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# ODYSSEY



# ORACLE

## INTRODUCING THE CLASS OF 2024!



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# ODYSSEY CLASS OF 2024



Dontaeve  
Acklin



Carissa  
Andrews



Lucas  
Benford



Jasmine  
Benson



Danika  
Bethel-Johnson



Mia  
Cannon



Vernell  
Cauley



Fataeshia  
Clark



Mekicia  
Davis



Andrea  
Evans



Aleesha  
Flowers



Andreyia  
Gavins



Shanigel  
Goodwan



Mikaylah  
Harris



Synquar  
Harston



Cierra  
Jackson



Blanca  
Laine



Rosanna  
Lopez



Giana  
Mason



Tanisha  
Milligan



Souleymane  
Nikiema



Terance  
Nix



Sally  
Phelps



Isiah  
Pickett



Rodney  
Poe, Jr.



Kimberly  
Rodgers



Marcy  
Tibbs



Amanda  
Von Behren



Endia  
Walls



Ron  
Watson



# FEELINGS ON JOINING ODYSSEY

*Students were asked on the first night of class to describe how they felt when they learned they had been accepted into Odyssey's Class of 2024. "Excited" won the contest for most-used adjective, with "blessed," "happy," "grateful," "nervous," and "proud" appearing often as well.*

One word, determined! I know the Odyssey Program will change my life for the better. I knew once this opportunity landed in my journey/direction that I needed to 'lock in' because I know my potential is unmatched. **(Dontaeva Acklin)**

When I found out I was accepted, I felt nervous because I did not know what to expect. After our first class, I am excited for this new journey for ALL OF US! **(Carissa Andrews)**

I have a complex relationship with higher education, so I was both delighted for the opportunity but also somewhat anxious about the program being a good fit. I enjoy having the space to be intellectual but have found, in the past, that higher education only felt like a pipeline to employment and not a space for academic discourse. I'm excited for this opportunity – a fresh re-introduction to academia. **(Lucas Benford)**

I felt like all my decisions to better myself and becoming a true storyteller are going to be possible. There's a crack in the gray sky and I have a chance to be great. **(Jasmine Benson)**

I felt empowered. I felt as though I wasn't worthy. I have this issue with myself that I doubt myself a lot. After receiving the news, I felt I needed to look in the mirror and be proud of myself. I have been extremely excited for my journey. **(Danika Bethel-Johnson)**

I felt very proud; I felt accomplished. To me it feels like the start of the next chapter in my life, a new beginning for sure. **(Mia Cannon)**

When I received the call that I was accepted for Odyssey, I was extremely excited. I'm very passionate about furthering my education and Odyssey will help me do just that. **(Vernell Cauley)**

I was excited. I was eager to know more, and now that I know more, I'm ready to give it all I have. **(Fataeshia Clark)**

Happy; I was so grateful to be accepted and I felt like I was handpicked and destined for this opportunity. **(Mekicia Davis)**

I was happy and kind of nervous at the same time, and when I told people that I had gotten accepted, people were happy, telling me it's a good program and I was more and more happy to start. **(Andrea Evans)**

I was overwhelmed with joy and felt so excited and eager in this next step in my life. I also felt very grateful for the opportunity to be in Odyssey! **(Aleesha Flowers)**

I felt overjoyed and excited. It was an emotional moment for me. **(Andreya Gavins)**



I felt good because I knew I had been accepted into a better opportunity for myself and my son. **(Shanigel Goodwan)**

I was happy to get to experience this. I felt thankful to be picked. I am excited to get to meet new people and learn new things and see different views. **(Mikaylah Harris)**

I was filled with happiness. I'm excited to be here. **(Synquar Harston)**

The feeling is very hard to describe. I was feeling so many good emotions at one time. I had to apologize for crying so hard. The feeling is comparable to seeing your child for the first time after birth and hearing those cries. **(Cierra Jackson)**

I was really excited; for an instant I couldn't believe that this is happening to me. After many limitations that I faced before, this part is my other side of my life. This is my side to overcome my failures and get success. **(Blanca Laine)**

