

# ODYSSEY JUNIOR

# ORACLE

## WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2024!

A SAMPLING OF IMAGES AND WRITING FROM 2015-2023



*Through a journey of self-discovery in the arts and humanities, Odyssey Junior empowers youth to find their voices, envision their futures, and change their communities. The Odyssey Junior Oracle provides participants with a chance to share photos, art, and reflections with their classmates as well as with adult family members in the UW Odyssey Project.*

Karen Dreyfuss, Odyssey Junior Director  
Emily Auerbach, UW Odyssey Project Co-Director/Founder; Oracle Editor  
Beth Auerbach, Oracle Designer

karen.dreyfuss@wisc.edu; 608-345-0807  
emily.auerbach@wisc.edu; 608-712-6321

[www.odyssey.wisc.edu](http://www.odyssey.wisc.edu)



# BABY BADGERS



I'm going to put my baby to bed. (Priya)



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





# SCOUTS

I'm the biggest dinosaur. THE KING!! (Rexley)



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





# EXPLORERS



I am a candle. Even when I blow out, I can still shine. When I shine my light, I can be helpful.

**(Omarion)**



I dream of becoming an astronaut. I am good at saving planets. I am from South Sudan. Only I know how to be me! **(Zaria)**





# ADVENTURERS

Just be yourself, and don't listen to anyone else. **(Cheyene)**



My journey has been really fun. At first I wasn't sure if Odyssey was for me, but now I feel like one big family. **(Yahmor)**





# WOMEN OF COURAGE

*Students were asked, "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)**



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)**



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)**



I admire my mom because she had me when she was 16 and my dad went to jail when I was 3 and when my mom was 19. Another reason is that she managed to take care of me when she was just in high school and when she didn't have any money. Then she took care of me when she was in college. She took me to some college classes sometimes until I was in 5th grade. My last reason is she makes a lot of sacrifices for me and my brother. In conclusion, my mom is a really great and nice person and she loves to encourage people who have trouble with their lives to not give up because she was in their position once but she found a way to fight out of it. **(K'Shawn)**

# SELF EXPRESSION



## The Skin I'm In

You may say my skin  
Is black  
But that's incorrect  
"The skin I'm in" is the skin  
Of the slaves  
The skin I'm in is the fighters of the country  
The skin I'm in is  
Everyone  
(Kamoria)

## Unity

In a world where nothing makes sense  
It's like no one can realize that they're blessed  
Can't make a comment on Facebook without making a mess  
Black or white, we need to unite  
People killing each other just out of spite  
Why can't we be one?  
(Savannah)



## See Me

I want someone to see me  
Not as my race  
Not as just Angel  
Not just someone  
See me as Joy  
See me as Kindness  
See me as Love  
See me as Hope  
See me  
That's all you have to do  
See me as the sky  
See me as God  
See me  
Don't judge me  
See me  
See me  
Don't be mean to me because this and that  
See me  
See me  
See me as the sun and moon  
See me.  
(Angel)

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
made speeches and led marchers.  
Inspired people, kind to people  
and himself.

Ruby Bridges,  
kind to herself,  
broke rules  
to break racism,  
like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A girl  
Went in a white school.  
Inspired little girl.  
I wish I could meet you.  
And you are the same,  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
And Ruby Bridges.  
(Kimari)



### Acrostic Me

**J** is for joking.  
**A** is for athletic.  
**V** is for very exciting.  
**O** is for organized.  
**N** is for nice.  
**E** is for excellent.

I was named after my father!  
(Javone)

### Just

**A**  
**Cool**  
**Kid**  
**Surviving and**  
**Overcoming**  
**Negative situations**  
(Jackson)



### My Fair Skin

My fair skin brings up questions  
definitely if you have seen my parents.  
My fair skin is one of the many reasons  
why people are racist.  
This racism is tearing me down,  
making me feel like nothing.  
My fair skin makes me me,  
but this feeling of not fitting in at all is horrible.  
Tell me why my skin is so fair?  
Why do I have it?  
My parents are black but I am mixed,  
Not fully black and not fully white but half and half.  
I hate when people call me a half-baked cookie.  
I am human.

