

ODYSSEY JUNIOR

ORACLE



Gwendolyn Coale, Odyssey Junior Manager
 Emily Auerbach, UW Odyssey Project Director; Oracle Editor
 Beth Auerbach, Oracle Designer •
 Photography by Gwendolyn Coale and Adelaide Rosene

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), Amy Basel, Becky Wheeler

Explorers: KaBao Thao, Latrice Johnson, Brenna Kelley, Ashley Rojas-Edge, Gabby Schreiber, Lyn Tschanz

Voyagers: Ozanne Anderson ('08), K'Shawn Gibbs (Junior grad), Zawadi Ozulamoi (Junior grad), Shantrice Solis, Riley Lynch, Prisma Ruacho, Lindsey Starrett

Teens: Angie Bazan, Deshawn McKinney, Lola Belchinsky

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

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, the UW Space Place, Brian Benford and Duke Ellington the service dog, Chris Wagner, and Adelaide Rosene.

BABY BADGERS



SCOUTS



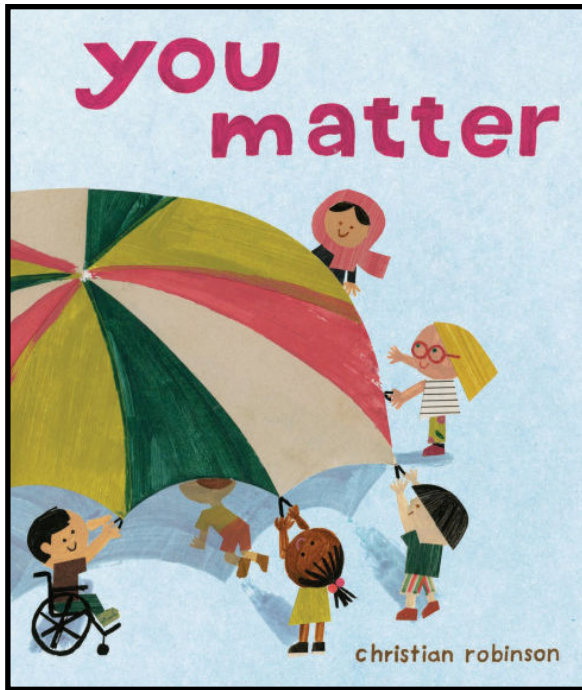
EXPLORERS



VOYAGERS



YOU MATTER



After reading *You Matter* by Christian Robinson, Odyssey Junior students made self-portraits, wrote “you matter” notes to their loved ones, and talked about what it means to matter. Jaiyana, 2nd grade, said, “Even if people think you don’t matter, you know inside your heart that you do. A lot.”



De’Zarieda’s letter to her friend from school:

You bring me so much joy!
 When I see you, I smile!
 When I see you, you make me laugh!
 When I’m with you, you make me feel like
 I’m wanted at any place!
 Not only do you make me feel like I’m wanted, you’re there when no one else is!
 You cheer me up when I’m sad.
 We are like the same two people in two different bodies.
 When I first met you, I never thought we would have so many memories.
 The memories that you bring are not only cheerful, but I can always look back and say
 “wow, we came a long way.”
 You’re not only a best friend, you’re like my sister!
 You bring me so much joy!



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

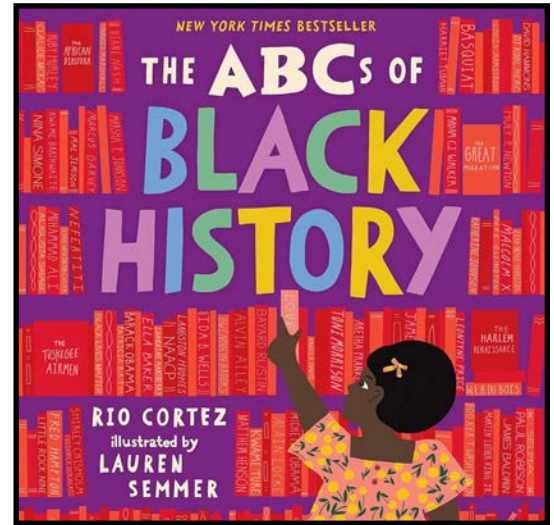
THE ABCs OF BLACK HISTORY

“E is for education, for expanding the mind,” writes Rio Cortez in *The ABCs of Black History*. Reflecting on brave young leaders like Ruby Bridges, students celebrated Odyssey Junior’s learning community by writing their own ABCs.