I felt accepted. **(Rosanna Lopez)**

Emotional. Elated. Honored. I felt my life was about to change and I could see it play out almost like a movie in my mind. All the bad was going to be in the past now. I'm so happy I've made it here today. It has been a beautiful summer of growth for me. I can't wait for this journey to unfold. Thank you for this opportunity – see you next Wednesday! **(Giana Mason)**

I felt excited to get to school. I have been putting it off for so long because my kids are so young. I really want to go back to school to become a social worker and give back to kids. **(Tanisha Milligan)**

I felt very blessed to have a great chance to start a new journey with all the help and guidance I need. **(Souleymane Nikiema)**



I felt the time to be brave. **(Terance Nix)**

I was very excited, grateful, and beyond blessed for the opportunity. I never thought I would be going back to school. **(Sally Phelps)**

I felt great, a second chance at making my dreams happen. **(Isiah Pickett)**

Blessed! I couldn't be more grateful for being given another chance at an education. **(Rodney Poe Jr.)**

I felt excited, blessed; I felt that it's my time, time for me to take advantage of this opportunity to get my education, something that I've been hungry for all my life. No matter what I'm doing

in life, I'm always finding the feeling of eagerness. Deep down inside, I want to write a book, as well as get a degree, following a career. **(Kimberly Rodgers)**

I think I was proud but most of all excited about this new journey. I am so thankful that I was blessed with this opportunity. **(Marcy Tibbs)**

When I found out I was accepted, I literally was in tears! I cried a few times actually (I'm very emotional). I know a lot of people that have been in this program. I fought so many years with myself and applying had me scared beyond measure. But I'm ready to get uncomfortable. I'm ready to try something new and prove I can be more than just a mom. I want to prove to myself and my children that I can and will be successful. Being a teen mom, I never got the chance to figure out who I really am outside of being a mom. Now's my chance and I will succeed! **(Amanda Von Behren)**

I was so excited and honored that out of all those people who applied, I was chosen. This is a wonderful opportunity and I'm so thrilled for the things I will learn from both my classmates and teachers. Thank you again for this opportunity. **(Endia Walls)**

I was elated. **(Ronald Watson)**

# ARE YOU A WRITER?

*Each student answered the question, "Are you a writer? Why or why not?"*



Am I a writer? What a great question, as well as a broad one. I consider myself a writer as I am capable of telling a story and writing/typing it out. I remember growing up, adults would always ask, "What's your favorite subject in school?" Easily I'd mention writing, English, or history! The feeling of expressing your story or simply escaping reality is absolutely amazing. So, am I a writer? Well, to answer that question: indeed I am. My goal is to enhance my writing skills and learn how to piece my story together in a well-written and organized story. **(Dontaeva Acklin)**



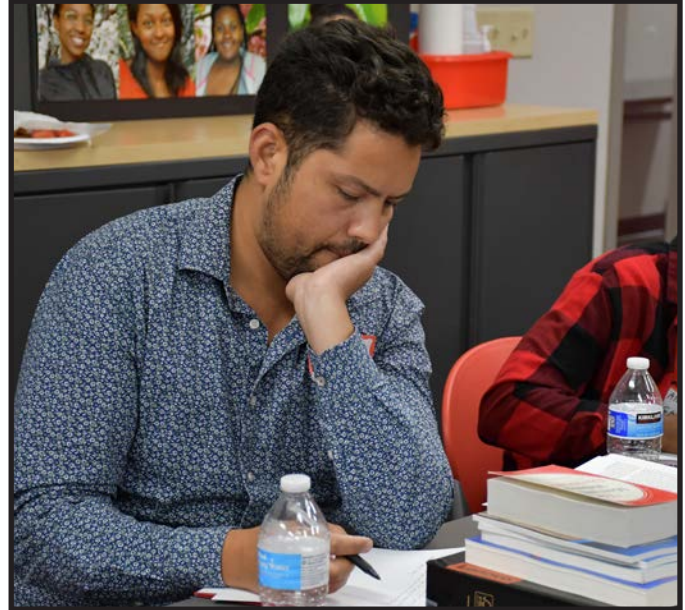
Yes, I am a writer because I am confident in the skills I already have, as well as the ability to develop more skills. **(Carissa Andrews)**



Yes, I am a writer because I write occasionally, but it would be more accurate to say that I write, and I'm working to become a better writer. I love the written word, and I'm excited to see how my "voice" develops and matures during this class.

