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ODYSSEY



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ODYSSEY LOVE



Contents

I Love	2
Martin Luther King, Jr. on Love	13
Fabric of Our Lives	14
Creating a Class Cape at the Chazen.....	25



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I LOVE . . .

In search of a broader definition of love for Valentine's Day, Odyssey students completed paragraphs or verses starting with the two words "I love."



I love watching my kids sleep. Watching them sleep brings joy to my day. Waking up at the crack of dawn, getting them dressed for the day, making sure they

have something in their stomachs before they walk out for the school bus and my younger kids off to daycare, I then am going to work and picking them up after a long day, going home playing with and educating them, then feeding and bathing them for the night, playing waterfall sounds so my younger kids can fall asleep, and then reading a book so my older kids can feel comfortable while they fall asleep. Watching them sleep all worn out from the day brings joy to my day. I literally watch them sleep and sometimes wake up in the middle of the night just to make sure that they are safe and breathing, happily sleeping. **(Tameia Allen)**



I love my kids. I can be going through the toughest time of my life, and they always bring a smile to my face. I love how my kids love me as their mom. It's always such a good feeling coming home from work and seeing them run up to me with those huge grins on their faces. My kids are the best part of me, and nothing makes me happier. **(Antoneah Armour)**





I love art! Whether it be tangible like a sculpture or painting, music or the movements of dance, I love anything that can help me express my thoughts and feelings through color and sound. It's a place where you can connect to others without words. (Kaitlin Birdsall)



I love basketball because it brings people together, whether you're watching it or playing it. I met most of my closest friends from playing basketball. It teaches teamwork and being respectful to one another. Basketball has always been my escape, and that will never change.

(Jonathan Booley)





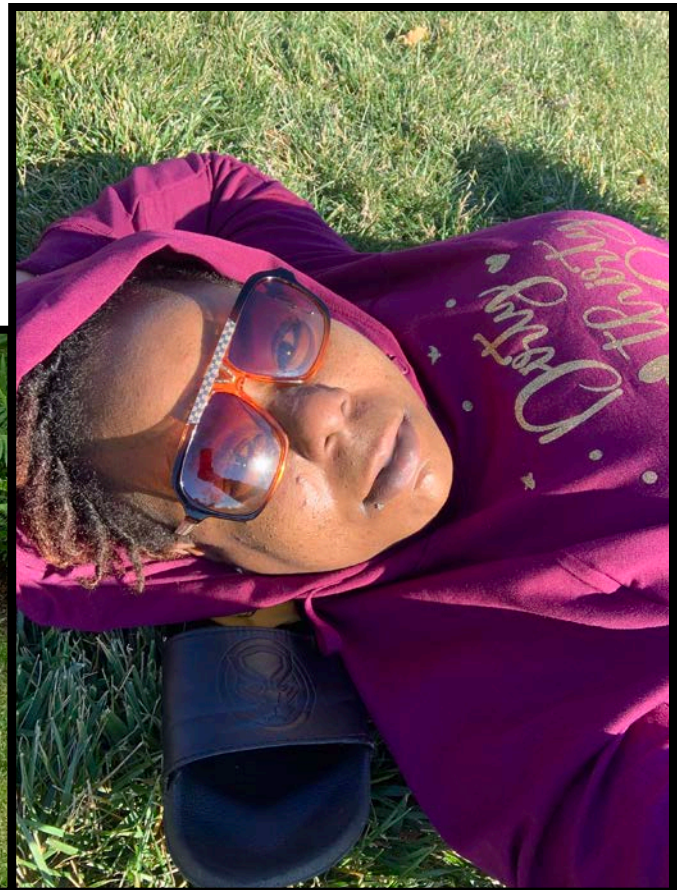
I love to give and receive love.
 I love the exchange of genuine energy,
 When you're down,
 a simple act of love can be the remedy.
 I love how real love can't be duplicated.
 I love when love is reciprocated.
 I love that love brings the absolute best out of us.

This time in my quest for romantic love I will not rush.
 I love that my kids showed me the highest form of love
 so in return I know who and who not to trust.
 Love is abundant
 So it is never redundant. **(Jekeiria Booker)**



I love the warmth beneath the
 sun. I love how the sunshine feels
 against my caramel skin. I love
 how the rays of light reflect off the
 things that are near. I love how
 the sun nourishes all around. I
 love how the sun warms my soul. I

love that we are children of the sun. I love the sun.
(Sarah Branch)





I love coming home to my children after a long day of work and school. I love being able to walking into my own home and inhale my plug-ins and just breathe. Kicking off my shoes and putting on some comfortable clothes is the best. But what I love the most is seeing my kids run to me with so much joy, laughing and telling me stories about their day. (**Gabrielle Brown**)



I love cooking. Cooking is not just to make food. It is to create something tasty with imagination. It is art and symbolizes tradition, culture, and history. Each dish means something. I love cooking. (**Fredy Carcano**)



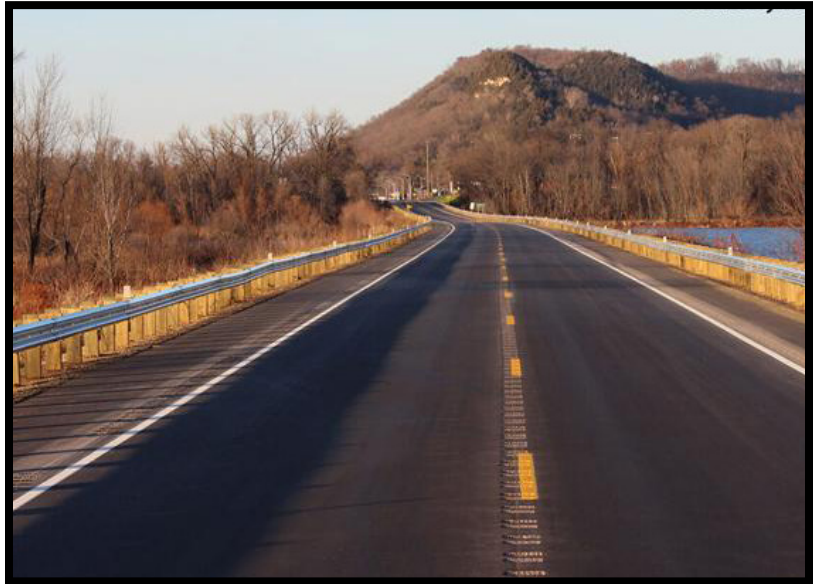
I love music. On a bad day I can listen to music and allow it to rescue me, to take my mind to a better place in time, and to also give me the motivation to keep pushing forward. Music is a universal language that can take you through an odyssey. From sounds of the Caribbean with instruments such as the congas and the guiro (salsa), to the electric sounds of dance music with instruments such as drums and bass, music can take you through a rainforest just as it can take you through the congested traffic of New Year City. Music speaks to me through any experience life has to offer. (**Mark Español**)