THE ABCs OF ODYSSEY JUNIOR

Awesome
Brave
Creative
Dogs
Eating
Friends
Grateful
Happy
It’s Possible
Justice
Kind
Love
Me
Nice
Original
Proud
Queen
Reading
Strong
Talented
Unique
Valuable
Wonderful
(E)xplorers
You
(Miss) Zawadi

Written by: Ayalis (7th grade), Cindy (2nd grade), De’Zariea (5th grade), Fatima (1st grade), Jaiyana (2nd grade), Jojo (3rd grade), Khaiyden (1st grade), Khaliyah (3rd grade), Noah (2nd grade), Omarion (5th grade), Xzayvion (6th grade), Zawadi (Odyssey Junior alum, UW Madison student)



I HAVE A DREAM

After reading *Martin's Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport, the Explorers wrote about their own dreams and practiced speaking in front of their class.

...that one day I will become a veterinarian. **Khaiden, 1st grade**

...that one day everyone will be able to enjoy love and care. **Marshall, 1st grade**

...that one day I will become a volleyball player. **Jourdyn, 2nd grade**

...that one day everyone will be able to enjoy food. **Journi, 1st grade**

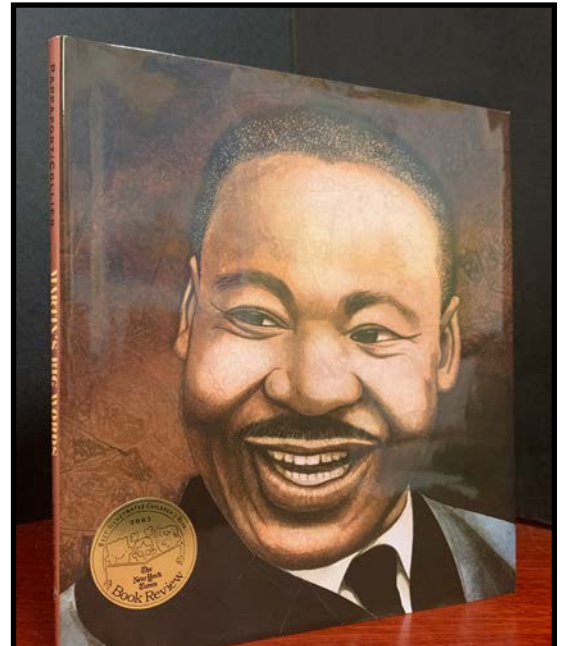
...that one day I will become a teacher. **Fatima, 1st grade**

...that one day everyone will be able to enjoy friendship. **Sincere V, 1st grade**

...that one day I will become a singer. **Adore, 2nd grade**

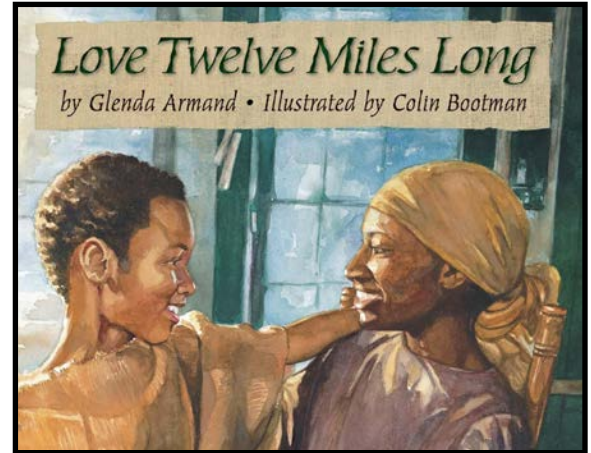
...that one day my family will go to Chicago. **Noah, 2nd grade**

...that one day I will become Superman. **Joshua, 1st grade**



LOVE, VALENTINES, AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass celebrated his birthday on Valentine's Day because his mother called him her Valentine. In *Love Twelve Miles Long* by Glenda Armand, Douglass' mother walks twelve miles to visit him. Each mile is for something different, hope, wonder, remembering, but the twelfth mile is always for love.



WHO IS SOMEONE YOU LOVE?