When I was younger, dyslexia made the experience of writing more cumbersome, but my love of reading would help support my desire to become a better writer. After having consumed so much of the written word, how could we not be compelled to create stories of our own?

A mosaic is a good analogy for my process as I tend to think in fragments – often feeling disjointed – and my writing reflects that. This course will hopefully allow me to find more unity in myself and transmit that unity to my writing. **(Lucas Benford)**



I am a writer. I own five journals to determine my mode and style of writing. Sometimes I feel like a rapper or poet. Sometimes I am a journalist reporting on my day to day. Sometimes I write a movie about how my life is filled with pain and drama. Either way, I write. I write to feel better about my situation. When I count on people or confide in anyone, I write as if I want a Nobel prize if it will get me heard. So yes, I am a writer. I just need the world to know it! **(Jasmine Benson)**



No, I am not a writer because sometimes it is very hard for me to be able to put my thoughts down on paper. I am very much able to read a book or magazine and tell you what I read. But when it comes to writing I freeze up. I do have an issue when it comes to organizing my writing. For example, writing an essay, you have a certain amount of sentences, and the way you begin and end those paragraphs is very hard. I struggle with self-doubt a lot, and I'm not sure I am doing things correctly. **(Danika Bethel-Johnson)**





I wouldn't call myself a writer, but I do have a lot to say ha ha. I believe I am

one of those people that can get my thoughts out better with speaking rather than writing. Not to mention, my handwriting is absolutely horrible, and I am trying my best. I am excited to grow as a writer and expand my vocabulary to be able to represent myself in the best way possible throughout my future. **(Mia Cannon)**



Yes, I am a writer because I have a story to tell. **(Fataeisha Clark)**



Yes, I love to write! I write short stories, poetry, and just for personal gain. I suck at math

but have always been a strong writer. I find peace in writing because you can create your own world and exist without reason. **(Mekicia Davis)**



I do not consider myself a writer although I do aspire to one day have the privilege to write my story. I have trouble with correct punctuation and grammar. **(Vernell Cauley)**



I could use some help at getting better with my writing. I write in a journal almost every day. Writing in my journal is my happy place and makes me feel better. When I'm going through something, I write. When I'm happy, I write.

Any situation I'm in, I write. When I get to writing in my journal, I can go for hours. Sometimes I turn on music and light a candle. **(Andrea Evans)**



Yes, I am a writer because I have always loved to read and write, especially poems. I would love to write a book! **(Aleesha Flowers)**



Yes, I am a writer because I come up with good ideas and I am a deep thinker. I like to write and read. I feel as though I have a life story that's "pretty" interesting to tell and millions would listen to. **(Andreyia Gavins)**



Yes, I consider myself a writer but only when I'm writing letters to myself because no one else gets to read them, just me, I guess. It's when I write my deepest thoughts, so it feels the most real in my life. **(Shanigel Goodwan)**



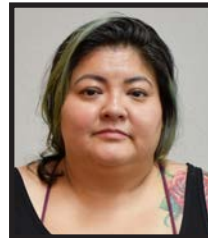
Yes, I am a writer because my mind is full of ideas and I enjoy organizing them and getting them situated on paper. **(Cierra Jackson)**



I am not a writer because in school I just wasn't a good writer. I sometimes misspell words and I'm not great at using punctuation. I sometimes use the wrong words for the context. I want to get better at learning how to use proper grammar and how to write using bigger words to sound more educated and professional. **(Mikaylah Harris)**



No, I am not a writer because I couldn't learn this skill in my past years. But, I am really eager to learn this wonderful skill. **(Blanca Laine)**



No, I am not a writer because I think talking is way easier than writing too. **(Rosanna Lopez)**



Yes, I am a writer because it became an outlet for me to express my own thoughts and beliefs. Throughout my childhood, I often chose to keep quiet and express my feelings through being angry and violent. Writing allows me to see my feelings and thoughts on paper, which makes it more true to me rather than being empty thoughts. **(Synquar Harston)**



Yes, I am a writer because... I have been told I make everything difficult. But, I just think I care. I put a lot of thought into everything I do, and I see and speak with eloquence. I consider my mind to be complex and intricate. Maybe my OCD has something to do with that. I'm running out of time to write... Anyway, I find writing comes naturally to me and it brings me confidence. **(Giana Mason)**



No, I am not a writer because I believe I can express what I'm trying to say verbally rather than writing it down. I don't know the right punctuation, and spelling is really hard for me. I know I can say what I need to verbally, but I'm not able to say it in writing. **(Tanisha Milligan)**





I am not really a writer—just letters and applications. I am from Burkina Faso, a country located in West Africa. The official language in Burkina Faso is French, but we have more than 60 local languages. I speak French, Mooré (my mother tongue), and Djoula.