I love taking trips and driving because I believe the highway and I are best friends. That's where I can focus the most and where I feel free. I can do what I want

because I'm an adult. Driving on the road makes me love me more. I get to let my thoughts and feelings run through my head. I don't have much to worry about as long as I'm driving. I feel free from stress calls and have no worries. I love listening to music while driving to ease my soul. Driving is my ultimate love life.
(Curtrice Foster)



I love being me.
I love being free, phenomenally.
I love beauty,
I'm such a cutie!
I love playing sports,
I love running up and down courts
I love flowers, to smell every hour.

I love my life,
my life is so bright
So bright like the sky,
the sky so blue and so high
(Geresia Homesly)



I love my family because we have been through so much tragedy these last four years, 2018-2022. We have lost a lot of family members, but we are still strong. My brothers and I

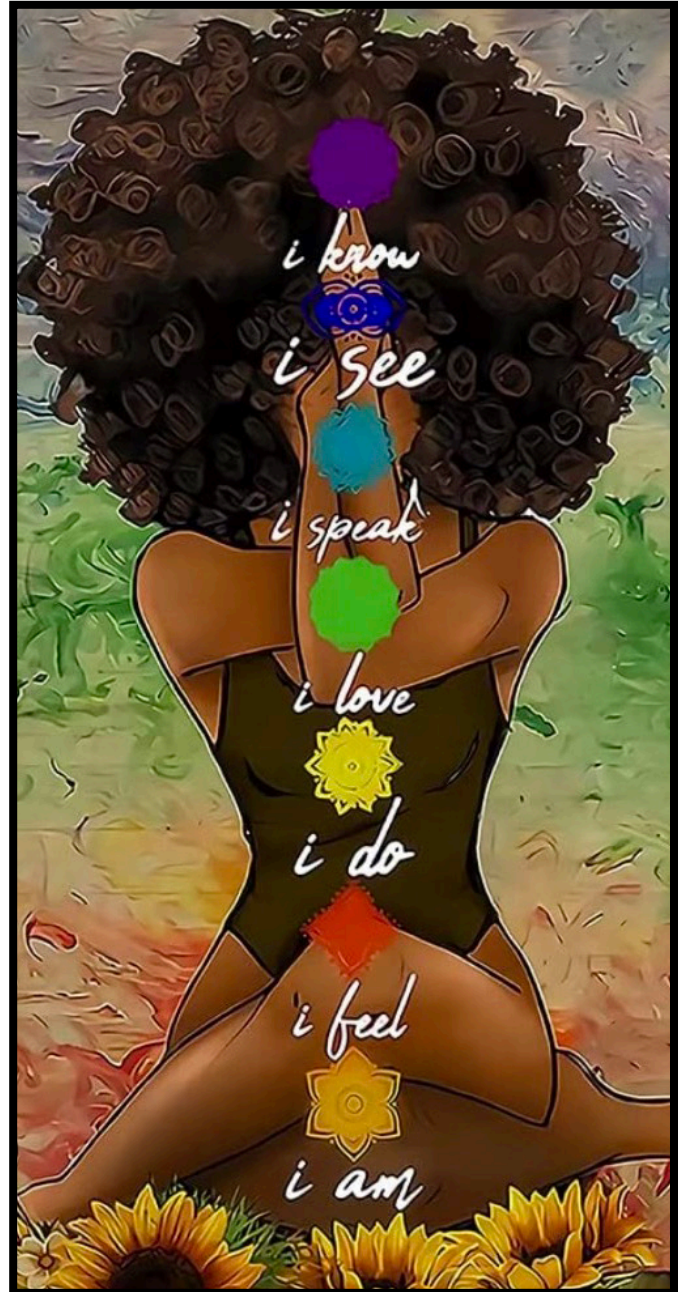
lost the most important person in our life, and that was our mother, Ruth Ann Diggs, but we are staying strong. My children and grandchildren are the love of my life. Last year was very hard because I lost a lot of family members. I got down and depressed for awhile, but once I found out that I had been accepted into the Odyssey Program, I had something to look forward to that would help me deal with what has happened in my life. I look forward to a better life by helping myself and my family.
(Tyrone Hudson Sr.)





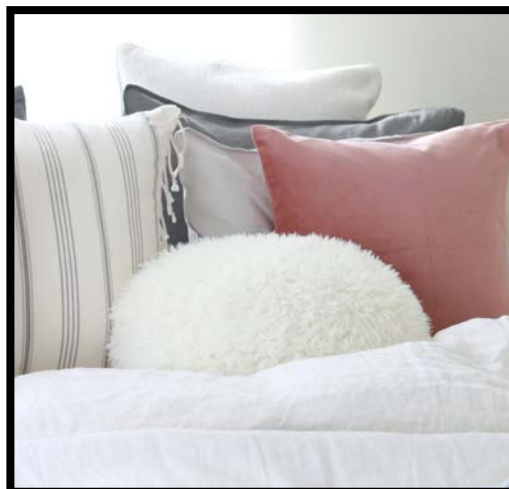
I love cooking a special meal for my family. I love cooking *llapingachos*, with piled corn. I love making *chicha de jora* with seven types of corn. I love to see the happiness of my son when he delights in the *pristiños*.

