

**SAYF Worship Journal**  
**SAYF at SAYMA**  
**June, 2018**  
**Warren Wilson College**

*On June 14-17, 2018 the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Yearly Gathering of SAYMA, at Warren Wilson College. This is our witness. This is our story.*

*(Note from Autumn: I've done my best to transcribe, please forgive a misread word here and there. Also - visualize dozens of handwritten hearts that scattered the handwritten pages!)*

Dear SAYF,

I'm honestly at a loss for words. This SAYMA was amazing! The group of Graduates will be so incredibly missed. It's really weird to think about coming to SAYF and not seeing Patrick. Anyways, I love you guys. Stay awesome always, or at least until I see you next.

- Marissa

SAYF-

Thank you guys for an amazing first year. I wouldn't trade these moments or memories for anything. I feel so lucky to have met all of you, especially the seniors. I can't wait to see you all again; and stay as awesome as you are until I see you next.

Maggie

SAYMA truly feels like my new-years day. This place and this incredible community leave me stunned and humbled every year. I can't even comprehend how much every retreat lets me bring my world into perspective and learn SO MUCH about myself. Through every struggle and every question I have in my life, this community helps me learn and lets me feel loved. I'm so proud of y'all, from newbies to FANs alike. Thank you all for blessing my weekend, you make me so proud to call myself a quaker.

lots and lots of love  
- Callum

What a beautiful SAYMA and graduation ceremony! Thank you SAYF community for loving and supporting each other in the spirit of Quaker values. Stay strong in yourselves and your beliefs as you move forward into the next year/phase of your lives. My children will be forever grateful for your friendship. Be lights unto each other and don't forget what you have learned here about the goodness of humanity.

Love, Jennifer R

Leaving SAYF feels like finishing a really good chapter in a book. This chapter has been filled with so many magical events and amazing characters. Every character brings something to the community. It's because of this community that I have grown so much since my first retreat.

No person is the same walking into SAYF as they are walking out. I'm thankful for every part because it made me who I am. I had to go through the phase of being awkward and shy to be able to be an effective nurturer and clerk. My life has benefitted greatly because of the people I've met through SAYF. Leaving SAYF doesn't mean those relationships are over. They are far from over. It's only one chapter in a really good book. The characters will still be around in the next one.

So just a last few reminders - Completely embrace every moment you have with each other because time does move faster than you'll believe. Be exactly who you are because this is one of the safest spaces to do that. And don't try to grow up too fast because when the day comes, you might wish you enjoyed it a little more.

So take it easy my children, you are loved and valued greatly. I will miss you dearly.

Signing off for the last time  
Mama SAYF  
Julia Hudson

How do I say goodbye to something that has been a part of my life for almost 14 years? I realize it isn't a final goodbye since Nashville is hosting the October retreat, but this is basically it. Thank you, young Friends, for being the fantastic people you are, and for giving me some hope for the future because it includes people like you. Thank you to the other Fans for keeping me going and teaching me about paying attention. During graduation I was reflecting on my time as a Fan, and I felt that while I may have worked to facilitate SAYF happening, it is the young Friends that make it a special place that people want to keep coming back to. Please continue to work on being welcoming to everyone, have sympathy for the Nurturer or Fan that asks you to help clean up on Sunday morning - they're tired too and probably hate to have to ask. Most of all, keep sharing yourselves with one another and loving one another.

With much love,  
Mark Wutka

Dear SAYFers,

This SAYMA was by far a lot better than the one last year, which I think we can all agree on. I haven't been here or seen y'all in seven months. I didn't realize how sad I was to be absent until this moment, now remembering that in less than an hour, I will most likely not see y'all again until September. Graduates, your presence will be incredibly missed by all those in our community. You all have had such an impact on this small group of Quakers that the rest of us will take with us for the rest of our lives. After graduation, we were walking back to our dorms, and in front of me were four younger generation SAYFers walking in a row. I thought, these are the people that will continue to make SAYF the beautiful space that it is, and I am so honored that they are. I must admit, I did shed a tear or two at this thought. I see the beauty in our graduates and the lessons they have taught us, and I see the beauty in our young'ns, and the incredible potential they have and all the joy they carry. I could not be more blessed to have such a

wonderful balance in my life. I will miss all of you dearly, especially our graduates, but that doesn't mean I'll miss the rest of you any less. Oh, before I forget, I want to say a big thank you to Mark and Mary Linda. Also Jennifer Chapman. But Mary Linda specifically because for our Nashville experience of SAYF, none of it would've happened without your active support and love for each and every one of us. I love you very much and I hope to encounter you often outside of SAYF. I want to say so much more to y'all, but that is for another day.