One of the challenges I am facing here in the United States is the language. That is why Odyssey is a great opportunity for me. I believe that this course will open the door to a better social and professional integration. **(Souleymane Nikiema)**



No, I am not a writer because I never tried. **(Terance Nix)**



I don't think I'm a writer but I do like to write when I need to express myself. I do better in writing than trying to talk or explain myself. **(Sally Phelps)**



No, I'm not a writer because I always felt I wasn't a strong writer, but I love to read, though. **(Isiah Pickett)**



Yes and no. I say yes because I love to write and create. I say no because my punctuation and spelling aren't the best, but that's something I look forward to improving.

I've always had challenges with saying too many words, summing things up, and saying the same word too many times, like "but," "and," and "because." I want to be able to write full essays and feel comfortable. One thing about me is my mind and imagination are very unique. I love coming up with stories, but I also want to learn how to

summarize what I read, conclusions, and all of that good jazz. Even in my notes. I would love to learn to be a better notetaker, and I think becoming a better writer will help with all of that. **(Rodney Poe Jr.)**



I have the will and eagerness to become a writer. I truly feel that I would like to tell my story. **(Kimberly Rodgers)**



Yes, I am a writer. I have loved the pen since I could remember. My first memory of using a pen was the stroke of it. I loved the way it glided across my paper, arms, legs, walls, etc. I am pleased to write about any and everything.

**(Marcy Tibbs)**



Yes, I am a writer because I have a lot to say. I love to learn new information and kind of break it down in my own eyes. I can't wait to learn how to put it on paper with proper structure and punctuation.

**(Amanda Von Behren)**



No, I am not a writer, but English was one of my strong subjects and also it was my mother's major in college. So I'm a little rusty, but for the most part I can write a good paper/essay, but I myself don't consider myself as a writer. I look

forward to becoming one of this program's elites and taking it to the highest level that I can. I love to learn new things, and this opportunity couldn't have been presented at a better time in my life.

**(Endia Walls)**



No, I can tell a story, but writing is not my strong suit. **(Ronald Watson)**



# SENTENCES ABOUT US

*On their first night of class, Class of 2024 students read three sentences about Emily and then wrote three sentences about themselves. Some sent in photos to go with what they wrote.*



I have three adult children and three grandchildren (ages 7, 11, and 15), and I love them passionately.

My husband is 18 inches taller than I am, so we look ridiculous on any dance floor.

The house I live in used to be an old stone barn.  
(Emily Auerbach)

I am open minded. I love learning new things and seeing different perspectives, and learning different cultures, ways of living, etc.

I am pretty competitive, but I enjoy playing sports and working out.

I have a passion for a healthy lifestyle, mental and physical. "Health is wealth." (Dontaeva Acklin)



I am a proud Latina.

My four-year-old son, Karler, is my whole world.

I love sports! Football and basketball are my favorites, but I like being active in general. (Carissa Andrews)

One of my proudest accomplishments is planting thousands of trees, grasses, and shrubs when I worked for an

environmental non-profit. I like to imagine people and animals enjoying the trees I planted long after I'm dead.

I have a three-legged hedgehog named Harley. I love looking at her spines—it's weird that something dangerous can be relaxing.

I'd like to write a screenplay someday. (Lucas Benford)



I am the third oldest of seven girls, and my mom calls me her only son.

I went to a new school in high school every year but graduated on time.

The amount of joy I feel from being awarded this opportunity leaves me overwhelmed with gratitude and bliss. **(Jasmine Benson)**



I am a mother of three children, and they literally give me the life that I have today. They are Da'Mari (8), Tre'Nique (4), and Tre'Den (1).

