

ODYSSEY JUNIOR

ORACLE

INTRODUCING THE ODYSSEY JUNIOR CLASS OF 2026



Gwendolyn Coale, Odyssey Junior Manager, Photographer
Emily Auerbach, UW Odyssey Project Director/Co-Founder; Oracle Editor
Beth Auerbach, Oracle Designer

Thank you to the following staff and volunteers of Odyssey Junior:

Baby Badgers: Raquel Diaz, Lulu Albarran Morales, Aida Bouzit, Cecilia Enriquez, Morgan Kelley

Scouts: Karla Holguin Espino, Yatziri Ortega, Courtney Snoberger, Milagros Urdaneta,
Anna Uriostegui (Junior grad), Becky Wheeler

Explorers: KaBao Thao, Latrice Johnson, Brenna Kelley, Ashley Rojas-Edge, Amy Basel, Lyn Tschanz

Voyagers: Ozanne Anderson ('08), K'Shawn Gibbs (Junior grad), Adelaide Rosen, Shantrice Solis, Riley Lynch, Prisma Ruacho

Adventurers: Angie Bazan, Deshawn McKinney, Lola Belchinsky

Support Staff: Marlon Anderson, Keena Atkinson ('10), Ron Buford ('20)

Special thanks to Drs. Jamie Henke and Hailey Love and Lucas Murray with Literally Arts, Sue, Dawn, and Joe from Go Team Therapy Dogs, Madison Reading Project, Madison College Goodman South, the UW Space Place, Brian Benford ('07) and Duke Ellington the service dog, Chris Wagner, and Karen Dreyfuss.

BABY BADGERS

Greetings from the Baby Badger classroom!

We are almost halfway into our journey, and our little ones have made so much progress settling into the rhythm of their new environment. With a group of about eight infants and toddlers, each day brings new milestones, sweet discoveries, and growing comfort in our space.



As the children continue adjusting, our focus has been on creating a warm, consistent, and joyful atmosphere. We spend a lot of time reading together, singing familiar and comforting songs like Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, The Wheels on the Bus, Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes, and the always-popular Baby Shark. These songs help build language skills, encourage movement, and offer predictability, something so important for young children.



In addition to music and books, the children are beginning to explore the classroom materials more confidently. From soft sensory toys to age-appropriate manipulatives, we're encouraging curiosity, fine motor development, and social interactions—even if that sometimes looks like parallel play or simply observing one another!

It's been a joy to watch each child begin to find their sense of safety and routine here. We're excited to continue supporting their growth, one song, story, and smile at a time.

With care,

Raquel, Cecilia, Aida, Lulu and Morgan



SCOUTS

Literally Arts

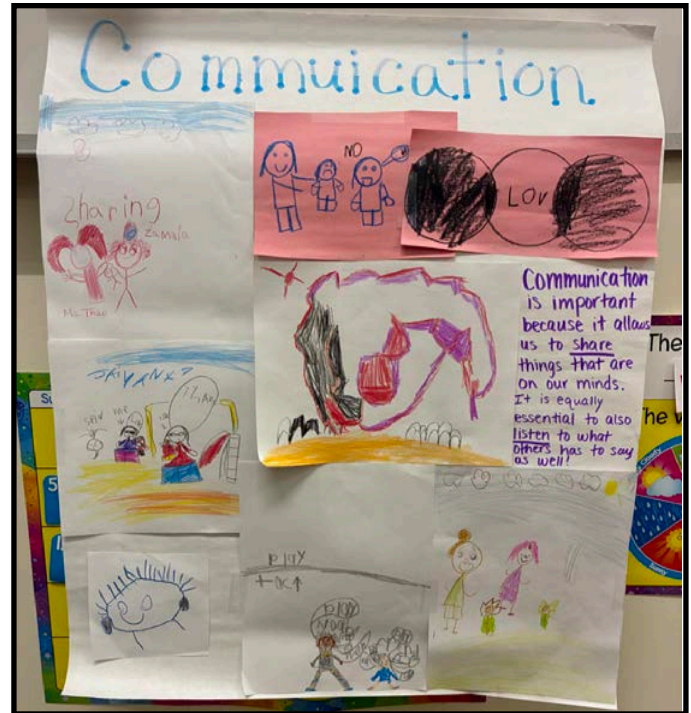
In Literally Arts's first visit of the year, the Scouts read *A to Z* by Sandra Boynton and practiced their letters through art and song. B is for Badger!