My best friend. He can always make me laugh and he can always cheer me up. **Ayden, 5th grade**

My mom, I like to talk to her and I'm here if she needs anyone to talk to. **De'Zariea, 5th grade**

I love my sister. I love how we can argue and be cool after by giving her tough love. **Miguel, 9th grade**

I love my friend because she makes me feel better and comforts me. **Cindy, 2nd grade**

My sister, she's pretty, funny, smart, and cool. **Lauren, 5th grade**

I love everybody because they're kind, special, and care for me. **Jaiyana, 2nd grade**



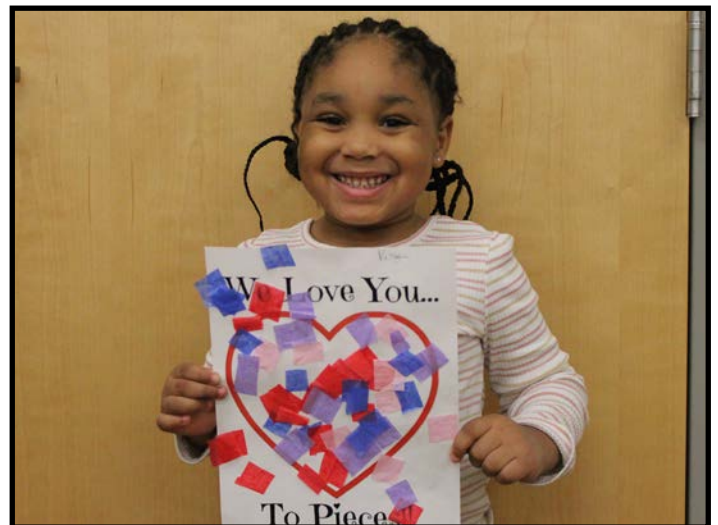
I love purple and pink and my mommy and daddy. **Va'Nylaa, 4k**

My mom is my favorite person, she's a good listener. **Khaiyden, 1st grade**

I love my mom because she takes care of us. **Sincere V, 1st grade**

I love my family. I love how much they care for each other. I show my family love by doing things together. I love my cousin Yaya because she's funny, kind, we have the same humor, we both make no sense, and we love making dad jokes. **Jojo, 3rd grade**

Amo a mi mamá. **Sol, 3 years old**



WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOURSELF?

I like my face because it helps me smile a lot.

Khaiyden, 1st grade

I can make positive solutions to negative things.

De'Zariea, 5th grade

I like that I'm good at making friends. **Miguel, 9th grade**

I'm a good friend and family member because of how much I care when somebody is hurt. **Jojo, 3rd grade**



My healthy and strong body. **Cindy, 2nd grade**

I am kind to myself. **Germani, 2nd grade**



I love my feet because it's comfy to not wear socks.

I love all my body parts to stay healthy. **Nylah, Kindergarten**

I love that I am beautiful and confident. **Adore, 2nd grade**

I'm good at soccer, football, and I have great style. **Raesel, 3rd grade**

I am great at being calm and patient. And sharing things with people. **Khaliyah, 3rd grade**



WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU LOVE TO DO?

I love to hang out with my teachers. **Adore, 2nd grade**

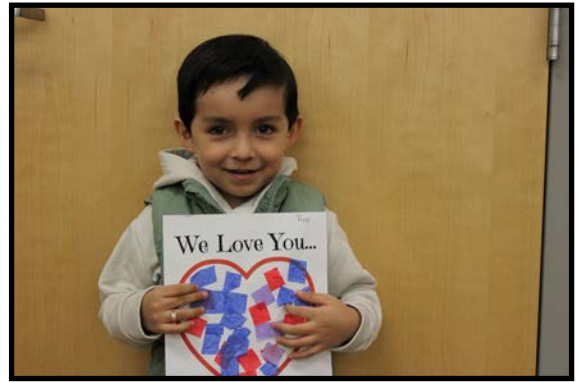
Yo quiero dibujar. **Sol, 3 years old**

I love to play with my friends. **Zaniyah, 3 years old**

A mi me gusta jugar con Super Sonic. **Rey, 3 years old**

I love alligators, Toy Story, and printing pictures. **Sincere K, 3rd grade**

I love to eat with my family, play games with my cousin, and be in the sunshine. **Marshall, 1st grade**



I like to cook, my favorite is spicy tacos. I like to swim in lakes. I love my mom. I love being alive on Earth. **Noah, 2nd grade**

I'm good at cartwheels and reading. **Genny, 3rd grade**

I love playing football and basketball. I am a wide receiver and quarterback. I'm very good! **Zyrie, 3rd**



grade

I'm really good at drawing and sketching eyes. **Jojo, 3rd grade**

I love being with my family and playing basketball. **Zamauri, 6th grade**



WINTER OLYMPICS

GOALS, PLANS, & MEDALS, OH MY!