Thank you friends,  
Kenya Clo

Dear SAYFers,

All y'all are my kids. I won't be around much anymore but I'm still here for you. If you ever feel you need an adult to talk with, I'm a text away.

with love,  
Mary Linda

Dear SAYF,

Thank you so so much for being a big part of my life - I truly would be a different person had I not been lucky enough to meet you all in this wonderful community.

To those of you who still have time here, cherish it while you can. I didn't value my time at SAYF in recent months as much as I should have. It took me until last night to realize how important every second with you wonderful people is to me. That is why I never left graduation, even though I had to pee the ENTIRE time, because I didn't want to miss another second with you all.

I wanted to write something about each of my fellow graduates, something along the lines of a poem, but I am truly at a loss for words. You all take my breath away but fill it with so much love instead. What keeps going through my head are the lyrics to a song that I have been listening to quite frequently as of late. The song is called Dang! By Mac Miller featuring Anderson Paak, and the chorus puts just how I've been feeling:

I can't keep on losing you  
Over complicating  
Gone too soon  
Wait, we was just hangin'  
I guess I need to hold onto, dang  
The people that know me best  
The key that I won't forget, too soon  
I can't keep on losing you

I love you all so much. Never change. But if you do, I know you'll still be great. Thank you for everything you have been.

Everything,  
Henry Chapman

P.S. The fire blanket, which has been to every SAYF retreat with me, has been passed down to Mandy so that it can continue to be a warm presence at retreats if you all ever need it. Take care of it for me.

Yuh, yuh, yuh \*Fortnite emojis\*

SAYF is a place where you can feel happy  
We'll miss all our seniors, like H. Chappy.  
Seeing them leave feels real crappy  
Staying up until 3 discussing the last airbender  
And when you are sad Lucas being a care-lender  
I wish that Warren Wilson would serve chicken tender  
But I wouldn't mind another cheese steak  
Watching Patrick graduate brought me lots of heart-ache  
Being allowed to help make SAYMA drip  
On this absolutely fantastic SAYMA trip  
Copping some teenage mutant ninja turtles glasses at the free store  
Playing Pokemon GO a lot more than ever before  
In a basement playing Ping-Pong  
Love for each other larger than King-Kong  
Hearing the cookout cashier saying "nugget"  
There isn't a lot one can rhyme with nugget  
Listening to George Lakey talk about Earth Team Quakey  
Croissants every morning, oh so flakey  
Leaving here with a fear that  
Real Fitness is near without Patrick to steer  
And make jokes to hear.  
I love all you peeps  
And the stu' never sleeps  
This is a second home  
I don't want to go home  
Thinking of this place brings to my eye a tear  
Thanks to every one of you, for a damn good year.

- Lu

Dear SAYF,

I started going to SAYFs regularly almost 2 years ago. I can still remember that Charlotte retreat like it was yesterday. It's crazy how time flies when you're around people you love. SAYF has become so special to me in so many ways and I really want to thank all of you SAYFers and FANs for that. Without you guys it really wouldn't be the same. SAYF is so so amazing because you can visually see everyone's love for each other and how SAYF helps people feel free enough to be undeniably themselves. Can't wait for 2 more great years with you wonderful people! Thank you for your love!

- Mandy Abbate

Dear SAYF,

I've been somewhat depressed lately and stepping onto campus here washed most of that away for now. Despite only coming to half of a retreat this year, I still know I have a home here and that I always have. This community has remained a constant for me and I feel like a willy despite graduating this year. I remember looking at V's candle last night, and it being the last one lit, and feeling like leaving this community would be like that candle going out - that it would be over, but I know that it's really not like that. This is a constant, and I know that I can rely on y'all for a long time. Thanks for all the memories, all the support, all the fun, and all the love. It's been a wild ride.

Dearest SAYF,

Thank you for being you. I'm not the most eloquent speaker and I often cry when I do if I'm thinking of you amazing people. Just know this - you are loved. Stay true to the mission of SAYF both here and at home.

To our graduates - pay it forward in your life. Come back and see us next year. Don't lose touch.

To the FANs - thank you. For all the love, hard work, and fun over the years. You've become my family and my friends. I'm truly grateful for the time I've had with you.

Love always!

Jennifer Chapman

P.S. Graduates, you are always welcome at my home. Anytime. For any reason.

P.P.S. Like the Grinch, my heart grew 4 sizes that day back in 2013 when I came to my first retreat. So much love to you all.