(Olivia)



I am a book because I'm full of words. I am a book  
because I'm intelligent. I am a book because I'm a  
storyteller. I am a book because people learn from  
me. I am a book because I'm full of ideas. I am a  
book. I am me. (Lexi)

What love means to me!  
When my mom tells me I am beautiful, that is love!  
When my dad makes my lunch,  
that is love!  
When my brother plays with me,  
that is love!  
When my mom puts me to sleep,  
that is love!  
When my dad helps me with my homework,  
that is love!

(Emily)





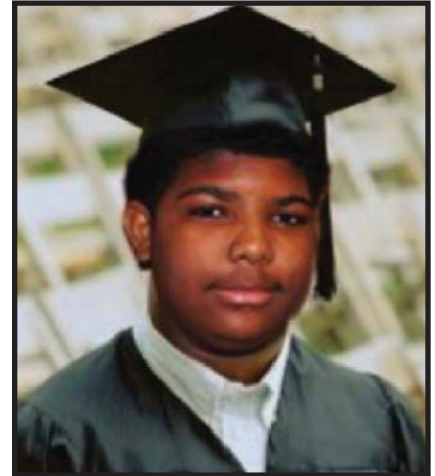
# THE ARTS





# ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

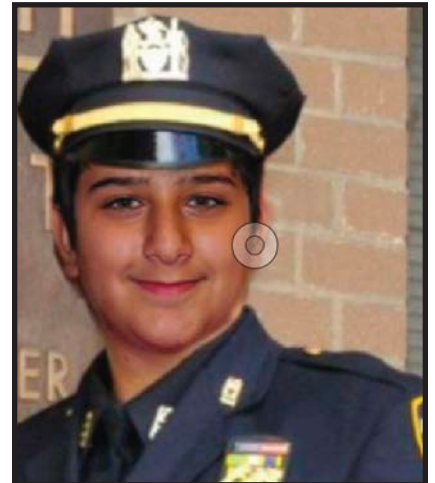
I want to be the first in my family to graduate from a Division 1 college or university or maybe working with kids that are living in poverty and inventing something to help the Black community. For all the goals I have in life or making the setup process of my life, I have to make not good but great CHOICES in life and surround myself with good, hardworking people. **(Jaquez)**



My dream is to be the President of the United States. Before I become the President, I will earn a law degree and be a lawyer. Hopefully, when I run for President, people will vote for me because of my extra experience. **(Anna)**

Eight years from now I will be 20 years old and in college. I hope to be studying to be a policeman. As a policeman I can protect people. Many people think Islam is equal to terrorism, but Islam means "peace" and is peaceful. As

a policeman I can help people and show that Islam is about peace. A terrorist could be from any religion, not just Islam. **(Abdul)**



My main goal is to get a 4.0 GPA. If I get a 4.0 I can do almost every other life goal I have. I can get into a historically Black College and become a surgeon, or OB/GYN, or anything in the medical field. Getting a 4.0 opens a lot more doors and opportunities. **(Javé)**

Well, for a long time I've been saying that I want to do something medicine-related. Maybe

something like urology, or another doctoral path, but for now I think I'm still set on that. My younger brother Kingston has autism, and just growing up with him and seeing the differences in how his brain works compared to someone who's neurotypical is really interesting, and that on its own made me want to do more research about it. **(Zawadi)**





# MUSIC LESSONS WITH THE UW MEAD WITTER SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Odyssey Junior has continued music lessons with the UW Mead Witter School of Music on Tuesday nights! Our students can sign up for violin, guitar, piano, tuba, and voice lessons with our wonderful instructors: Karen, Leo, Carrie, Kevin, and Angelos. Music fills the halls of the UW Partnership Space while adults and youth enjoy the drop-in tutoring hours (5:30-7:30 p.m.) every Tuesday evening. We're also excited that many of last year's juniors were able to attend the UW Summer Music Clinic, where they got to expand and perfect their skills over the summer months.





