

ENDEAVORING ON AN ENDEAVOR

In preparation for a visit and performance by Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra on the theme of "Endeavor," students wrote about how the verb or noun applies to them.

verb: endeavor: to try hard to do or achieve something

noun: endeavor: an attempt to achieve a goal

Origin of the term: from Middle English, meaning "to put oneself in" or "do one's utmost." If you endeavor to do something, you try with earnestness and effort. NASA named one of its space shuttles Endeavor.

Odyssey is an endeavor to me because I know I can do it, but I know as well that I try hard to achieve this goal. I didn't have a good feeling because I've always doubted myself. Hearing others doubt me made me feel like I couldn't do it, but once I got into the program, I knew I could achieve something. I learned that no matter what somebody says to you, push harder and recognize who you are. **(Cquemiah Clark-Richmond)**

When I finally started thinking about my education I went to MATC to sign up for HSED classes. That was the first part of my endeavor to further my education. It had been a long time since I was in school, and it was intimidating. I thought of a quote I heard: "if your goals don't intimidate you, they are too small." I know furthering my education is going to be intimidating but it is so worth it. **(Kiana Galloway)**

Growing up, my family wasn't the most oriented, in fact I felt we weren't oriented at all, which over time led my siblings and me to be placed in foster care. Living with my parents I felt I had high hopes, but I felt that they were nowhere in my reach. I felt that no matter how hard I tried, there was no way I could be my "best self" in that environment.



Moving into foster care brought home for me. I was reassured that "I can" and that's exactly what I did. Instead of feeling like I wasn't going to graduate high school, I did what I had to do to beat those odds. I took three buses from the far east side of town to the far west side early before the sun was up. I dedicated myself to do the homework and be the best version of myself. I did just that and graduated high school. **(Roche Palmer)**

Growing up in Chicago, I had to endeavor every day. Whether it was to eat, live, or school projects, it was hard growing up there. Every day was a different situation. I endeavored to do everything: play football, go to the store without fighting to duck bullets. It was crazy. **(Johnnell Britt)**

I had to overcome my hometown. My endeavors were just me growing past everything wrong I learned growing up in a bad environment. I was faced with abuse as well as substance abuse early on in my life, and if I didn't overcome these things I wouldn't be here doing this work today!
(Richard Butler)

My father was an alcoholic and so it was expected that I would follow in his footsteps. When I turned 18, I made a decision to myself that I would not follow in my father's footsteps. I am proud to say today that I am not an alcoholic, and I don't even drink. Odyssey for me is my endeavor to become more than I am now. I want to finish what I have started and be the best version of myself.
(Viwe Mpurwana)

I am on an endeavor to have a better life/lifestyle for myself and my children. Since I was 14 years old with a newborn baby boy, I have been trying to



make a better life while still struggling. Working and going to school myself while teaching a child as well was very challenging. Pushing myself to keep going and not give up is an endeavor that I still have today and think I will have for a lifetime. **(Shataya Hall)**

I had to endeavor my whole teenage life to prove that I would not be a teen mom dropout. I endeavored to finish school and graduate, something I could be proud of. I struggled to make it to school to turn in my assignments to understand what my teacher was teaching me, but I was determined to see it through to prove just because the odds were against me (a teen mom, a drug addict parent, no sense of direction), I, Jerwanda, was going to get my high school diploma. The day I did was one of my happiest moments and proudest. I finally did it. **(JuJu Stallworth)**

I have heard of the word "endeavor" but I have never used it in a sentence or in my life, to be honest. But the definition I google is "to try hard to do or achieve something." This is what everyone in my Odyssey class is trying to do—to achieve higher education and have a better life or a better career. I hope we all achieve what we want and are looking forward to! **(Tida Drammeh)**



In my life, I have had to endeavor to survive both childbirths. My first pregnancy was a Covid baby. I had Nylah on January 4, 2020, and I didn't have anyone but my mother and my child's godmother by my side. I was in labor for 36 hours and everything that I did not want to happen happened... I had to have an emergency C-section. I had to get an epidural and after having my baby, she was 8 lbs. 9 oz...I developed hypertension, which caused a seizure and I flatlined in front of my mother. When I woke up, I didn't know what had happened to me. I was in so much pain I couldn't even hold my baby for almost a month and a half due to me having nerve spasm in my spine.

Now to this day I have a bit of short-term memory loss here and there, but after all of this had happened to me and I somewhat healed, I felt like a warrior for myself and my baby because I could have died while my baby was born! I went through hell and hot water to bring such a beautiful and amazing baby girl into this world. To be here and have the opportunity to raise my kids, I feel like I was put on this earth to be a mother and so much more in life... why go through so much in life not to be able to tell your story!