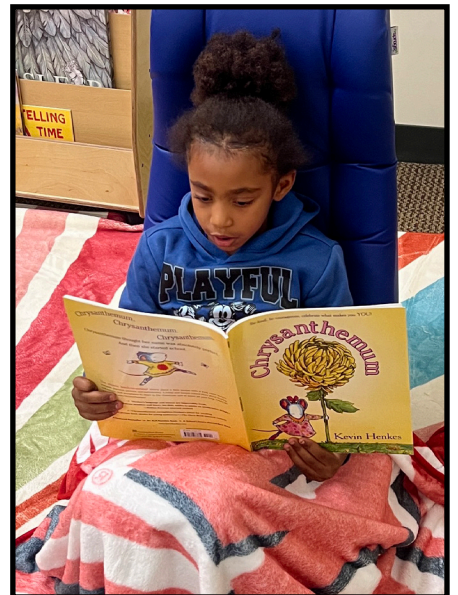




EXPLORERS

The Explorers have been learning about social emotional skills like kindness, communication, and self-confidence. We're so proud of the care they've built into their classroom community!

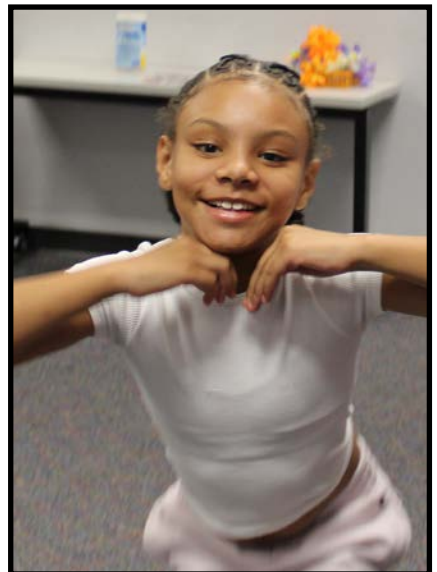
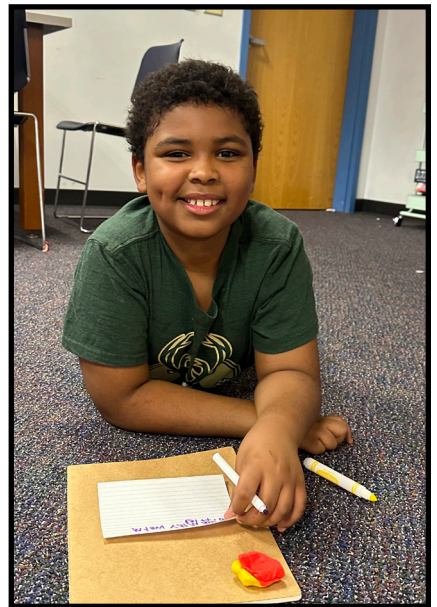
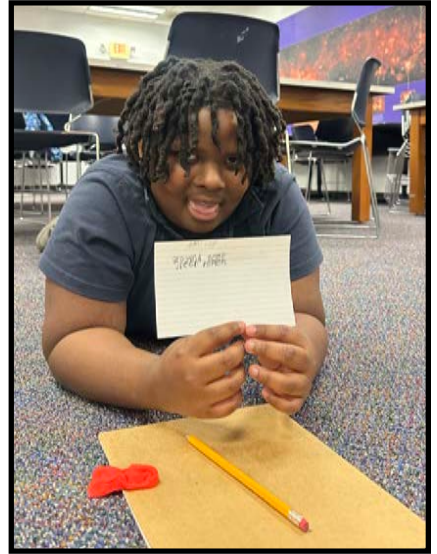
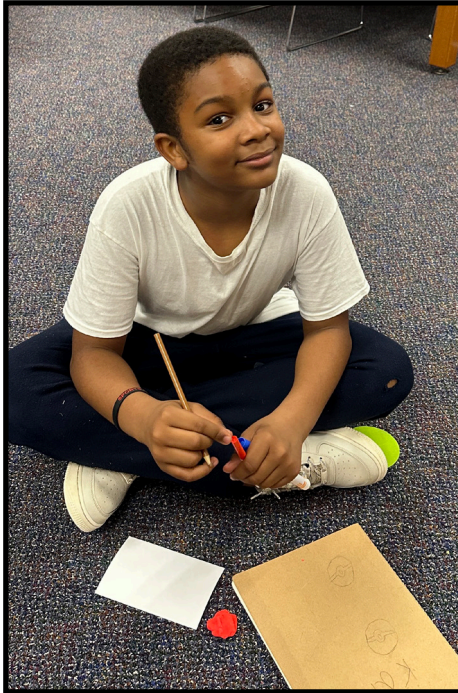




VOYAGERS

The Voyagers have been busy getting to know each other, reading Desmond Cole Ghost Control, creating their own spooky stories, and going to nearby Penn Park!