What is a goal you've reached? How did you get there? How did you feel?

One time my mom taught me how to tie my shoe. I tried to do it but it was hard. Then I practiced for years and finally met my goal. **Khaliyah, 3rd grade**

I remember the day I read my first chapter book (*Harry Potter*) and I was so happy about it. **Ayden, 5th grade**

One day we went to Gym with classmates and we did a pushup test and I got 80. I was happy. **Raesel, 3rd grade**

When I was trying to get better at swimming and now I can swim in the deep end. **Genny, 3rd grade**

I got a kindness award at school. **Zyrie, 3rd grade**



I kept going even though they told me “No,” and I feel like I can reach it if I keep trying. **De’Zariea, 5th grade**

My goal was to be kind. I did that by helping people. **Fatima, 1st grade**

I practiced swimming in the shallow end to reach my swimming goal. **Cindy, 2nd grade**

I go to swimming, karate, dancing, and Girl Scouts. I keep going and never give up. **Adore, 2nd grade**

When I was five my goal was to do a cartwheel. I kept trying and trying until one day I did it myself and I was so proud. **Omyma, 3rd grade**

What are some ways to celebrate success without a medal?

Spending time with my mom. **Omarion, 5th grade**

A big hug from my mom. **Cindy, 2nd grade**

Party! **Adore, 2nd grade**

We can believe in ourself and be the best person we can be! **Zaria, 4th grade**

Just do it! **De'Zariea, 5th grade**



ODYSSEY TEEN

SONGS OF OURSELVES, INSPIRED BY WALT WHITMAN

I Am Antonio

I am Antonio.
I am a son of a mother who is and was hardworking and relentless.
I am Antonio.
I am loved by all of my family.
I am Antonio.
I am a person of many hobbies.
I am Antonio, a descendant from my Smith family.

I Am Ayalis

I am Ayalis.
I was an only child but now I'm the oldest sister.
I am Ayalis.
The quiet one.
The one you don't have to worry about.
I am Ayalis.
That comes from a family that yells and shouts.
I am Ayalis.
I am Mexican and Puerto Rican and proud to be.
But who is Ayalis?
A 13-year-old girl who is still finding herself.



I Am Dae'Vion

I am Dae'Vion.
I am quiet, well spoken, outgoing and calm.
But besides all of that, I am me.

I am from Madison, Wisconsin, born and raised.
When I look at myself I see a mixed-face, sexy
Lightskin man who prioritizes God and money before anything.
I have four siblings and I am the third oldest of all of my siblings.

I am interested in sports, culinary work, and things that I find passionate.
I am currently employed and my dream is to make people happy.

I Am Jasmin

I am Jasmin.
 I am the oldest of five.
 I have the most pressure on me.
 I am hard working.
 I am genuine.
 I want to succeed in life.
 I am afraid to fail so I won't.
 I am Jasmin.

**I Am Jessica**

I am Jessica.
 Hair soft and silky.
 Eyes deep and dark.
 Personality filled with spark.
 Green, white, red with an eagle.
 Representing my pride and my culture.
 Coming from a family of immigrants.
 Giving me a better life.
 I am proud of who I am.
 I am Jessica.

I Am Mane

I am Mane.
 The 13-year-old boy who single-handedly wrote insane.
 A song about falling in love--
 just to fall back out.
 I am Mane.
 I may not be the smartest-
 But I am damn sure the hardest working in the room most times.
 I am Mane.
 A 6'4" athlete with a size 14 in feet.
 I am Mane.
 Someday or even later today,
 I'm going to make a name for myself.
 They may not know the face,
 But they will remember my name.
 I am Mane.
 Someday I'm going to drive the world insane.
 Not in a bad way, but in a good way every day.

I Am Miguel

I am Miguel, the defendant.
I am Miguel, a Mama's Boy.
I am Miguel, a hustler.
I am Miguel, I'm determined.
I am Miguel, I hate school.
I am Miguel, I'm an entrepreneur.
I am Miguel, I love sleeping.
I am Miguel, I love video games.
I am Miguel, I am blessed.
I am Miguel, I am humble.
I am black and Mexican.
I am Miguel.