(Aida Inunca)



I love my bed. It is my favorite place to be. It's cozy, comforting, and warm. I love taking naps alone in my bed. I like to watch TV and eat

in my bed. We have family movie nights in my bed. My kids love to sleep in my bed. My bed makes me feel safe. I love to sleep. Sleep brings me so much peace. All of my worries are gone when I am asleep.
(Tierra Kimbrew)



I love being a chakra, living bliss by joy, allowing my intuition to be 100% responsible for my art addict energy. My chakras

bring in wheels of empathic healing frequencies, with 432 the sound I want to give to you. Through teaching I am also evolving, and that's how you bear the fruits.
(Monél Long)



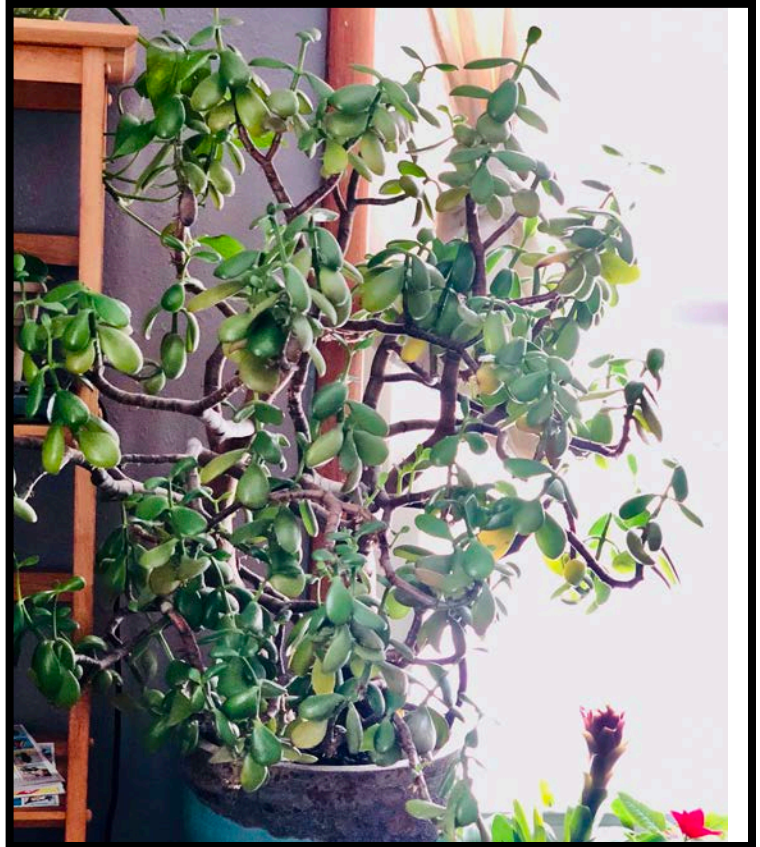
I love having plants inside my house, whether they are hanging, small, large, with flowers of different colors. The plants give me a sense of tranquility, freshness, and a good vibe.

(Maricela Martinez Munguia)



I love being a mother learning something new every day. I love knowing that my children love me for who I am, with hearts that will take me on my bad days, when my hair is standing on

my head and I haven't brushed my teeth, the kinda love that just doesn't go away. I love my kids. The joy in the love I get from them is the love that is unstoppable. I love the love my children have and will always have for me. Warm hugs, wet kisses, movie nights: I wouldn't ask for anything less. **(Lavinia Miller)**





I love my life! In the past I never gave myself the time or the space for myself. I moved to the USA at 17 years old, and I came

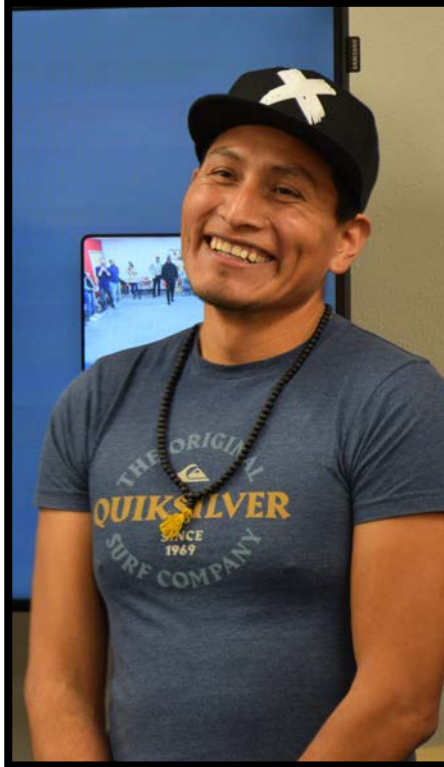
here straight to work. I never had the opportunity to study, to grow, or to discover who I am. Today is about finding the real me, who I am and what I am capable of doing. I love my life! Life is beautiful and I'm very content with my little but beautiful simple life. I love my life!

(Saul Naxi Perez)



I love who I am. I love that I can bounce back from anything life throws at me. I love my hustle. I love my ambition to continue to grow and elevate my life. I love my faith I

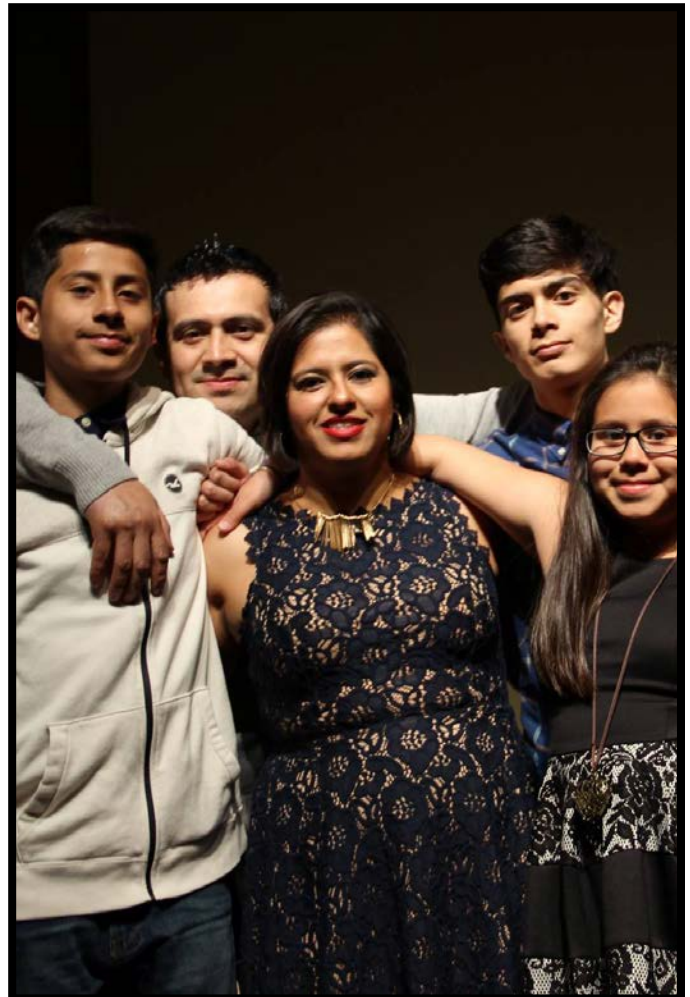
have that allows me to push myself to achieve my goals. I love that everything I want I get it. I love the mother I am. I love where I am headed even through every imperfection. **(Keely Nelson-Gray)**



I love my family because they always bring me up when I'm down, and they are supportive.