I also had to endure a traumatic event that has caused me and my daughter permanent trauma, and I'm still trying to figure out how to recover, trust, and be able to be open and dependent on others when it comes to my kids... that's a touchy story. I had to endeavor to almost become homeless and am still trying to endeavor while being car-less.

I've been put in a position to endeavor to survive so much betrayal from people who I thought would never betray me!

The goal I will endeavor will be me to continue being a great mother and trying to advocate for me and my



girls as much as possible. I will also endeavor to complete the Odyssey program. They have already shown me that I can trust this project, that they're here for me, and that they want to see my children and me be successful through this program despite the challenges I'm having. This chapter of my life is hard and sometimes I don't see myself completing the program, but I'm choosing to fight back as hard as I can. The last two goals I will endeavor to achieve will be getting a new truck and receiving therapy to help my mental state. **(Roncal Riley)**

In 2023, I made a plan to start a new life in Georgia. The same day I got approved for an apartment was the same day I found out I was pregnant. I took it as a sign to go when really it was a sign to stay. I lost everything—my car, home, job, cat,

and even dignity. I may have lost my mind too, in all honesty. Everything was crumbling before me during the time of a new creation blessing my life. It took a lot of resilience, sad nights, guilt, rejections, motivation, overcoming fear, and determination to continue. Although I'm still rebuilding, I've never been more excited for my new life. Things fell apart so that the life I prayed for can come together. **(Shaneece Taylor)**



I think the greatest endeavor thus far in my adulthood has been learning to juggle my mental health while having to be an adult and a parent, while also just doing it all for the first time. Right now, I'm dealing with postpartum and being a mom of two, but it's a little easier now because I've done it before. You see this time I'm in therapy once a week, actually reaching out and asking for help. I had the courage to say it's too much this time! My first rodeo I struggled with postpartum for five long years; self-harm, suicide attempts, extreme weight gain, drug abuse (mostly marijuana), and mental blackouts. But I made it through! My goal was simply to survive, and I did just that; through blood, sweat and tears, I'm here. **(Laura Bass)**



Well, just being a man of color, my life was an endeavor in itself. I was born three months early and had to be incubated. I had a hole in my heart that was never supposed to heal, but it did. My mom sent me to primarily white schools my whole life, and racism first struck me there in high school on the basketball court. The coach would not start any of the colored kids no matter how good we were. And we were good, so good that we embarrassed them every day in practice. Then as an adult you encounter the same discrimination at your job. No matter how good you are, you're never good enough to be

at the top. So just being a colored man living and breathing at age 40 with no criminal background is an endeavor in itself. **(Shelton Murphy)**

One endeavor in my life has been balancing school, work, and family. There are times when it feels very overwhelming, but I push myself to keep going because I do know the outcome will be worth it. I endeavor to show up every Wednesday, even when I am tired and may not have all of my homework done, because I want to learn how to write on a different level and succeed. I want to provide a better future for myself and my kids. Completing Odyssey and working towards my goal of becoming a pediatric nurse is an endeavor and takes dedication. **(Shakila Woods)**

Coming to Odyssey is hard with my three kids. I try my hardest every day to tell myself I can do this for me. The challenge of having to get the kids ready and make sure I have my husband's lunch made and household caught up is something I try hard to achieve every Wednesday and Monday.

(Lilibeth Sobrevilla)

Me being accepted to the Odyssey Project, I will endeavor to further my education. No one from my family got to go to college, so I want to overcome the stereotype of my family. I remember when my parents, my two siblings, and I were sleeping in a one-bedroom apartment. My mom was pregnant. It was hard to learn, but it made us be stronger as a family and learn to never give up. **(George Sydnor)**



Graduating the Odyssey class is an endeavor for me. While working a job and taking care of my baby. I'm driven to also complete my homework on time, as well as come to class even after working a 12-hour shift and still participate. With all that life has going on, I know that this endeavor will be completed successfully. **(Serene Boyd)**

I as a single mother of seven have had to endeavor hard to keep a stable roof over our heads. While suffering from depression, I had to make sure it didn't affect my children. I, as a student in the Odyssey Project program, want to do better than my best. **(Angel Moore)**

In this very moment, Odyssey is my endeavor. With the many obstacles I am facing, my goal is to finish and finish strong. I want to overcome my mental block that I have of not being a writer and not being creative. This endeavor I am on is personal for me. I deserve it. **(Paola Damiani)**

A couple years ago, I took a leap of faith moving my family from Madison to Illinois. I was offered a nice job and promised a nice home/good life. I had to endeavor when I noticed the plan backfired. This left us homeless, jobless, and very uncomfortable. To make things better, we moved back to Madison. I started from scratch looking for a home so that my family doesn't have to live under someone else's rules. **(Joseph Thigpen Jr.)**

