

SAYF Worship Journal
SAYF at SAYMA
June, 2017
Warren Wilson College

On June 15-18, 2017, the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Yearly Gathering of SAYMA, at Warren Wilson College. This is our witness. This is our story.

Dear SAYF,

I haven't seen you all for quite a while, and I must say, it's good to see you all after so long. I'm rather regretful of the fact that I didn't come to more retreats this year, because it meant that I didn't get to spend more time with the graduates. I wish the graduates the best in their future endeavors, and I hope to stay in touch with you all. Please come visit. I hope to come to more retreats next year so that I don't make the same mistake I did this year.

With love,
Henry Chapman

First graduation, so amazing! You all are lucky to have SAYF as a rite of passage. Stay true to your values and reach out to those less fortunate to lift them up. If you pay attention, there are people all around you calling out for support and friendship. I trust that you will be the helping hand for so many. Blessings!

SAYF,

This was my last SAYF for a hot second but it just makes me even more glad that it happened. To the 4 graduated seniors I thank you. Each and every person adds themselves to the massive soup that is the Sayf community. When a person leaves they might be gone but their flavor stays in the pot forever. So to those that are leaving I thank you for everything you have brought to this group. Goddamn it I love this community soup.

With too much love

~ Jonas

P.S. Rest in peace my beautiful carrots Ameleia, Levi, Susan and Ella

SAYF,

This has been a big one for me. I am so thankful to be coming out of this retreat feeling very good about the discussions we have had, and the strength and resilience we have displayed

as a community. I feel like we will just continue to grow closer, and there may be bumps along the way, but I am so confident that we have the skills and compassion to dissolve or talk through any road blocks we may face. Our love is a special one, and I have yet to find it anywhere else. It's a weird thought that I am suddenly closer to graduating than I expected. Yes, I have two full years left, but the four years I have already been here have flown by so fast. I have suddenly found myself imagining what it will be like when I'm in the middle circle, looking at my candle, and realizing that I have to move on.

But, I am so excited for those who are just starting their SAYF journey, those who have six of the best years ahead of them. I am so glad that the gift of SAYF will keep on giving and that I am able to love and cherish that gift while I have it. You have to savor it, guys; time flies by faster than you will be ready for it to.

I love you all SO much, SO SO much.

Your friend,

Cora

I love the SAYF community. This community is full of kind, loving, and sincere people who I will always respect and love. This year's graduates each represent an aspect of SAYF which is irreplaceable. Ella, you are kind, genuine, and THE most positive person I know. Susan, you have shown me and countless other people that there is true power in silence. Emelia, although I only really got to know you this retreat I feel that you are one of the funniest people I have ever met. Levi, you are one of the most talented, loving, and whole people that I've had the privilege to know and talk to.

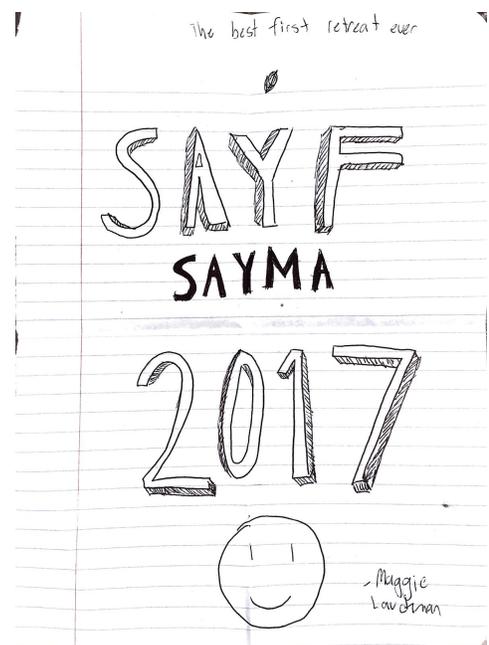
- Finn

- Finn M-H

P.S. I know I'm bad at writing.

This is a Limerku - the first part is a limerick,
the last part is a Haiku

The SAYF community is, I suppose,
The most loving place anyone knows,
I have been a SAYF FAN
for three years and ten
Excuse me I need to doze
SAYF is love practiced



Dear SAYF,

This retreat sure was a handful. From productive discussions to cute JYM and younger kids, it was a great 4-ish days to spend with you all. Although I am sad that some incredible people have left SAYF this year, it was made up for by the numerous hugs and love throughout this community. I've only been to 2 SAYF's, but it feels like way more, and already has greatly influenced my life.

Oliver

Dear SAYFers and FANs,

Every time I think I'm done, you pull me back in. You pull me back in with your patience, honesty, hard work, understanding, love, and tremendous silliness. While I may sometimes get impatient, sometimes angry, by the end of each adventure with you, I am hooked. Community is often hard. We sometimes butt heads. But when we look each other in the eye and really listen to one another, we find deep down we all want the same thing - love and respect. I love and respect each one of you. Even when we are apart, you are close to my heart. I am a better person because of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Love,

Jennifer Chapman

FAN for Life

Dear SAYF,

I often wonder how I can love something so much that it makes me so damn sad. Saying goodbye to my capital F Friends every month is such a hard thing to do, but that sadness is hugely outweighed by the happiness of the hellos. Jumping out of the van and running into a group of people who not matter who you grab, they will give you a huge hug and tell you how much they missed you is something so special. I laugh and talk and feel more at a weekend at SAYF than I do in the entire month in between. This was my first SAYMA, and it was one for the books. I have made memories that I can't forget. Even though some of us are leaving, and we may not see them 'till this time next year, I will have these memories to sustain me until then. It's gonna be hard coming to retreat and not seeing some of yall's beautiful faces; not hearing your laughs from the other room and knowing exactly who it is. But, I know you never leave us. To all the seniors, you have made me want to be better and shown me who I want to be. I admire each of you deeply for your individual strengths. I'll see you again.