## UW SUMMER MUSIC CLINIC

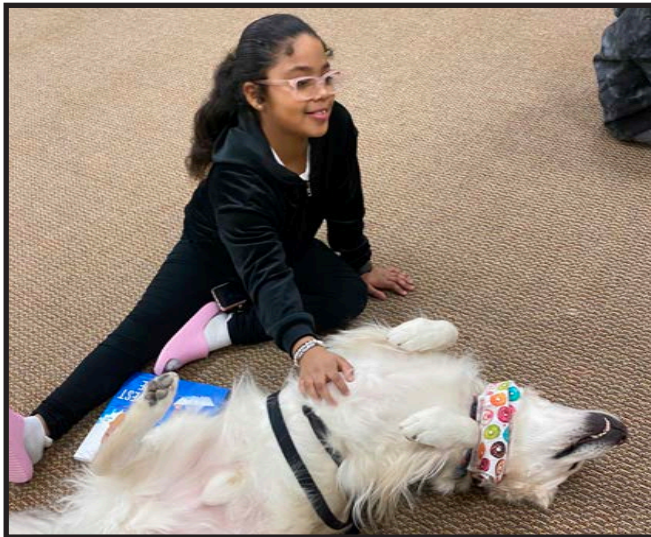
"I loved camp. Can I go again next year?" asked Symone, pictured playing flute at UW Summer Music Clinic. "It was a terrific experience! I literally can't put my guitar down now," added Alex, and Talaya joined on the tuba. Odyssey Junior matched two dozen youth with a summer camp opportunity, with some commuting while others enjoyed a week in the residence halls experiencing life as a Badger.



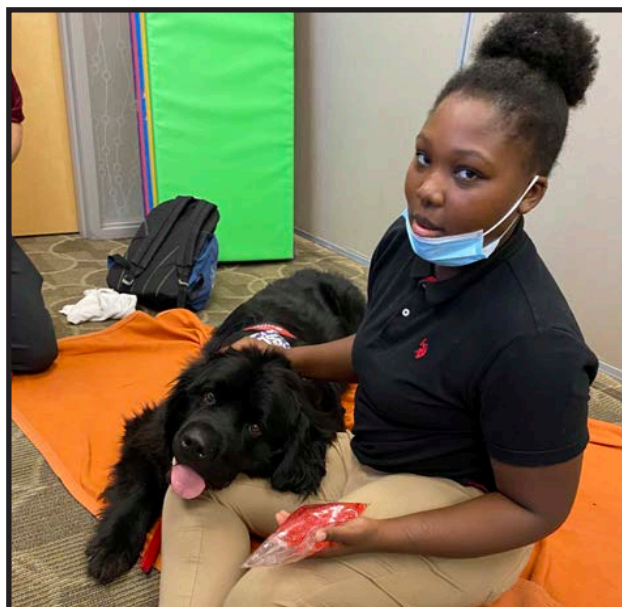


# READ TO A DOG WITH GO TEAM THERAPY DOGS!

Odyssey Junior kids love it when they get to read to the Go Team Therapy Dogs.