When my career got taken from me, I felt like everything I had endeavored was flushed away and I had nothing to live for. But I found Odyssey Project, a program that is going to get me to my success!!! I've worked so hard to be great, to be something, and with every endeavor I've encountered I will not give up! **(Destiny Drone)**

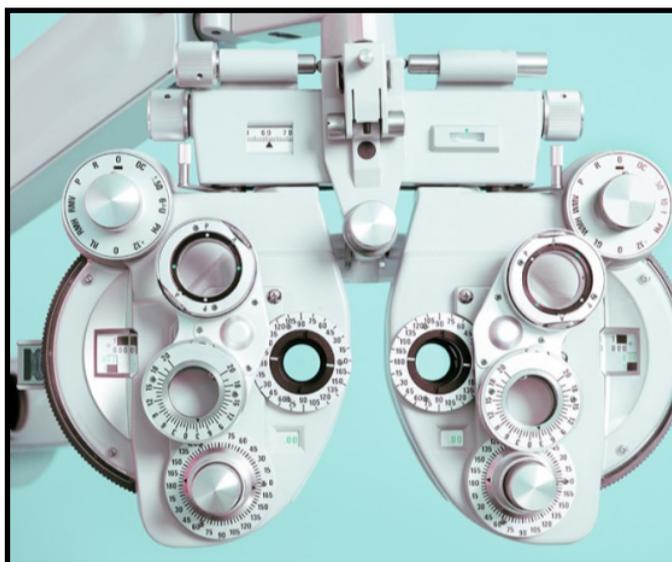


I've struggled a lot growing up: lots of abuse, low income living, house hopping, and foster home living. I never had a break point even when trying to overcome on my own. I had not much family support and lots of childhood and adulthood trauma. I want to overcome these things, heal, learn myself again, and become the best. I've never had a helping hand or a go-to person. I mostly feel alone, afraid to fail but doing a lot on my own, just trying to overcome many challenges.

(Antejah Greer)

Obtaining my certification for ophthalmic assistant

has been one of the more challenging endeavors I've faced. It took time, dedication, and grit. This meant a lot to me, as my employment was on the line. My job gave an eighteen-month grace period to obtain after date of hire. I'm proud to say I passed and now am a certified ophthalmic assistant. The same willpower will be used during my journey with Odyssey. **(Lisa Brown)**



An important endeavor of mine was to be the best mother that I could be, not to be like my mom. My grandmother raised my brothers and me; Joanne just didn't have the time or patience. I vowed to always put my children first, to always be there when they needed advice. I wanted to try and walk a path that I would want them to follow and did not want them to call another woman "mom"—there's only one me. My grandmother was mom to me, and I am grateful for her. **(Jaqueline Hawkins)**

I endeavor in my life to change my mindset. I grew up around drug dealers, gangbangers, and thought that was the life to live. I went to jail, which gave me a different outlook on my life. I wanted to change because the way I was living meant I couldn't get an apartment. I wasn't getting good jobs. I was losing myself. I made a decision to change. I started doing things different. I backed off the street lifestyle and worked hard. As I cut a lot of friends, I started to book good jobs. I started to reach some of my goals. **(Larry Grant)**

Being a mother I feel like every single day is an attempt to achieve goals, to become a better person and show your children a different way of life. You want to have something to be proud to say you've passed down or made better. My son gives me strength and courage to make every dream I have come true, and that means passing this class. I strive to run multiple businesses and to own my own home. I strive as a parent to get my child the support he needs. I want to be the best mother and show him he can do anything even with his challenges. **(Tikoya Gilmer)**

Endeavor is a term that defines life's successful moments. There is always another conquest in our journey, contingent on its very meaning. Successful ones can be encouraged not to be disparaged by the less successful. We sometimes walk into things with confidence in our ability to do well until our very human nature interjects, but we

Musical Landscapes in Color
Vol. III

Xavier Foley
Autumn Maria Reed
Omar Thomas
Regina Harris Baiocchi
Eric Gould

Endeavor
October 10, 2025 – 7:30 PM
Capitol Theater, Overture Center
Xavier Foley, bass

Recorded LIVE for
2026 Album Release

must remember to keep the lessons to get to the next successful one. **(Kharmen Thomas)**

I plan to endeavor and complete the Odyssey program.

I endeavor and dedicate myself daily to my short-term and long-term goals.

I will endeavor and achieve my goal of getting back into entrepreneurship full time! **(Brittany Hughes)**

An endeavor for me is showing up, completing assignments, and graduating. With life, work and school, it has been challenging, staying afloat and being present. From me being wild in the streets and being troubled growing up, a lot of people never thought I would have made it thus far, by simply just keeping a job. My endeavor is to be the best version of myself, to stick it out and finish all things I start. **(Valencia Collins)**