionary, really educational, book smart. Your brain is amazing.

Mr. Antwon always reminds me of how beautiful his mom is. Your name should be Knowledge because I swear you have been here before.

Kahliana, that's my mama's girl, your mommy my BFF, and you're so beautiful with your beautiful eyes. I remember it was just me and you when I gave birth. That's why you're so strong with a big spirit; you're going to have more courage than Mommy ever had. You made my life better knowing

you allowed me to look at myself in the mirror. That's why I hold you close and tell you how beautiful and smart you are. You taught Mommy to know her worth.

My kids, each of you in the future is going to be great. God showed me how. **(Kiana Sims)**



My dearest Camilla and Keziah, I thank you for taking this journey with me to a better and brighter future. I appreciate your patience as I

navigate through the many avenues on my way to finding me so that I am better for you. Mommy wants to give you more than worldly possessions; Mommy wants to give you the gift of knowledge—the gift that keeps on giving. Love always, Your "Life Size Doll" Mommy **(Dominique Smith)**





My Joy, I love you. You are my sun on cloudy days. You came into my life and brought me a purpose. Being young when I had you makes me appreciate you more. All of the hard times I've had, you experienced with me, so you understand me like no one else can. You are special to me, truly. You look at me with no judgment in your heart, only love.

I adore the way you want to be me, pretending to read books like me, even though you can't read yet, exercising with me because you like seeing me healthy, and speaking your mind just like me. I want to raise you to be fearless and powerful, to know that one day you'll be a queen and the world is yours! My beautiful black Joy.

Being your mom is a blessing, and I am glad to have you experience everyday life with me. On Tuesdays you ask, "Mommy, do we have class tomorrow?" Every freaking Tuesday, even on the days I don't want to go,



I answer "yes" because I want to set an example for you. Coming to class without you would be strange because you're the reason I'm still coming. Knowing you are down the hall waiting until 7:30 PM to ask me what I learned today, just like I do for you after school, is motivation for me. Most of the time you have no idea what I'm talking about, but you pretend you do because you care. Thank you for caring for me, loving me, believing in me.

Thank you for being my Zola. I can't imagine a world without you in it. Our love is forever, always has been, always will be. Hugs and kisses, your mommy <3 **(Tiara Smith)**



Alejandra, my first love, my everything, my struggle baby. We came a long way together through rain, sun, and storms. You are the reason why I am the woman I am today. Thank you! I'm so proud of you! You're 18 and graduating high school. You did it! We did it! I couldn't be prouder of you! Remember always you can do anything you want in life—you've just got to do it. I love you!

Miguel, Migo! To the coolest kid with the biggest heart, I love you! You're my favorite little man in the whole world, my man of the house. Life would never be the same without you. You are my soul, my boy! Keep being you and don't change! I love you, Mijo!

Cielo, my twin! I love you from the moon to the stars! You are the best little sister your siblings could have. I love your determination at such a young age. Keep shining bright like a diamond Love, Mami **(Roxanna Sobrevilla)**





Dear Lexi, you are the most beautiful and smart girl that I know! Remember when I first told you about Odyssey? You weren't very thrilled about coming to "class" after school, but now you love it here! I'm so proud of you for taking this journey with me. --Mom

Dear Narai, I was nervous bringing you into daycare, but look at you! You're being one of the best Baby Badgers in Odyssey! I love that you're making friends and having fun! <3 --Mom
(Andrea White)



Dear Aiyanna and Yahmor, I love you so much.

Aiyanna, you are so bright and happy and love to share that with everyone around you, and at the same time, you can be bossy and outspoken. I love every bit of you. I see how you are growing and learning. Although it's rough sometimes, you never lose your shine. My sweet baby, keep growing and becoming the best you can be, and I'll be right here helping and cheering you along.



Yahmor, you are growing so fast that it's scary. I look at you now and wonder where the time has gone. The hardest thing to admit is as a parent, my job is to prepare you for life without me, so as much as I want to hold on as long as possible, I know that you are ready to see the world and find new adventures in life.

