

THE UNIVERSITY League-Letter



Join the Excitement! *New Group Launched on Wave of Enthusiasm*

The September meeting sparked a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and excitement for University League's unique new interest group, the "Friends of the Odyssey Project." Dr. Emily Auerbach, the project's director, described how the UW-Madison Odyssey Project, now in its second year, gives motivated, low-income adults, aged 18 to 58, the chance to turn their dreams into reality and start college for free. Two students spoke movingly about how the Odyssey Project has opened up a new world of learning and discovery for them and their families. The class, which focuses on the great works of philosophy, history, literature, art, and music, is helping to make these students better citizens and better parents. The project is a perfect fit with the University League's mission of supporting scholarships, service, education, and friendship, and it offers a unique opportunity for us to make a real difference in someone's life.

Jill Muehrcke led the group in a series of brainstorming sessions to decide how University League can best help the Odyssey Project succeed. As Jill explained, most of the students are older adults with kids to care for, jobs to work at, and little money to spend, so they are grateful for any help we can provide. After completing the course, which meets one evening a week from September to May, many of the students are eager to continue their college careers, and this is where University League volunteers can be especially helpful, offering support, help with emergency funds, and assistance in navigating the system and applying for financial aid.

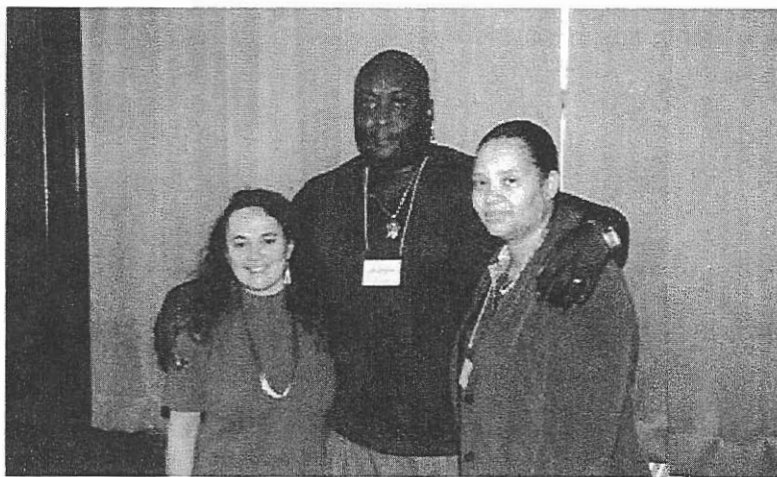
The brainstorming sessions generated many ideas of ways we can help these talented, deserving students move forward with their education. These ideas include providing rides for the students, helping Emily build a library in her classroom, serving as "buddies" for students, and creating a resource handbook for Emily and her students.

We have already put some of the brainstorming ideas into action. Evelyn Miller is calling all the interest group chairs to arrange for each interest group to deliver a dinner for one class per year. Since the class meets in the evening and many students come directly from work, the dinner is a vital part of the experience, and eating together adds a cozy, congenial touch that is very important.

We have also started a special fund so that we can receive checks to benefit the Odyssey Project. If you wish to donate money to this fund, send your check made out to University League (with "Odyssey Fund" written in the memo space) to the University League treasurer (Norma Jones).

Jill Muehrcke is putting together a master list of items people want to donate to the Odyssey Project. If you can donate any items, please e-mail or call Jill (or add a note for Jill when you send in your registration form or your Odyssey Project check). These items could include such donations as books, computers, and furniture for Emily's classroom. Emily is currently looking for an upright piano, as well as art and plants to decorate her classroom.

If you are interested in volunteering for the new "Friends of the Odyssey" group, contact Jill Muehrcke, muehrcke@core.com, 231-2373.



Professor Emily Auerbach, Joe Robinson and Denise Maddox