My family is amazing. I can say so many good things about them. It would fill up this whole page. But I'm going to keep it short and sweet. I love my family because both of my parents are very hard working and they never give up; they are always giving their 110% in everything. My siblings are also very supportive and always there for me. That's why I love my family so much.

(Gael Rodriguez)





I love family. Peace is knowing that the lord of the universe is by my side and resting in my soul. I love being different. I love being a mom. I love love because that's something you can't buy. Love doesn't cost a thing. I love being a leader. I love giving hope. **(Kiana Sims)**



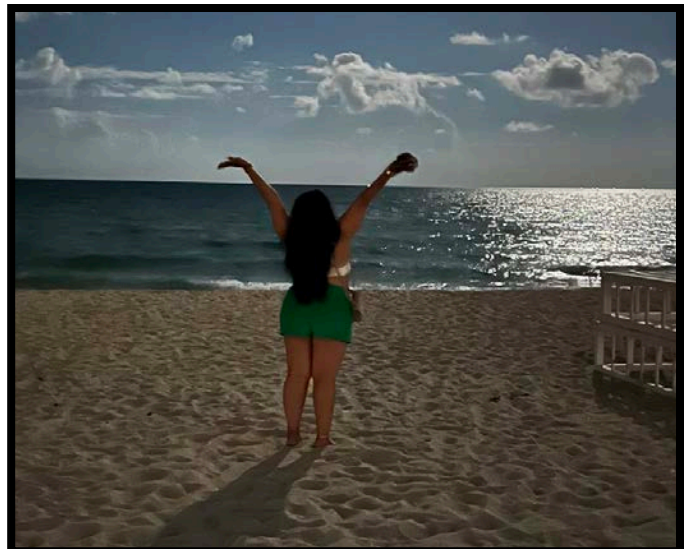
(Tiara Smith)

I love change. It pushes me to adapt, grow, and explore different things in life. I love that with change I change and become something better. I love adapting, building character and evolving. I love change, and it changes me.



I love my universe! (Roxanna Sobrevilla)

I love my universe!
The universe loves me!
It guides my spirit and soul!
The universe is for me!
The sun! The stars!
The moon! My tears!
The universe defeats all my fears!



I love the courage of love. Love is powerful and independent. It is not easily influenced. Love is honest, and love is assertive. Love lives in its truth and does not discriminate.

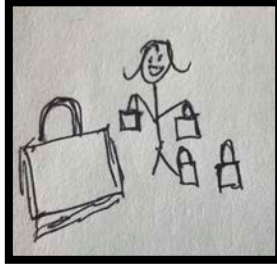
I love purple. I love its pure purpose and what it represents. Purple is royalty, powerful and pleasant to look at. **(Dominique Smith)**





I love shopping, or as I like to call it, “retail therapy.” I can stay hours shopping. If it were a job, it would be my dream job ha ha ha. I may have a lot of things, but there

are always new things, many things I want but don’t need. I love shopping.
(**Lupita Valerio Aragon**)



I love my life for what it currently is. I love waking up to my two beautiful daughters every day, having the time to make them breakfast every morning, and getting them to school and daycare. Having a job that not

only pays well but also continues to support, empower, and inspire me is such a blessing. Having the opportunity to serve on the leadership team at the Urban League of Greater Madison Young Professionals has been a tremendous help with developing myself personally and professionally. Lastly, being a part of Odyssey has been such a privilege—to be surrounded by so much love, encouragement, support, and knowledge. I still have days that aren’t necessarily great, but I now have the support system to continue to encourage me to push through. (**Andrea White**)



I love taking naps. The nap is quite possibly the best thing God ever created. I like taking short naps to reset my brain when my day isn’t going the way I planned it. I love how a short nap pulls you right to the edge of sanity and insanity. I love long naps, the kind that have you thinking you started a new day but, surprise, it’s still Thursday and now I get to go back to sleep and finish my wonderful dream. Naps allow me to build a world in dreamland that I can play in all night once I go to rest for the day. Naps are building blocks to summer mornings on a sandy ocean beach front, a long hike through an autumn wood full of multicolored trees, a spotlight on me as I begin a sonata I wrote myself, playing at the Sydney Opera House. (**Mya Whitson**)





I love
Odyssey! It
has given me
the strength
to do things I
never thought
I could do!

Being a part of Odyssey, I feel
like I'm on top. I'm more open
to change now without being
scared. I tell everyone about
all the amazing things about
Odyssey. **(Amanda Willis)**



I love my
life and my
children
so much.
They are
everything
to me. I am

giving them the life I never
had, pushing them so they
can be strong in life and
not ever want for anything.
I love that I have a great
relationship with my mom

and my brother. They mean the world to me, and
there's nothing I wouldn't do for them. I love that I
can love and I love really hard. That's for family and
friends. Love is me. **(Zykia Wilson)**



I love my body.
She creates and she heals
Provides warmth and love.
She gave shelter to my son
She's scared and bruised
Strong but slightly used
I love my body

I am enough
Beautiful and tough.
(Sinetra Wilson)



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ON LOVE

“Love is the most durable power in the world.”

“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

“Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.”

THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES

I have this warm fleece blanket with “Wisconsin Badgers” written on it. It’s red, black, and white. It has little shingles on the end of it. This blanket keeps you warm. It’s the go-to banket when sitting on the couch to watch a movie or take a little nap. **(Curtrice Foster)**



My one piece of fabric would have to be my red bracelet. From the day I was born, my parents have always kept an evil bracelet on me. It protects me from

the evil eye, bad energy, and jealousy. The one I wear every day means the world to me. My father gave me the bracelet I got on before he passed away. It’s been five years and still feels like new. It’s red as the same color blood my father and I have, strong as the love he had for his family, beautiful as my father was. My favorite fabric is my father! **(Roxanna Sobrevilla)**

My weighted blanket! It took me over a month to knit myself. I wanted to create something that I could completely wrap myself not just for cozy warmth but also for a mild form of grounding security.

Every stitch of the plush grey and bespeckled cream yarn was meticulously done, every night, and whenever I had time to spare for my anxious hands to move.