My mother and I look like identical twins. Everyone who meets us believes we are sisters.

My favorite thing to do is sing. **(Danika Bethel-Johnson)**



I have a seven-year-old daughter who is my broke best friend.

I have four siblings with whom I have a great relationship: two older sisters, one older brother, and one younger brother (my mom's and God's greatest gift to me).

I am a dental assistant and a freelance make up artist.  
**(Mia Cannon)**





I have seven children and one grandchild.

I consider myself a strong man of the Christian faith and focus on living my life in a way that will be pleasing to Jesus.

I love music.  
**(Vernell Cauley)**



I have three children, all boys (ages 7, 7, and 9), and they motivate me in being better, for them and myself.

My children and I all enjoy sports and traveling.

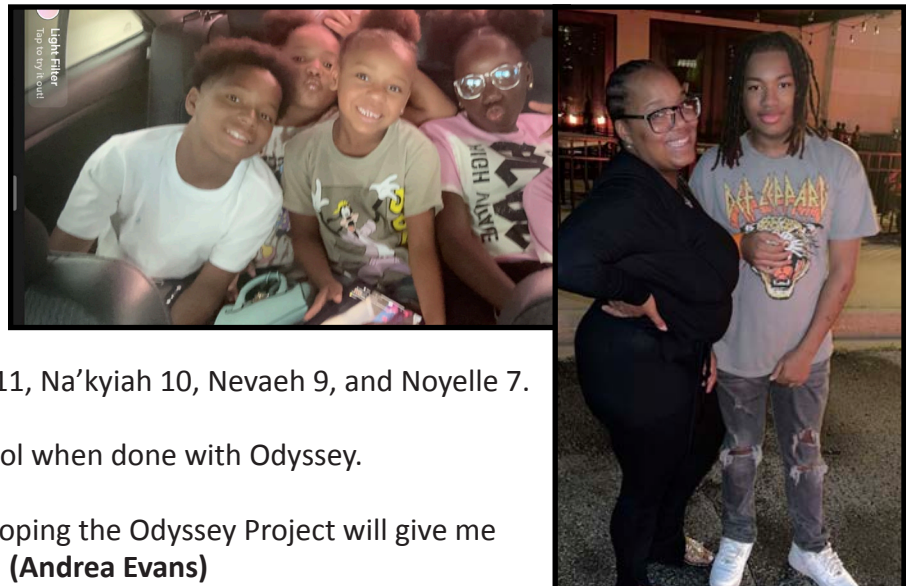
My journey with my kids is a story to tell.  
**(Fataeshia Clark)**



I love to laugh, talk, and read.

I can be social, but most of the time I stick to myself.

I have strong opinions, especially when I consider myself right, but I will always listen and understand when I'm "wrong."  
**(Mekicia Davis)**



I have five kids: Dereon 12, Damari 11, Na'kyiah 10, Nevaeh 9, and Noyelle 7.

I would like to enroll in nursing school when done with Odyssey.

I always question myself, and I am hoping the Odyssey Project will give me that confidence to believe in myself. **(Andrea Evans)**



I am a mother to seven amazing children and adults. My oldest is 31 years old; the others are 28, 25, 22, 20, 10, and 9. I am left-handed and none of my kids are!

I have been a barber/stylist for 15+ years.

I enjoy spending time with my family as much as possible.

**(Aleesha Flowers)**



I'm in school to become a chef, and I work at Claire's store as an assistant manager.

I'm a twin, and I have twins.

My favorite hobby is watching movies.

**(Andreya Gavins)**



I own a baking business.

I love shopping.

I am very shy.

**(Shanigel Goodwan)**





I have a 6-month-old, and he is the happiest baby ever.

This is my first year in college, and I am also enrolled at MATC.

I am very ready to learn new things and see different views.

**(Mikaylah Harris)**



I am black and gay.

I've been with my boyfriend for three years and recently pushed him to go back to receive his GED.

I love to write, but I haven't written anything in five years.

**(Synquar Harston)**



I have two beautiful children: a thirteen-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl.

I graduated from LaFollette High School in 2010.

I love the Superbowl! **(Cierra Jackson)**

I am a native woman from Ecuador.

In size I am really short, but my heart is big.

I love to dance and sing.