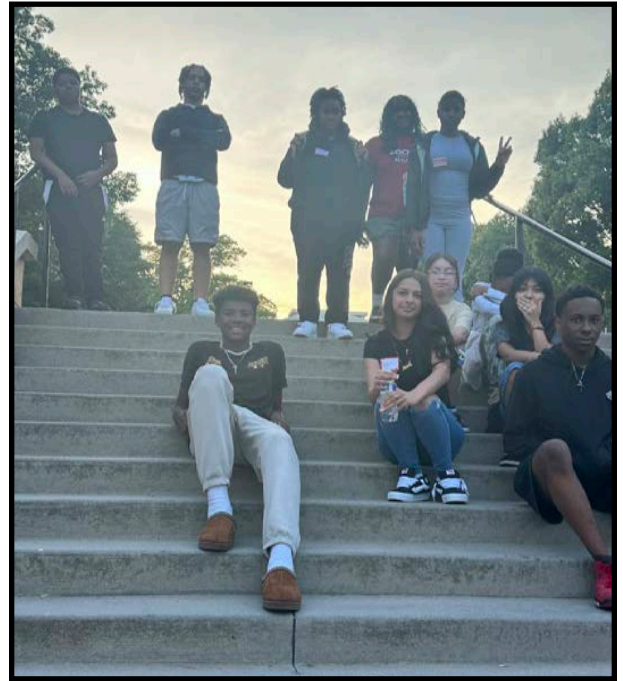


INTRODUCING THE ODYSSEY TEEN PILOT

This year we've expanded our teen program to give twelve teens the opportunity to explore academic and professional resources, explore their interests, develop their voice, and build connections with their Odyssey peers.

Thank you to Antonio, Ayalis, Blessing, Daevion, Jamari, Jasmin, Jessica, Mane, Miguel, Nyjah, Trinity, and Zacaria for participating in Odyssey Teen!

In the first couple months of the pilot, the teens visited the UW Madison campus and the Madison College Goodman South Campus. On the tours they learned about the programs offered at each college, multicultural organizations present on the campus, and the process for applying. Christine Cina, Odyssey's Navigator and Academic Advisor, is available to support any Odyssey teens or Junior alumni in pursuing their academic goals!



MY COMMUNITY FLAG

I used green and red to represent the good and bad, and I added singing notes for my dance. **(Antonio)**

It represents me by my country. It's where I come from and what I speak. **(Ayalis)**

Black means you should overcome anything and the white reminds me of yin yang, people uniting with each other. **(Jamari)**