Whether it’s for an extra layer of warmth to throw on the bed or for burying myself on the couch, it’s my favorite go-to.

Unless it’s summer... then it’s too clingy and hot. **(Kaitlin Birdsall)**



My fabric choice is the white blanket over my sister's casket.

- The blanket is a rectangular shape
- The blanket is all white, soft to touch
- The blanket is warm-looking
- The blanket has my sister's smell
- The blanket was made by my grandmother
- The blanket cover is made out of soft fabric

The blanket cover means a lot to me. My grandmother made it by hand. My sister was covered up with the blanket in her casket. The blanket has my sister's smell on it. The blanket is the last thing my sister was touching in the casket. **(Tameia Allen)**

My mother's Rebozo is navy blue with white lines, rectangular, measuring almost one meter in length. It can be very versatile and used as a scarf or shawl to carry babies or transport things.



The Rebozo is one of my mother's favorite garments that she used during her life. My mother used to wear her shawl for almost all occasions, whether it was to cover herself from the cold, to snuggle up, to decorate her elegant clothing at a social event, to release dense energy when her body ached from a cold or fall, to carry groceries from the market, or to snuggle up to my brothers and me when we were little.



This shawl is very precious to me. On my sad days I usually wrap myself in it imagining that it is her arms that embrace me. On some other occasions I place it on my shoulders and extend my arms as if it were wings that are about to cover my children. On other occasions I use it to carry my children, like my two-year-old daughter while she sleeps. Other times I usually use it to put it on the waist, making a direct connection with my feminine energy.

This rebozo reminds me so much of her since she passed away. This is a way of keeping her close to me. **(Maricela Martinez Munguia)**

Mom's sweater. The item that I hold most dear is my mother's hoodie. It's a deep navy blue, a little faded from washing. The front zips up, which connects the two separate pockets. This was one of my mom's favorite pieces of clothing. After her passing, I decided to keep it. Days I need to feel her near, it warms me. It holds and wraps me, as if I were still in her arms. This hoodie is a reminder of all the wonderful, joyful moments we spent wrapped in each other's love. The sound of her voice is laughing near. **(Sarah Branch)**



My polo jacket. On March 3rd, 2022, I was released from prison after serving nine years. This is the first jacket I would wear as a free man, so it would have a sentimental value to me for the rest of my life. My jacket is made of cotton so it's soft to the touch and warm. My jacket was given to me by the woman I love that was waiting for me at the gates when I was released. My jacket is a sport jacket that is white in color with a navy-blue stripe down its sleeves. My jacket to me resembles freedom, love, and a new life. I love my jacket. **(Mark Español)**

This piece of fabric is a soft and fluffy baby blanket. You can compare it to touching a soft baby sheep. It's warm and cuddly and could make a person fall asleep within minutes, as if they were a newborn baby. This piece of fabric means so much to me because I had a very hard pregnancy with my youngest daughter. I was dealing with preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and low iron, so it was a very high-risk pregnancy, making me miserable. Seeing my baby for the first time and being able to wrap her up in this blanket made all of the sickness and pain worth it. **(Andrea White)**



It is a Mexican shirt called Guayabera. This shirt is white and has short sleeves with very colorful decorations. The colorful decoration is only a strip of fabric and is located in the right front of the Guayabera. The decoration is a combination of colorful threads that makes the Guayabera look beautiful. There is a small pocket on the left side of the shirt that is also decorated with colorful flowers. The material of just the Guayabera is one hundred percent cotton, and the decorations are a mix of different materials. And last, the buttons are made of coconut shells.



The Guayabera has a very special meaning to me because it represents the indigenous part of me, my roots, and my Mexican culture. I got this jewel on my last trip to Cuetzalan, Puebla, Mexico, my most favorite place in the whole of Mexico! Every time I wear the Guayabera, I feel very proud to represent my roots, my culture, my feelings, and my identity. "I am Mexican" is what it means when I wear traditional clothing, like this jewel from Cuetzalan, Puebla. This traditional clothing reminds me to stay humble and in touch with my roots and my ancestors. It is a reminder that says, "No matter how hard life gets, with faith, a blissful mind, and no limitations in oneself, everything is possible!"

I'm proud to be an indigenous Mexican. **(Saul Naxi Perez)**



I was given a hand-knitted quilt when I was pregnant with my son Deandrae. My dear friend Sue made it for me. Sue calls me her guardian angel because she believes I saved her life. This quilt is important to me because she created a one of one handmade item with me in mind to welcome my journey into motherhood. I appreciate the love that was put into this quilt, and maybe one day I'll be able to pass it down to my grandchildren. **(Monél Long)**

My grandmother's scarf means so much to me. She always wore it when I was a teenager, and I always used to ask, "Can I have it?" because it was so pretty. It is silky orange and green with a line pattern on it, and you can wear on your head or around your neck. My mom gave it to me when my grandmother passed away. Now my daughter has it, and she wears it every day to bed. **(Zykia Wilson)**



This is a special blanket made with patience and love from your great grammy's heart. It's made from blue fabric with tiny elephants on the other side, small enough to roll you up to keep you warm and cozy. Every night as we lay you to sleep, we cover you with more love. **(Sinetra Wilson)**

For my choice of fabric, I chose pillow quilts that my mom made. It's basically a blanket that you fold into a pillow. My mom has made tons of them over the years for her mother, children and grandchildren, family and friends.

The first one she made for me was when I was really young. He reminds me of a thin comforter, a little smaller than a full-size with just enough room for one. It has a cloudy blue background with small splashes of white all over it with pink and blue striped bows scattered about. The other side is lavender with a square pocket on it that you can use to fold the rest of the blanket into a pillow arm. When using it as a blanket, you can stick your feet right inside the pocket. I use mine so much I wear a hole right through it. You can't even see the teddy bear sitting in the middle of a train set with other toys surrounding it anymore.



When my older daughter was around four years old, my mom made her a pillow quilt and I asked for another one. My mom said, "No, you can come and make your own because I already made you one." Shortly after she rejected my request, I got burnt and she surprised me with a new one while I was in



the hospital. That pillow quilt was bigger and better than the first because my mom had evolved with all her experience of the years. It's thicker with microfiber fabric, both sides hot pink with white hearts all over; some are solid white, and others have a white outline. On the side where the pocket is is a picture of Lamb Chops leaning on a purple mushroom, smiling at a green butterfly with red and white wings. Lamb Chops's fur used to be fluffy and white until I fell back into old habits of sticking my feet in the pocket. Now poor Lamb Chops's face is gone! At least she still has eyelashes and a small piece of her nose with matted fur.