**(Blanca Laine)**



I have four kids who are mine, another two are my boyfriend's, and I love them.

My boyfriend is white.

I used to play the clarinet.

**(Rosanna Lopez)**

I believe I am an old soul. I love old music and old things and have always felt like I was born in the wrong generation.

I want to get married one day to someone I can dance with.

I am an excellent cook—I love Anthony Bordain.  
**(Gianna Mason)**



I am a husband and dad of three wonderful children.

I am eager to learn.

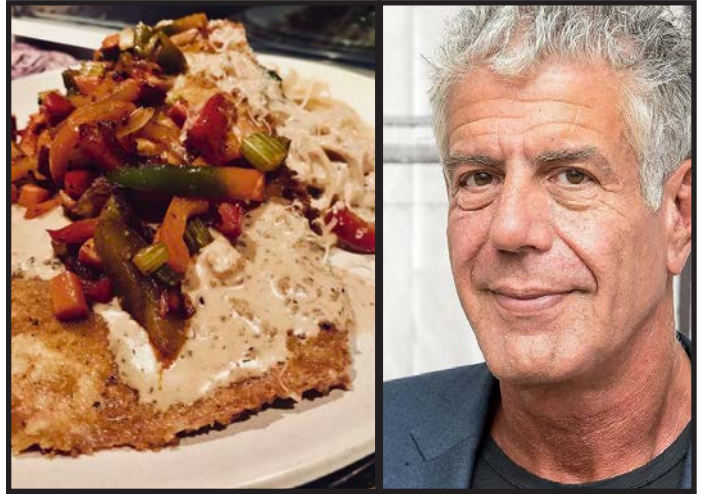
I speak French. **(Souleymane Nikiema)**



I am a mother of four (two girls, two boys), and I am a grandma. They are my pride and joy that motivate me to push myself.

I love volleyball and am very passionate when I coach.

I enjoy cooking and get-togethers with family and friends or doing outdoor adventures. **(Sally Phelps)**



I have three children, ages 14, 6, and 4.

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio.

I work in a high school. **(Tanisha Milligan)**



It is hard for me to speak in front of people.

I love sports.

I love to eat. **(Terance Nix)**





I'm a father of three sons (16, 18, 20) and one beautiful two-year-old daughter I call Princess (named Isis).

I love sports (all kinds).

I love video games (PS5).  
**(Isiah Pickett)**



I am weird/goofy—always have been, always will be. I love to have fun and enjoy life by the grace of God.

I have two beautiful children. My son is five and my daughter is two. They are my reasons why I do what I do.

I love sports, especially football. Whenever it's football season, I am at my happiest. On Sundays during football season, don't bother me!

**(Rodney Poe Jr)**

I am a mother of five children, six grandchildren.

I have a beautiful family that God has blessed me with.

I am trying hard to listen more to God to continue to grow a wonderful family, friends, and loved ones.

**(Kimberly Rodgers)**







I have six children and one bonus child (ages 18, 17, 15, 8, 6, 4, and 2). They are the greatest thing that happened to me.

I am the only child.

I love to cook and try new food. I recently became lead baker at my job. **(Amanda Von Behren)**



I just was married to Ericka Booe (Odyssey '22) on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

I am the sous chef at SASS.

I enjoy meeting new people. **(Ronald Watson)**

I have three children, one of whom I birthed.

I am a foster mom.

I am a people person. **(Marcy Tibbs)**



I work with a client who has autism and have been working with her for two years. It's a wonderful experience and I've learned so much from her.

I am a very good cook, and I like to eat. I'm exploring more with food from different cultures with new tastes and textures.

I have five children and one grandchild, and they still motivate me to accomplish things I've put off because their needs come first. **(Endia Walls)**





# ALUMNI CORNER

## MY JOURNEY

BY RENÉ ROBINSON '08

I was born in Chicago, number eleven of fourteen children. At one point in my life, we had ten people in a three-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment. It was lively, challenging, and sometimes disappointing, but never a dull moment. It was family, my family. I didn't have a choice in the matter.

We were poor. How poor were we? We were so poor that my uncle, who worked at the Campbell Soup Factory, would bring us cans of soup that couldn't be sold because of flaws (bends and dents). The cans didn't have labels but contained numbers, which identified the type of soup. We memorized the numbers because we had to. If you didn't know the numbers, you were stuck with the soup no one wanted, which in our house was the tomato soup.

