

Champaign Odyssey Project Graduation Speech
Janice Walker
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Good Afternoon Friends, Family, and Faculty. Thank you for taking time to celebrate with the 2010 Graduating Class of The Odyssey Project.

About 2 ½ years ago, I saw the Odyssey Program advertised in the *News Gazette* paper and I thought WOW, what an opportunity but at that time my personal plate was full and I couldn't take advantage of the Project, but I did tell others about it, and one of my fellow co-workers completed the program last year. Little did I know a year later I would need some additional humanities credits in order to complete my Bachelor of Science Degree and so on a personal note that is what this project has done for me.

Answers.com gives a definition of the word ODYSSEY as an extended adventurous voyage or trip. An intellectual or spiritual quest. Both definitions are fitting to what we've experienced.

This is my explanation of the letters which spell ODYSSEY

O Opportunity – to reach new heights in the Humanities

D Dignity – everyone has a story worth telling and listening to

Y Yearning – we were here to increase our educational pursuits

S Solidarity – there was unity of purpose and togetherness

S Success – this is an event that accomplishes an intended purpose

E Effort – it took physical energy to get to class and mental energy to maintain in class

Y Yes – an affirmative yes you can, it is so, we are the ones who made it through.

A quote from Nelson Mandela says, "Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, and that a child of farm workers can become the president."

Thank you Odyssey Project and all who have traveled this odyssey with me.