All my love, Mommy. **(Mya Whitson)**



Symoni Yakeen, and Priya Lee,
I am so proud of thee,
You fill my heart with joy and glee.
You're the best big sister to Priya Lee.
You two girls are my world, you see.
No one else can be what you be.
No, I'm not perfect, so don't fault me, please.

I'm just trying to be the best facsimile.
Nothing can break our bond you see,
I'll always be there 'til the lights turn out on me.
I am so delighted that you picked me to be your mommy.
My sweet little ladies, Simoni Yakeen and Priya Lee.
(Amanda Willis)





My children are all special in their own way. They are all kind, funny, and energetic. I am so proud of all the experiences they are gaining through Odyssey Junior.

For example, Zion got into a drum band through a summer drum camp he attended that was sponsored by Odyssey Junior. He also told me he wants to be a mechanic because of the experience he got through a summer program sponsored by Odyssey. Zion is a go-getter. He is not afraid to speak his mind and try new things, and he is always leading from his kind heart.

I am proud of Zawadi. She has a heart of gold. She is shy like me, but her beautiful spirit and presence can be felt wherever she goes. Zawadi is my Picasso. She is an amazing artist, and her voice is one of a kind.



Zaria is my little parrot. She always has something to say, and she is so funny. She has the best laugh and is very inquisitive.

Kingston is my gentle soul. He has the best smile. Just like his big sister Zawadi, his kind spirit is always felt.

I want my kids to know how proud I am of them. They should continue reaching for the stars. I will always support their dreams. Thank you, Odyssey Junior.

(Josephine Lorya '08)



RJ, Grandma Mary loves you SO MUCH! Ever since you took your first breath nine years ago on June 6, 2013, I have looked forward to every opportunity to spend time with you. Each moment is special to me. Our "special time" together happens every Wednesday at Odyssey Jr. as well as at tutoring on Tuesday.

I look forward to seeing your smiling face as you listen to your favorite song, "Smooth Criminal" by Michael Jackson. There are lots of things I love about you, but most of all I love your great sense of humor. You are compassionate, and you have integrity and honesty, which are all qualities that will take you far in life. You are funny and intelligent, and you care deeply about your entire family, including your new baby brother KJ, who was born one day before your birthday.

A few history facts for you: In 2006 I was introduced to the Odyssey family, and in 2017 you were introduced to the Odyssey family through Odyssey Jr. I love to see your enthusiasm each week of coming to Odyssey to see your friends, including therapy dog Duke Ellington. It makes me happy to see that you have the exact same enthusiasm coming to Odyssey each week. Love, Grandma Mary **(Mary Wells '07)**





Dear Emi and Alex,

Emi, it's very wonderful seeing you grow. This year finally you are able to learn how to play the violin, and you are taking it seriously with extra classes

from Odyssey! Good for you, Emi!

Something that I love about you is how you show your kindness to others. Thank you so much for being so helpful, respectful, and a good listener during Odyssey Junior, tutoring nights, and at school. I feel very proud of you, and I know you will reach your goals because you are very smart, capable, and a hard worker.



Alex, I'm so happy that this school year is being so far so good for you. I love to see you so confident and full of knowledge. I love to see you taking advantage of the good opportunities that life brings to you. Your godmother offered to teach you piano and you accepted it, at school they offered to teach you how to play an instrument and you chose the trumpet, and Odyssey Junior gives you the opportunity to learn guitar and you took it too. I love to see your love for learning. It makes me feel very proud of you and very lucky to be your mother.

With infinite love, your best and only mother. **(Marisol Gonzalez '16)**



Zinedine, my special handsome young man, you bring out laughter, are gifted with the ability to gab with just about anyone, and that have a brilliant imagination that makes you so special! I am so proud of your accomplishments this year. With your brother being away, you still work on your goals and tackle your ghosts. I hope my sacrifices will bring you a life of happiness and adventure. I wouldn't change a

thing about you because you drive almost everyone crazy, including Aaron. Love, mom! **(Sandra Zintzun '19)**



To my son, TJ, what I really admire about you is your ability to love others and care so freely. You have such a genuine spirit. I remember when you were first born and how you had

this luminous aura about you. Your smile, your eyes, and your laughter are something remarkable. You are my light in the darkness and my biggest blessing. I love you, son. **(Michelle Mack '22)**