The pillow quilts are important to me because they are convenient, warm, and cozy, with different ways to use them. I have taken them on road trips and to the movies; I have hid all my snacks in the pocket. They hold decades of precious memories. Most of all, they're made with love by my mom!!! **(Amanda Willis)**

I am a Kichwa kayambi woman from the north of Ecuador. This fabric is meaningful to me because this is a type of traditional blouse I have worn since I was a baby. Hand embroidery is something that I do by heart, and all members of my community make their outfits by hand. Woven on the loom, embroidery designs identify our culture, and forms of life are stitched on the fabric. These designs are colorful and are the language of my community, the love of our ancestors to their kids and new generations, the happiness of a successful corn harvest in the field, the sunshine gleaming on the quinoa plantations, the water that springs as rain in our fields.

Colors are dyed with natural extracts from plants, such as nettle extract for green, nuts extract for brown. All these natural extracts convey the beauty of Mother Earth. Earth colors are my favorite.



Graphics tell the experiences and stories of those who embroider the blouse or the outfit. They tell a lot about the person's emotions. The colors and designs are the language through which people talk and communicate with each other. This old tradition of embroidery comes from an ancient time in my Andean Kichwa community, where Incas used a technique called Tocapus (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tocapu>), which was an artwork or design (textile) used by members of the community during special events such as the festival of sun. We still carry on this tradition in present days. When the festival of the sun is approaching, families are in a hurry to embroider their most beautiful blouses by hand for use during the celebration.

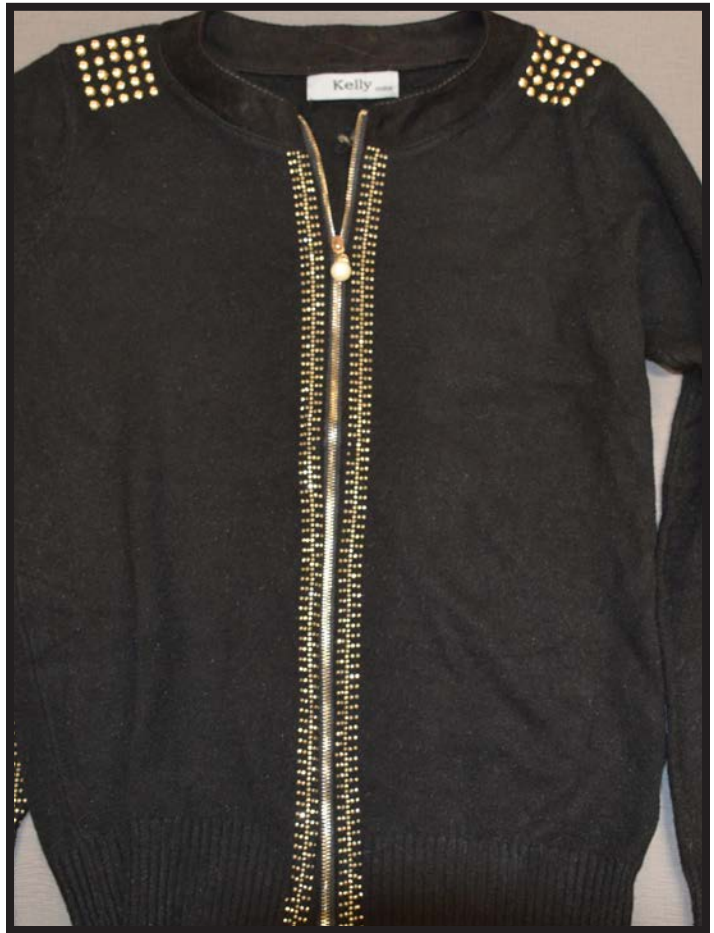
In my family, when I was just four or five years old, my mom gave me a set of colorful threads and pieces of fabric to build my embroidery endeavors along the way of my beginning life. My mom taught me several samples of stitches, such as the bosal and the llano. My favorite was the llano because it was more challenging. Bosal was much easier, and I used it only when I was stitching veins (lines) in the fabric.

Some people don't need to draw a design on the fabric before embroidering it; they just let their fingers and threads carry the emotions and feelings and pour them as a form of stitches in every pinch of the needle sewing the fabric. My mom never drew an image on the fabric before embroidering on it. Some people generally draw their history on the fabric, and then they stitch over the lines. A couple of times I tried to embroider without drawing on the fabric and it was hard, so I prefer drawing or templates.

Hand embroidery in my community is very common. People are embroidering all the time. They embroider while they are walking on the roads, when they are sitting on a chair or just on the dirt. They are embroidering everywhere and all the time. Even when they are cooking, they are embroidering their blouses. Every household carries tons of threads in different materials and colors and pieces of fabrics. The lines on the fabric mean routes in life and sometimes it means the field where the family goes to work every morning. The lines sometimes represent the seeds like gold treasures that Mother Earth gives to us. They are seeds such as corn (the gold of the Incas), potatoes, herbal medicines, quinoa, amaranto, chili peppers such as rocotos, food of the Incas.

Finally, I am proud of where the roots of my hand embroidery are coming from. I respect my ancestors, and I will never stop embroidering my dreams in my blouses so I can pass the message to the future generation.
(Aida Inunca)

The object I brought today is a sweater without a hoodie. It's black with a gold zipper, with gold details along the zipper. This piece is important to me because when I turned 15, my grandma and grandpa gave it to me. It was from Mexico, and they had come all this way to get me a gift and spend time with me. **(Guadalupe Valerio Aragon)**



Dark and warm like a muggy summer night. The color of waves crashing. This material is mostly made of sweat fabric, with an attached hood and ribbon to be laced up. Perfect for any weather, especially the rain.

But more importantly, it's really special to me because this is all I have of my brother Clinton, who passed away. His favorite. **(Gabrielle Brown)**

My fabric means life to me. My fabric is the very first items my children wore the moment they entered this world—the second after they took their first breaths, while still covered in white muck from the womb. Five and three years later, I still hold these items close to my heart. **(Keely Nelson-Gray)**



The fabric that I chose represents healing. I am going through a healing phase in my life, and the fabric is a design for healing. My family is healing. My soul and heart being broken, I am turning my scars into inspiration. Writing this article after being at the Chazen museum and speaking to my fellow classmates, I have found a family I never had. Loyalty is family. It comes with scars, and sometimes the scars need healing.