# SPECIAL MOMENTS



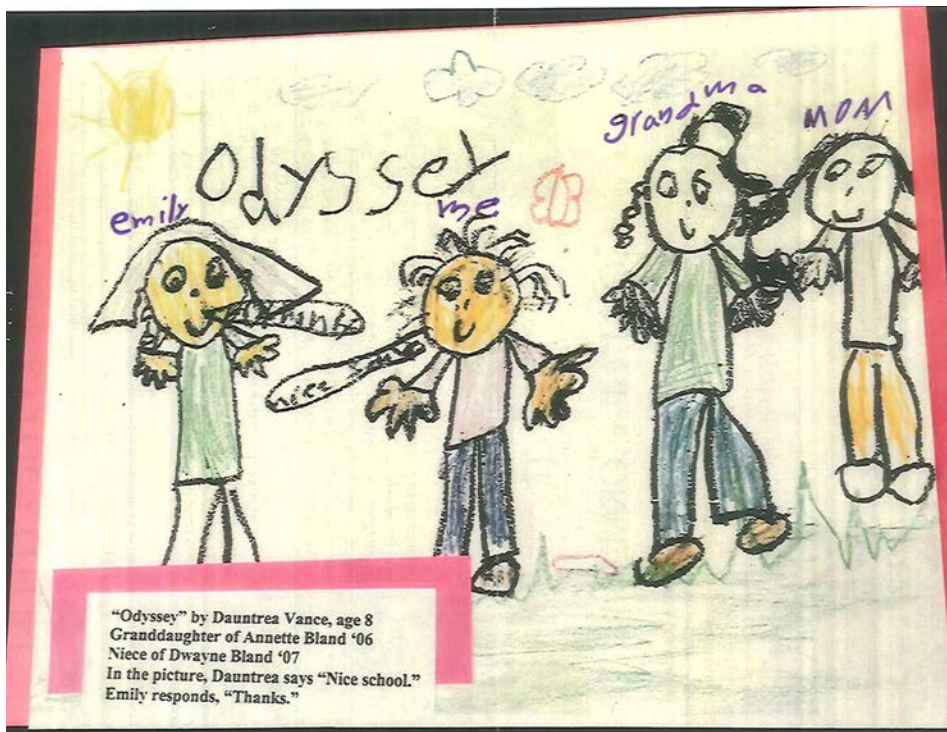


# COLLEGE CORNER

## MEET DAUNTREA VANCE!

I was in Odyssey Junior, and my grandma, uncle, and mom all went through the Odyssey Project. Thanks to Odyssey and Odyssey Junior, my family and I were encouraged to think about college and were supported in going forward.

The first time I thought about college was when my grandma was in Odyssey in 2006, when I was eight. I drew a picture showing me saying “nice school” to Emily [Odyssey teacher], and my mom and grandma are in the picture, too. Later, I took part in Odyssey Junior, and we were encouraged to use our voices.



After Odyssey Junior, I went on to attend and graduate from the UW-Madison. I aspire to be a defense lawyer. My goal is to work for the Department of Justice because I want to combat racial inequality in the system and help bring justice to America.

While at the UW, I majored in Political Science and Legal Studies and earned certificates in Criminal Justice and Afro-American Studies. I spent my junior fall semester in Washington, DC interning for the NAACP DC Branch working to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensuring

political, social, and economic equality for all. Back on the Madison campus, I founded a new UW chapter of the NAACP.





In the last semester of my senior year, I got to study abroad in France. But then because of the pandemic, I suddenly received orders to come home as soon as possible. When I tried to get a plane ticket, I was placed on hold and told there were over a thousand other people ahead of me! It was crazy and chaotic, and I didn't have extra money like some students do. With breaking news every hour getting worse and worse and my funds getting lower and lower, I was so relieved to make it home to Madison.

Even though my semester abroad had to end early and in this scary way, I'm so happy I was able to go. It was my first time going out of the country. Paris was so amazing! I also was able to travel to Spain and Portugal, Prague and Amsterdam. Going abroad changed how I see the world—and it changed me by giving me a new perspective about myself, too.

I was sad that my own graduation ceremony was canceled. I had looked forward to celebrating my UW bachelor's degree with a big ceremony. It was especially important to me as a person of color and first-generation student to

celebrate this moment, and my whole family was pumped up about it.

If any of you in the Odyssey Junior Class of 2023 feel you are not college material, I strongly encourage you to at least look into college programs. College will give you opportunities you can never even imagine!