With all the love in the world, Evangeline

I'm sad to be leaving SAYF. I didn't start coming till 9th grade, & I feel like I should have started earlier. The SAYF community has impacted my life in so many, indescribable ways. Thank you to everyone for laughing at my sleep deprived fueled jokes. To the other graduates, thank you for coming to SAYF and making my high school years happier and better than I ever could have imagined. To the younger SAYFers, I will miss each and every one of you. Even though sometimes I have to speak loudly (yell) at you. I'm not the best at expressing my gratitude and love through words, all of the other graduates' epistles were probably more eloquent than mine. But that doesn't mean that I don't love you and hope to see you in the future and hear about your exciting new lives.

With all my love,

Emilia

text me or something

Dearest SAYF,

How have you been? I feel like it's been a while, and maybe it has. Do you remember 6 years ago today, when you sent me away from this place, feeling more bewildered and giddy than my 12 year old brain was prepared for? You gave me a new part of myself I didn't know I needed, and right now, trying to describe it, feels almost blasphemous. Feelings like that are like pictures from the tops of mountains, you want so badly to take a picture and put the whole view in your pocket for later, but as soon as you do, you're misrepresenting it. Beauty like this, like that, wasn't meant to be able to be merely observed. You can't take a glance or a note and know what it is. SAYF is my mountaintop view, and I'm glad I can't put this feeling in a photo album, because the only right way to experience it is live, HD, in action. The only way to experience it is alone on a chair, writing your last epistle, looking back on all the years of fun and love and shit and tears trying to rationalize climbing into a car and leaving just a few hours early. So I'm sorry, I'm sorry I can't be here to watch you grow. I'm sorry that there's nothing I can do to help you anymore, I'm sorry I'm leaving 2 hours too early. If I could ask one last thing of you, one final request, I would ask you to keep on keepin' on. Keep bewildering 12 year olds who walk through your door, and if you happen to find another young Saderholm enter this abode, wrap your wing over their shoulder, smile your famous smile, and say "hey, I knew your dad, pretty damn well. How is he?"

"How lucky I am to have something that make saying goodbye so hard"

~ Winnie the Pooh

Love, Love, Love, Levi

SAYF,

I've hit an interesting and good but very confusing point in my life, which has made this retreat very emotional. As much as it doesn't feel too great, it's made me realize just how much this community teaches me and pushes me to learn and grow. Whatever conflict I end up facing, I always find myself drawing from the values SAYF so wonderfully holds itself to.

I love you all dearly and I'm hoping that good 'ol Quaker grasp is gonna keep you graduates close to your SAYF home.

- Callum

This is it, Friends.

After 6 long years as part of this wonderful community, it is time for me to take me leave. I still remember my first retreat, struggling to escape from Ian Saderholm in a game of Wink in this very room. I remember the original Mama Sayf, Chuck Jones as a FAN, the business meeting where we chose the name "FAN," and so much more. I have watched this community grow and transform around me, and now I am leaving it behind once and for all.

Most of my friendships outside of SAYF involve me just trying to hang around the handful of people who tolerate me well enough to let me stick around. At SAYF, this is not the case. This has been the place that always has room for me, and doesn't exclude me in plans made while I am there. For this I am grateful beyond words. Thank you all, for providing me with this space for so many long years. These are years that I will never forget.

Much love,
Susan

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This SAYMA has brought me back to the community I love. The last few retreats I've been to have left me feeling like something was missing, but all of that stuff came back during this one. Being able to see people I haven't seen in so long is truly amazing. This community never ceases to amaze me, and I'm excited to come back to as many retreats as I can during my senior year. I love you all. Stay golden.

ML

Honestly, I could not imagine life without every one of you amazing people. I have been in SAYF only one year, so I haven't known most of you that long. However, I truly believe that our souls are old friends. I have seen you all grow and change over the past year, and thanks to you guys, I have changed as well. The best part of every month is getting on that van and knowing that I can come here and be myself and be SO happy. The stress of my home life and school melts away, and I am so grateful that I found this absolutely amazing community. Never ever change yourself because you are all beautiful, intelligent, kind, caring human beings and I am so lucky to have all of you in my life. The past year has been difficult for me, but no matter how bad I felt you guys always made me feel better. Every time I fall, SAYF is there to pick me back up again. I honestly don't think that words can explain how much you all mean to me. Every time I leave a retreat my heart aches for you. I also have a new friend and memory almost every retreat. Last night at graduation, so many people hugged me. But Maggie wrapped me up and told me it would be ok, and Callum gave me a hug so tight that I knew it really would be ok. Jonas saw me and hugged me in such a loving way, and I knew after graduation, that although things wouldn't be the same without Levi, Susan, Emelia, and Ella that SAYF would still be filled with wonderful people. It will be SO different without the graduates, but one of the lessons that SAYF has taught me, is that different is almost always a good thing. Embrace the things that make you stand out in a crowd. Love everyone, including yourself, and most importantly, stay awesome always, or at least until I see you next. Love always and forever, Marissa