For me to be the best mother that I need to be and because I am a leader, I have to heal so I won't hurt my children. I have to heal to be a queen and a master of knowledge. If I don't take the time to heal, the scars get deeper, the pain gets harder and stronger. So the fabric I chose means healing. I'm so grateful to be a part of the UW Odyssey family, the family I never had. Being here, being accepted for who I am, being understood is a part of healing. **(Kiana Sims)**



This is a very classy but modern and abstract art purple silk scarf. It looks oriental. It reminds me of a cherry blossom tree with surrounding foliage. The print is of field workers, roosters, deer, chickens, dogs, and birds— a beautiful land of freedom.

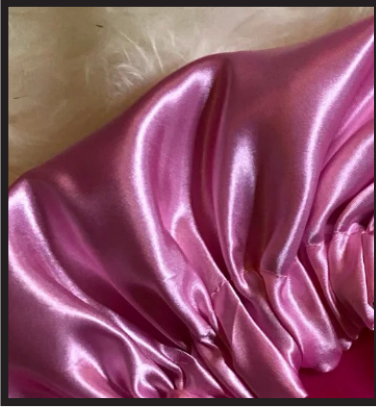
I got this scarf from a good friend named Shannon about four years ago. I usually wear it when I'm reading or having a few minutes of prayer time. It plays a role of comfort when I need a moment of quiet time, sometimes from a long day or early morning when I'm doing my morning prayer. **(Lavinia Miller)**

Here lies a small hand-crafted dress. It is made of white yarn to form the dress figure, with pink yarn bordering the hem of the dress and the waist belt to tie in the back. Ten inches in length, it is just big enough to fit a doll or small child.

This piece of fabric belongs to my first child, Camilla Marie Simon. She was born on February 26th at 12:13 AM at 22 weeks. The significance of this fabric is that it was the first and only dress she would wear and the first and only time I would be able to play dress-up with my little blessing.

Although my heart ached for what was to be the inevitable, I was able to enjoy being in the present with my daughter before she took her last breath. Holding her in my arms, I remained present in the moment and burned this memory with her in my heart forever. Mommy's little angel, Camille Marie Simon. **(Dominique Smith)**





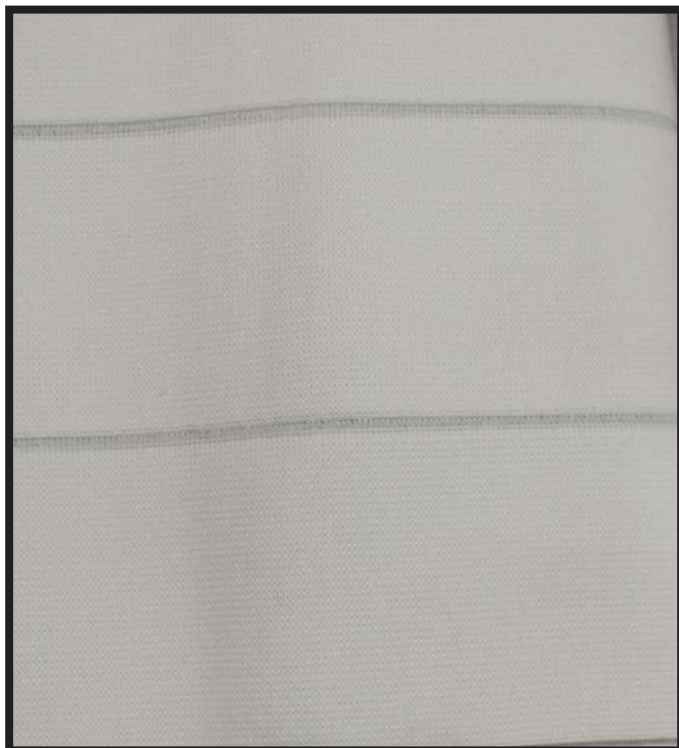
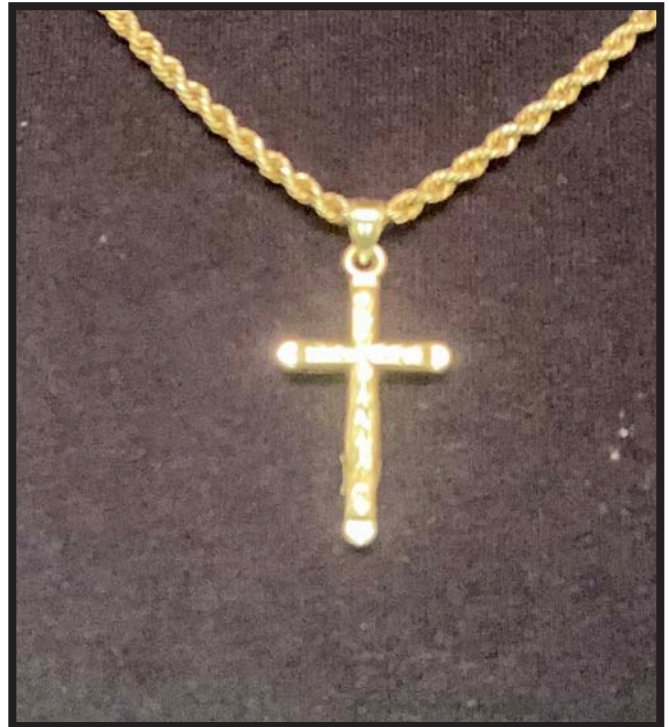
WHAT AM I?

This glorious rosé cloth is one-of-a-kind. Used for many reasons, this cloth has influential essence. Gazing for example as a rich auntie, but before slumber time situating the rosé cloth on my crown to protect my kinks. The rosé cloth is magical! What type of cloth am I? Silk bonnet.

