

**SAYF Worship Journal**  
September 2019 Retreat  
Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse

***On the weekend of September 13-15, 2019 the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Atlanta Friends Meeting. This is our witness. This is our story.***

Thank you for being here. Thank you for the fun. Thank you for the food. Thank you for the new friends.  
Thank you for -

Dear SAYF,

Teens now are dealing with things that I couldn't possibly imagine. A broken political system. All pervasive technology, constant social connection. A firehose of information and noise. Constant exploitation and predation. And catastrophic climactic changes.

Looking over that list brings a lot of despair. But, bringing you all together into this beloved community reinforces a feeling of hope. A hope that our future is going to be O.K. A hope that the kids will be all right.

Keep your community healthy, your lives balanced.

Much love, SEAN from Chapel Hill

*Dear SAYF,*

*Because I was a little under the weather, I didn't get to participate as much as I wanted to, but I was still so glad that I came.*

*Watching this group of caring community makes me feel so hopeful about the future. Thank you for the leadership of the nurturers who tended to the newbies and helped move the retreat schedule smoothly along.*

*Let's remember all of our strength we listed at the workshop with George Lakey, especially when we struggle with obstacles...we will all be strengthened by holding each other in the light too.*

*Thank you so much to Aaron and Atlanta Young Friends for organizing this wonderful retreat.*

*Peace and love,*

*Mari*

Hey SAYF.

I guess this is another epistle where I just don't quite know what to say. I would say that this is in my top 10 favorite retreats, but I've only been to 7; top three it is then. I absolutely adored seeing all of you after 5 long months. And I couldn't forget meeting some new SAYFers! I really hope that you guys stay. I promise you won't regret it :).

Thinking about it, the Atlanta Meeting House has been where I've gotten the least amount of sleep. The January retreat was pretty sleep deprived, but this is on a whole other level.

I was a little worried about how this retreat would go, seeing how many of our seniors graduated, but it was actually fantastic. Speaking of, I'm sorry I didn't make it to SAYMA. I don't know if the seniors were immediately taken off of the mailing list (hopefully they weren't) or not, but if you were a 2019 graduate: I'm sorry I didn't get to say goodbye. You all, and I mean every single one of you, made such a positive impact

on my SAYF experience. So, thank you.

To the rest of you gorgeous people - I know that every. single. one of you are going to do great things with this program; with the world. Thank you guys for all the hugs, the cuddles, the laughs, the pointless talks (some at an unreasonable time), and all of the love. I constantly with I had more people like you guys back at home. I love you guys. And I always will. Each and every one of you holds such a special place in my heart.

And now, we wait for next retreat. Well, I won't see you guys until November, but I guess that's more to look forward to, right. Until then, keep your chin up, and

try your best to take care of yourselves.

Much, and I mean MUCH  
Love,

Ollie Bellando 9.16.19 Atlanta, GA



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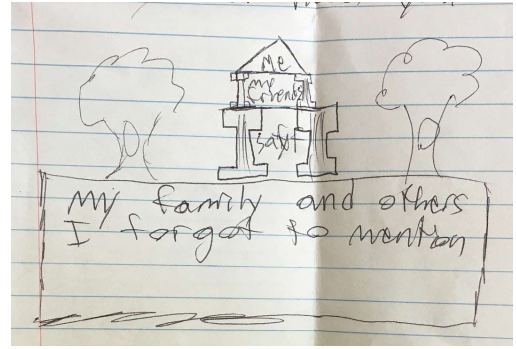
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Dear SAYFers,

I just want to say how wonderful it has been at this retreat and how the friends I have made are forever going to help build me up and make me a better person.

- Graham



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I THINK FOR AWHILE I WAS AFRAID OF NEW EXPERIENCES, NEW PEOPLE. MY FIRST SAYF RETREAT I REALLY DIDN'T TALK MUCH, AND AT MY SECOND RETREAT IN KENTUCKY I STARTED CHALLENGING THAT PART OF MYSELF, I MADE FRIENDS THAT RETREAT THAT I NEVER LOSE, AND THE SAME WITH SAYMA AND THIS RETREAT. I'M NOT AFRAID TO SHOW WHO I AM TO PEOPLE. ALL THE PEOPLE I LOVE ENDLESSLY. EACH AND EVERYONE OF YOU IS A BEAUTIFUL SOUL WITH SO MUCH TO OFFER AND SO MUCH TO GAIN IN LIFE. SAYF IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GROW AND LOVE AND APPRECIATE ALL TOGETHER. I LOVE YOU ALL, I'LL SEE YOU NEXT MONTH.

- CARMELLA

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I think I have started to realize how loved I am, I never truly felt that way. As much as I have thought that I'm hated I can't deny how much love the people here have for me. I think that part of growing up is learning and realizing things you never believed. I found a place full of kind and amazing people I'm so infatuated with. And I thank you for showing me the unbelievable. You all mean more to me than I'll ever be able to express.

After so many crucial people in our community graduated recently, I came to this SAYF with lower expectations than usual, no offense to you guys of course. After many hours of laughing and learning, I can say with confidence that my expectations were blown out of the water. What better way is there to commemorate such a good time than for me to bring back my, as Jonas put it, "world-famous" epistle style, the list?

- 1) The car ride here was quite eventful indeed, with hour-long standstill traffic, and a stretch of land we traveled through having no restrooms or restaurants due to water issues. Even so, it was the best bad situation I could've possibly been in, and we all had a lot of fun.
- 2) My reputation as a good back massager quickly grew, and before long I had a line for my services. Thankfully, as I gave them out, they were given to me as well, and that stuff feels great.
- 3) Its me...pee pee caca
- 4) Reuniting with my close SAYF friends is always incredible, but possibly even better was seeing how well all the new people fit in.
- 5) Henry reading about consent while Lu was trying to lick his arm, all of this at the same time as Callum yelling out lyrics to songs that I think just I didn't know.
- 6) Seeing Jonas again was incredible, and while it was bittersweet, thinking of all the others that aren't here, we did at least create #7 on the list.
- 7) The "Be Like" game, which, by the way, is absolutely NOT a ripoff of Simon Says.
- 8) Watching Grave of the Fireflies and crying (again)

Anyways, I'm now the last one writing so I better hurry this to an end. There are so many more things I could mention (The entire George Lakey presentation for one), but for now, just know that this retreat was, in all ways, wonderful.

Oliver

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