Survival, that was my life. Not only did I have to survive on the south side of Chicago, in the ghetto, the low-end as we call it, but at home as well. Can you imagine fourteen children vying for attention? Fourteen children wanting to be loved? Fourteen children striving to be better than the next?

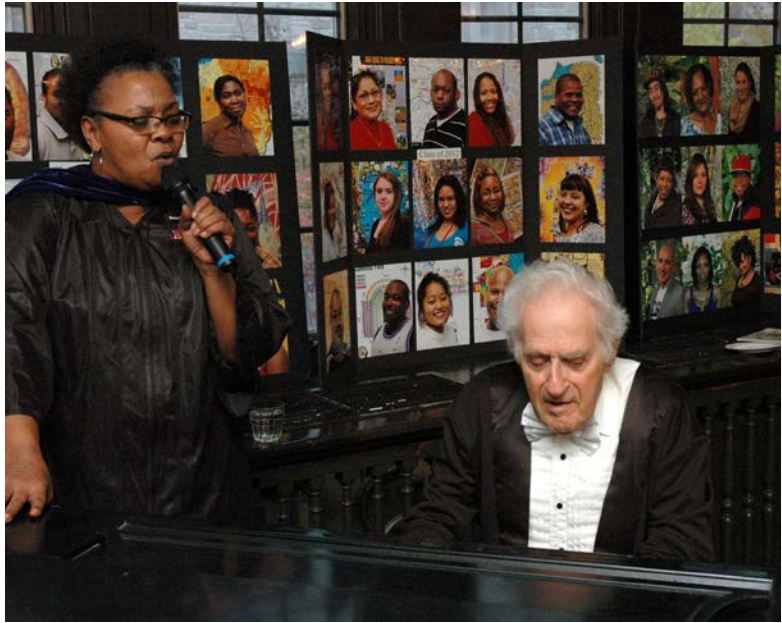
It wasn't all good but neither was it all bad. We were taught principles, morals, and Christianity. We were required to excel in school. You would think that such an upbringing would produce upstanding and productive individuals, and it did for ten of us. Unfortunately I was one of the four who didn't quite meet the challenge. I was persistent at taking the wrong path and making poor decisions. I had my oldest son at sixteen and was forced to attend a high school for pregnant girls. I married at seventeen and had my second son at eighteen. It was a blessing to have a husband who was also the father of my children (where I come from, that was a unique happening in itself), but unfortunately with that came physical abuse.

I could go on and on about the many ups and downs due to the poor decisions I made over those thirty years, but I want to talk about the good news! I made it out of that situation and relocated to Madison, WI. I got a job, an apartment, then a used car. I joined a church that made me feel at home, and then I heard about the UW Odyssey Project, one of the best decisions I have ever made.

Odyssey is for people just like me; those who wanted to do better but couldn't for whatever reason. Having made so many poor decisions in my life, I feel I'm somewhat of an expert in understanding how easy it is for people to mess up, to make mistakes, and choose the wrong paths.



Odyssey gives you the feeling like the little red engine we read about in elementary school, “I think I can! I think I can!” It releases the “Wow” factor as in “He did that? She did what? Really? They left Britain to do the same thing in America? I didn’t know that.” Then it begins, the desire to know more, the desire to understand, the drive and tenacity to do better and to critically think, analyze and understand what you are reading. And what’s so fantastic about Odyssey, it’s generational. I tell people that all the time. Not only does it change the lives of parents, it changes the lives of their children, which will change the lives of their children, etc. Odyssey is a “Mind Opening Experience”!