Hi SAYF,

I'll keep this short and sweet. During business meeting yesterday, Mark said "I wish the whole world could know you all." I can't believe I'm one of the lucky few in the whole world that does know you all. You've all left a mark on me and I'll wear each of those marks proudly for the rest of my life. Grateful seems like too small of a word right now. I have so much faith in you all. Keep fighting the good fight and don't forget me too quickly.

All my love,  
Evangeline

P.S. Stay in touch. I'm just a text away if you ever need me.

Loves of my lives,

It always felt devastating to watch people I love leave each June. Even when I hardly knew graduates at all, it seemed like a blow to SAYF's gut every time it lost some of its magical pixie kids or wise centaur kids or world-painting mer-kids...I could go on. But I've seen their gifts and more reincarnated in y'all. You're all vital and gorgeous and incomparable. I have mothers, children, beacons, and muses in you, and it was my life's greatest joy to embrace and be embraced by you. I'm not worried one bit for what I'll see each time I visit, I know you'll pass your love forward infinitely.

Thank you for being who you are, past and present SAYFers. I couldn't have asked for a lovelier cocoon, and I'll miss it dearly.

Love,  
V

Dear SAYF,

I have been here for 6 years now and it doesn't feel real that I won't show up here next September. I will miss you all and I will try to visit when I can. In the meantime, keep the culture. It is up to you youngin's to make new rules, fix things that we didn't have time to, and keep guiding the community. Do not let real fitness hours die, it's mad healthy. I've gotten close to you all in the time we've been together, and I hope that I'll stay in the quaker community, and continue to see all of you, even if I'm not a SAYFer. You're all amazing, and if you need anything I'm here.

- Patrick

Dear SAYF,

This retreat meant a lot to me. There was so much wonderful stuff that happened. This was also my first SAYMA, so my first time being at graduation. There were so many things I wanted to say that I didn't and so many amazing people I'll never get to talk to again, or talk to at all. I'm not very good at writing sentimental stuff, but I want all of you to know that I love you very much. SAYF is such a big piece of my heart.

Sincerely,

Eli

SAYF,

I have been so grateful to become a part of this community the past year. You've helped me grow, and the love and laughter I've shared with you is something I'll never forget.

I've had some great conversations this retreat about anything from politics to apparently homosexual geese.

I'm really going to miss you all, especially those graduating.

Lots and lots of love,  
Sadie

My lovely Quaker friends,

The love I have for each of you is a little bit ridiculous. Each of us make up a community that exists as an ever-changing constant for so many people. The permanence and the impermanence of SAYF is part of its beauty. I was thinking during graduation about how, sometimes, it all feels like a really long and seamlessly executed improv skit. I know that SAYF is much more than that, but bear with me while I get this thought on paper. Sometimes, after years of material and contribution, some people have to tap out. They leave their mark on the cast of characters and know that they have helped guide the course of our little troupe. They then have the ability to become a loving and loved member of the larger quaker audience. They will peep in on us from time to time to check up and check in, and we have love in our hearts for them always. I am so honored to be in this cast of characters, and know that the show will go on no matter what. So much love to the graduates, you all have been (and are) my light and I love you all so much. Also, Mark and Mary Linda, thank you for being much more than just my transportation to SAYF. I love you both so much and am so grateful to have been one of your SAYF kids. And Jennifer, I know that I will see you again, but I wanted to thank you now for all of the hard work you do for SAYF. I am inspired by you in so many ways and appreciate your ability to seamlessly go from business meeting to bohemian rhapsody.

I love you all so much,

Cora

P.S. Thank you Aaron for all of the time and thought you put into orchestrating this retreat. We appreciate you so much.

Dear SAYF,

I continue to be blown away by the depth of the love and support in this community. Saying goodbye to those who give so freely is never easy. So I'll just say "See you Later." and "Keep in Touch!"

Keep shining your light!

Sue Abbate

Dear SAYF,

This retreat has opened my eyes in a way I didn't think I would accept. I was originally planning on not coming back to SAYF after the graduates leave, but I now know that this community needs me. Not to brag but you know what I mean. Just hearing everyone's stories of thinking of not coming back and staying anyway made me realize, I need this place. I want to go to every retreat, and I will miss the seniors but new memories will be made. This is a magical place and I just want to hold it tight and not let it slip away too fast. I love everyone here so so dearly, you don't even know. This was my first SAYMA and I never want it to be my last. You all mean the world to me.

Love,  
Astan Joy