I Am Nyjah

I am Nyjah from a black household.
I am Nyjah. I'm from Tennessee where we listen to music 24/7.
I'm Nyjah. I'm the second oldest from an older brother and a little sister.
I am Nyjah. I'm the fourth eldest on my dad's side.
I am Nyjah. I am a basketball player.
I am Nyjah.

**I Am Trinity**

I am Trinity Eve Latimer.
I am a volleyball player.
I am loyal.
I am a daughter.
I am an aunt.
I am a kind person.
I love my PS5.
I am a twin.
I am Trinity.

Story of Zacaria

I am Zacaria.

Daughter of two

Navigating to be the middle as the oldest.

I am Cookie.

The person that's name managed to get spread around the whole school,
Yet no one knows me.

I am Zacaria.

One second I'm attracted to someone and being all social.

The next, I'm distancing myself and tip-toeing around everyone.

I am Cookie.

I smile and hug everyone because I want them to see me

As an affectionate person that's sweet.

I am Zacaria.

I really just want to be left alone and forgotten.

The Teens had the opportunity to see a private dress rehearsal of *The Hobbit* at the Children's Theater of Madison. CTM offers theater classes for grades 4-K through 12th where students "develop a sense of pride in accomplishment, a greater sense of community and ensemble, and a deep connection with their own creative problem-solving skills." Odyssey Junior alum Alleanah Hancock-Jammeh performed as Dorothy in CTM's production of *The Wiz* in 2023.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

ZAWADI

Where are you in your educational journey? What steps did you take to get there?

I am currently in my second semester of nursing school, though my journey here came with a couple of bumps in the road. My senior year of high school, I applied to UW-Madison for neurobiology, and got denied. Though at the time this news was disheartening, I still knew I wanted to pursue higher education.... something in the medical field. I began researching different healthcare pathways, and nursing struck my eye. It was a career that combined both compassion and science, and this intrigued me. So, I enrolled in the LAT- Pre BSN program at Madison College. It was there I completed my nursing prerequisites, took on leadership roles, maintained academic excellence, and ultimately graduated with my associates degree. I began the transfer process to UW-Madison my sophomore year, applying for their TBSN program with the support from the Odyssey community. Lo and behold, I got into the program and am one step closer towards becoming an RN.



When were you in Odyssey Junior? What do you remember about your family's time with Odyssey?

I have been in the Odyssey family for most of my life, starting when I first met Professor Emily at 3 years old! Though, I'd say my earliest memories in Odyssey Junior were in middle school when our classroom was in the library across the street; my younger siblings were also in the program. I remember the genuine friendships with the other students, and my warm appreciation for the teachers. For me, Odyssey was a place where I could be myself and bond with my peers, whilst also feeling seen in a space in which other people looked like me. Wednesdays slowly became my favorite day of the week, and my love for writing grew with every weekly journal. Through Odyssey, I relearned that writing can indeed



be fun. I will forever be grateful for their continuous support. :) I am now one of the Voyager teachers, and this whole journey feels very full circle. I hope to instill that same sense of belonging I felt to the Voyager group, for these kids are truly remarkable individuals.

What advice would you share with kids who are in Odyssey Junior now?

My advice to the kids and teens: believe in yourself. Believe that you are capable, excellent, worthy, beautiful, intelligent, kind, loveable, loving, and so much more... because you are. Believe that you are destined for great things in life, wherever your odyssey may lead you. Know that if you can reach for the clouds, aim for the moon, then the stars. Know that you radiate light into this world, and how much you are truly loved. So, believe in yourself, and know that the Odyssey family will always believe in you.

ODYSSEY JUNIOR GAME NIGHT

Before spring semester started, Odyssey families and staff got together to reconnect during winter break and play some games!



OUTSIDE OF ODYSSEY



Mane released his first original song and music video, "Rewrite the Past," available to watch on YouTube.



Sincere K celebrated his 9th birthday at Alligator Alley.

Oli turned 1.



Sisters Harmony and Germani find joy in dancing.



In February, we welcomed six-week-old Knowledge to Baby Badgers. Congratulations to Odyssey student Richard Butler on becoming a new dad!