Before Odyssey, if someone had asked me to write a poem or told me that I would be analyzing Socrates, Shakespeare, Emily Dickinson, and Frederick Douglass, I would have rolled my eyes up, down and sideways. But there I was, at my Odyssey graduation, earning six UW Madison credits and reading this poem I wrote about the value of lifelong learning:

### **My Journey**

My journey started about nine months ago.  
 How I would fare, I really didn’t know.  
 Reading, writing for sure there would be,  
 But from six to nine PM, that I couldn’t see.  
 The professors were there for all to meet,  
 Outlining History, Humanities, and Philosophy.  
 I was scared but I didn’t know why,  
 Maybe it was the thirty years that had quickly gone by.  
 Getting acclimated was a little rough at first,  
 But soon thereafter to read books I would thirst.  
 See, prior to Odyssey, I didn’t read.  
 All the info I got was from the TV.  
 But things have changed, mainly the screen  
 From the TV to the computer, I’m now a Google Queen.  
 My journey, my journey, who would have thought  
 Would be the beginning of me being taught,  
 Being taught the importance of opening my mind,  
 Instead of sitting around wasting my time.  
 Thank you, Odyssey, for choosing me,  
 I’ve found knowledge, my greatest discovery.



### René Riffs on Plato

I believe the prisoners in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" are us: people, human beings in general. It has nothing to do with race, economical or educational status; I consider those sub-caves. We have all been fettered (shackled and chained) from generation to generation. We have been taught how to think and what to think. The expansion of our mind has been limited to our surroundings. We have been made products of our environment by our communities, our neighborhoods, and our upbringing; we were all born in a cave.



The cave is like a one-sided coin: seeing only one side. If you are born rich, do you know what it is to be born poor? If you are born poor, do you know what it is to be born rich? The importance of getting out of the cave is to find out what's on the other side of the coin; such as Socrates' example of going from the darkness to the light. I believe every human being in this world is dealing with some form of darkness, whether by force or choice.

We need to walk towards love, passing by hate. We need to walk towards courage, passing by fear. We need to walk towards "I can," passing by those infamous words, "I can't."

*René performs as a musician, motivational speaker, and dramatic reader (Sojourner Truth, Maya Angelou, and others) in church, at community events, on the radio, and for every Odyssey class, and serves on the Friends of the UW Odyssey Project Board of Directors.*

# I LOVE ODYSSEY

## BY JUANITA WILSON '07



*Juanita (1936-2019) inspired her granddaughter Isis to graduate from Odyssey, too.*

I love Odyssey because before Odyssey I always felt like an outsider when I was among a group of people. I now feel that I can contribute to the conversation and feel that I am no longer a slow learner. I feel that I can accomplish whatever I set out to do. I am happy most of the time now.

I am going to be a lifelong learner.

I feel that I am not alone anymore if I need help with a problem. I feel that I am loved by my teachers and classmates. I feel that life is beautiful this year and the rest of my life because of Odyssey. I feel that there will always be help available to me. I feel blessed.

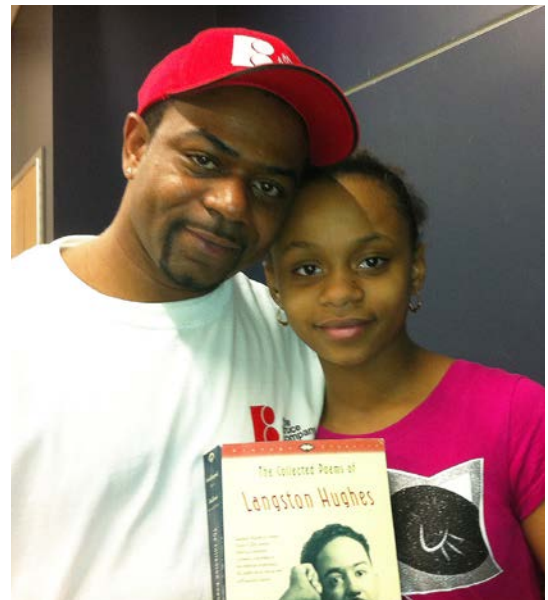
# I LOVE MY WEBSTER'S

## BY TOSUMBA WELCH '13

I love my Webster's with a great passion and sense of dependency. Webster's has never stood me up, let me down, or led me astray—never! It tells me secrets that sometimes no one else can even imagine. One time I was walking through a path of words and there were blank spots on the path. Out of nowhere, Webster's replaced those blank spots with words, and I was able to continue my walk.



Webster's sat me down one night and gave me an idea that landed me second place in an essay contest answering the question "Why Vote?" I have never known Webster's to be anything but perfect. Webster's has given me 230,000 reasons to be in love with it. I love my Webster's.



*Tosumba's daughter Denaria attended Odyssey Junior.*