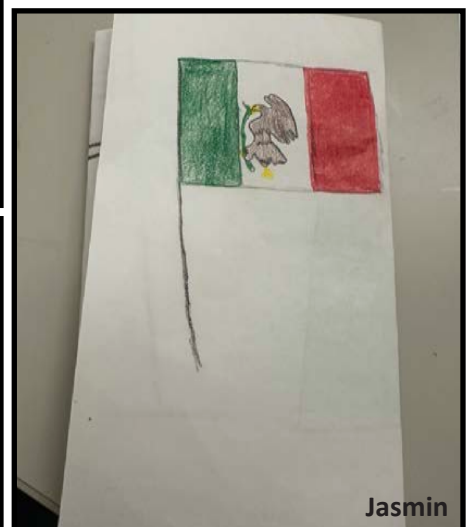
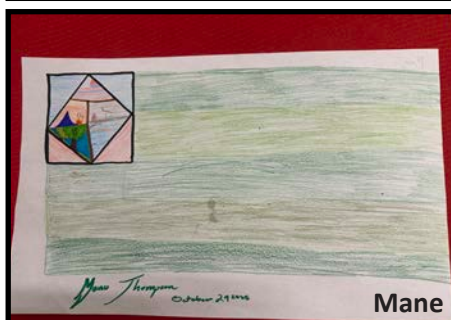
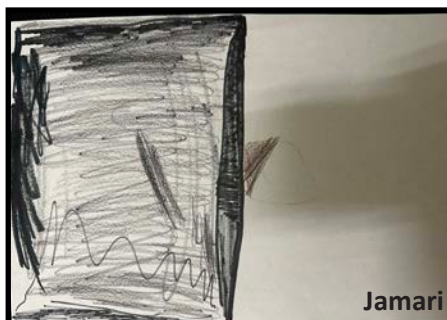
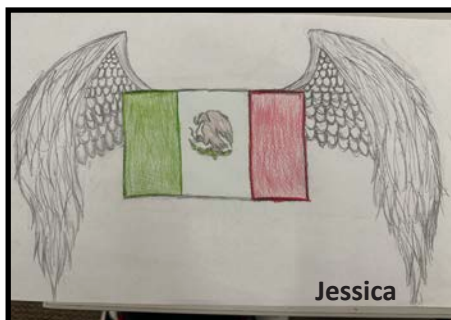
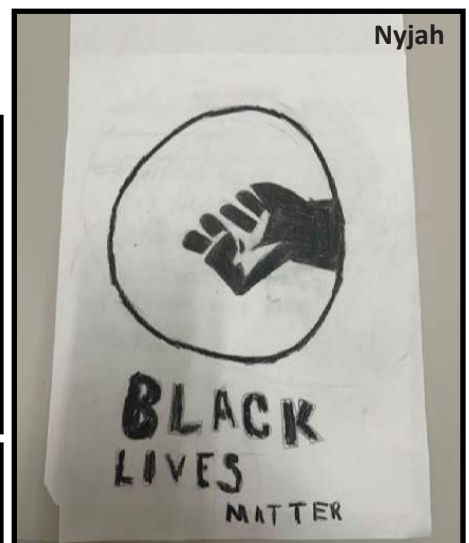
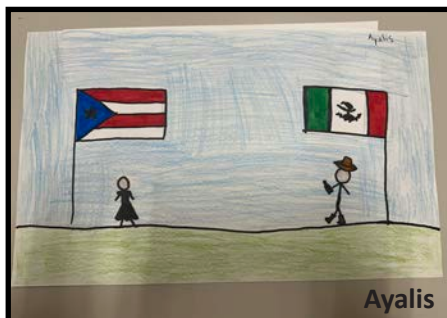
The bird represents freedom and the Mexico represents me and my family and where we come from. **(Jasmin)**

My flag represents community to me because Mexico is where my family is from and it's my culture. **(Jessica)**

Fire/tent = my love for camping. Tree = my love for nature/outdoors. Stage = my love for singing. Water = my love for the lake. Bonding, patience, community, and peace. **(Mane)**

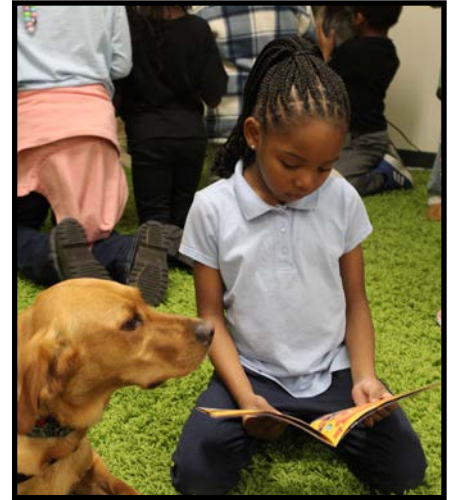
I used black, white, and the Black Lives Matter symbol—it represents me. **(Nyjah)**

I did Odyssey because I am a part of that community and black, twin because I have a twin, and VAHS because I am a part of that. **(Trinity)**



GO TEAM THERAPY DOGS

Zinnia, Riverbelle, and Gary joined Odyssey Junior for an evening of sharing our favorite books and animal stories. We can't wait for their next visit!



MOVEMENT

For the second year, we are very lucky to have Keena Atkinson, Odyssey alum and founder of R'oujie Wellness, bringing movement to Odyssey Junior! Keena works with students to develop their confidence, self-regulation, and teamwork skills through dance, yoga, and affirmation exercises.

We also have the multi-talented Yatziri working with the Scouts! She is learning about teaching movement, supporting students with unique learning needs, and brings a wealth of early childhood education experience.



CLASS OF 2026 FAMILIES