So soft, fluffy, and white, I'm always open to warming offers! I'm always there when Ozzy cries or needs my help. He and I talk about everything. I'm always being thrown, bitten, even cuddled for bed. Ozzy and I travel everywhere together! What am I? Ozzy's Binky... white, mink fox fur

I am peaceful, spacious, and comfortable. You can walk around nude in me. I have two clusters like a home. What am I? Fluffy robe. **(Geresa Homesly)**

I chose to write about my gold cross that hangs around my neck every day. It shines like sunlight and catches a person's attention without making a sound. The exterior is hard like a stone while the interior is hollow like an empty box. The pattern going down the front of the cross mimics the stem of a flower that's rising from the soil. My gold cross symbolizes my beliefs and represents my faith. It reminds me to be a good person even when I don't want to be. It's most special to me because it's been with me through thick and thin and will continue to be. **(Jonathan Booe)**



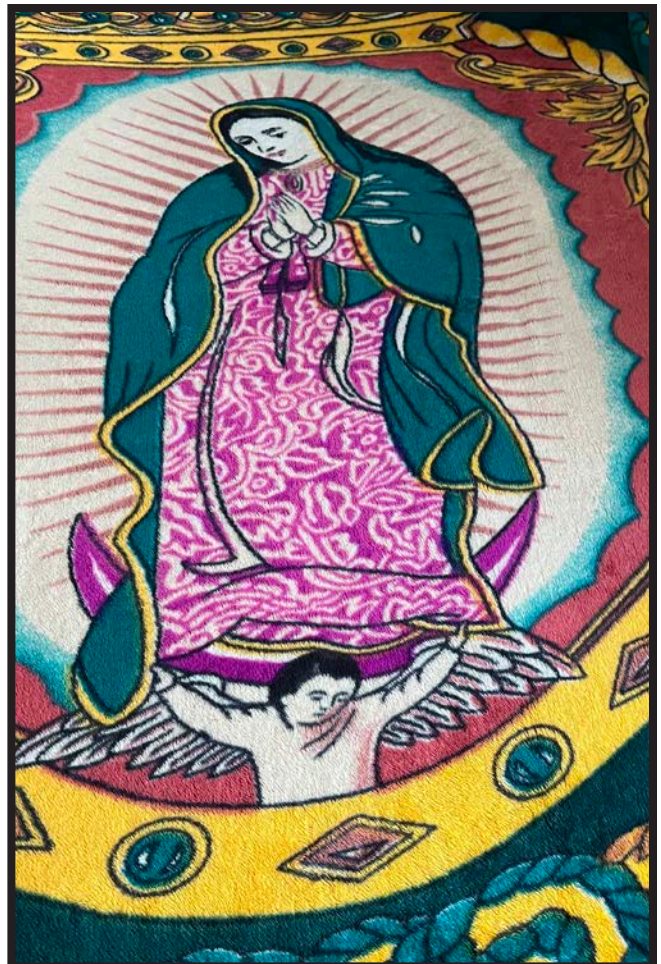
I picked a long white piece of rigid cloth that has Velcro straps at the end. This piece of material is stretchy but firm. My choice of fabric is a maternity band. A maternity band is a belt you wrap around your belly while pregnant to help support the lower back, pelvis, hips, and abdomen of a woman. This has meaning to me because I am a mother of three with one on the way. This particular cloth represents strength, nurture, and comfort to me. It also gives you a glimpse into the resilience and lengths a mother goes through to get her child here safely. **(Jekeiria Booker)**

I am writing about my dashiki that my fiancée brought back from Kenya for me. Tars Dashiki is a part of her African heritage, which the men over there used in ceremonies and weddings in their heritage. She had it made for me when she went back home for a visit. I hope to go over there to visit her family in Kenya one day and learn more about her heritage and culture. I also hope to see a safari while I am over there. The dashiki was handmade by one member of the family.

(Tyrone Hudson Sr.)



This is my wedding dress; it's the color of the first snow clouds in a December sky, a white that somehow has all of the colors of the rainbow inside of it. This is my fitting because the feeling of this dress is also like a cloud. It's silky and slippery and light, and it floats around me as if I am riding inside a cloud. I was on "cloud 9" when I got married as a December bride in my snow cloud dress. **(Mya Whitson)**



I don't really have anything that means a lot to me, but I have a blanket that is as old as I can remember. On the blanket, there is a big image of the Virgin Mary. I guess it has a little sentimental value just because it's been in our lives for so long. But it's a pretty big blanket. The main colors on the blanket are black, green, and red, and the Virgin Mary is centered in the middle of the blanket. As soon as you put it over you, the blanket is so soft, very cozy, and feels very comforting. **(Gael Rodriguez)**

My Mexico soccer shirt was a Christmas present to me from my oldest son, Juan. I loved it because all of my family loves soccer. It has the Mexican flag on the shirt as well as the colors green, red, and white. It has an Aztec logo that represents the culture of Mexico. Aztec is considered the most important civilization in Mesoamerica, and it represents where I come from. **(Fredy Carcano)**



This blue sleeper with the giraffe and koala bear is the very first sleeper I put on my baby when we were in the hospital. I remember the day we were supposed to be leaving the hospital I was so excited to get my baby dressed and go home. The doctors began doing the tests and check up on my son to clear us for leaving. Just when we were about finished, my baby began coughing and choking to the point where he couldn't breathe. They had to rush him to the NICU. I sat in the room crying, waiting for the results on what was wrong with my child. I was so scared because I'd also given birth to three other kids and never thought about something like this happening.

When the nurses came back in, they told me we would not be leaving that day and my baby would have to spend some time in the NICU so they could watch over him. His oxygen levels were low, and this was making it hard for him to breathe. We stayed a few more nights and had a couple scares along the way, but after a few days his levels were fine and we were finally able to go home.

This sleeper has special meaning to me because it reminds me of one of the greatest but scariest moments of my life. **(Antoneah Armour)**

CREATING A CLASS CAPE WITH THE CHAZEN



UW-Madison's Chazen Museum of Art has been a longtime partner of the Odyssey Project, from hosting our 10th—and soon, our 20th—anniversary celebration to welcoming Odyssey students to campus for 20 years to view and respond to the art it displays. We were delighted to have Chazen leaders and guest artists such as Sanford Biggers visit our class in November to discuss the museum's problematic "Emancipation Group" sculpture showing Lincoln in a paternalistic pose over a crouching slave.

In February, New York artists Wildcat Ebony Brown and Lenore Routee visited our class to share their love of cape-making as a form of community and activism inspired by abolitionists in the Civil War era called "the Wide Awakes." These capes are displayed in the same re:mancipation exhibit at the Chazen featuring responses to Thomas Ball's "Emancipation Group" statue.



In class on February 1, each student decorated an individual fabric piece to represent themselves and their concept of freedom. Just a few days later, a finished Odyssey Class of 2023 cape was on display in the lobby of the Chazen for the opening reception for the re:mancipation exhibit, attended by hundreds of visitors. In her remarks, Chazen director Amy Gilman thanked Odyssey students for their voices and visions. We thank the Chazen for making us part of the creative process of finding new ways to respond to old wounds.





