

# SAYF Worship Journal

March 2020 Retreat

***On the weekend of March 20-22 the Southern Appalachian Young Friends were to have met at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. As a result of a global coronavirus pandemic, the retreat was canceled. This epistle zine is sent by mail. April epistles can be emailed to Autumn at [awesomesayfers@gmail.com](mailto:awesomesayfers@gmail.com). Check for updates about SAYF at [awesomesayfers.org](http://awesomesayfers.org).***

Here is a song I wrote for SAYF some time ago, and I feel like now would be a good time to share it.

SAYF Song

Keep it going for a while-

The tradition goes

On & on

For you-

I'd like to say it's for you.

Although it seems to be long

In-between our subtle and improvised meetings,

We always end up wishing for a longer time-

Wishing we lived closer together.

SAYF is a place for the colorful people,

The ones who want to fit in the most.

SAYF is a place for whoever the hell wants to go-

But for most of us:

It's a place for love,

And a place for caring,

While cursing doesn't seem Quakerly,

SAYF is a place for all kinds of wording-

As long as it's friendly

-Eli Saderholm :)

Dear SAYF community,

What images come to mind when you think of your inner light of truth?

This is Mari, Celo lead FAN. I had to call our [March] retreat to be canceled. I knew it would bring a big disappointment in all of you, but safety within our community as well as for larger community took priority. I share the disappointment with you too.

Celo FANs got together and had a wonderful planning session. We invited SAYFers in the area but none of them were able to make it. We did have great input from one and this is the query that we composed. While we were not able to gather in person, I wanted to share the query and invited you to spend some time, a day or more... and feel free to share in the epistles. We had awesome activities that we'd hoped to have at the retreat and hopefully still can in the future. It probably means it still need some time to cook.

Lots of love to you, dear ones.

Mari Ohta

Dear SAYF, Usually, I type your words. Since few words arrived, I will share some of my own with you. As the pandemic keeps my family and I - husband Tiyo, 14-month-old Rowan and I - at home, I was watering the garden by the south window of the house and thinking about the simplicity testimony. Working with the earth, feeling the sunshine on my skin, watching water fall on newly opened yellow tulips and soil growing dark and moist...in the garden is where I experience simplicity. There is simplicity, for me now, in having few places to go. The hundreds of plans I am constantly generating are laid softly aside. There is simplicity when I can completely focus on Rowan, full of giggles and laughter, loving to splash mud with his bare chubby legs and constantly to be found sprawled fully on his belly drinking from puddles in the threshold stone, from puddles on the deck, from water collected in the rim of the lid to the galvanized metal can that holds ashes from the woodstove. Exclaiming "Wow!" at the white butterflies that float by, which I know will make little green caterpillars that will eat my cabbage and kale in the garden as soon as they have a chance.

I also think about SAYF when I am in the garden - wonder how you all would like to stay connected, what will give you feelings of depth and closeness with each other in this difficult time when we cannot have retreats. I am here to send your words for each other through the mail, come April, if you choose. What can deep simplicity look like in this time? I notice that I am pulled into the news, into my phone, into the myriad "connections" that take me away from the baby smiling for my attention. I wonder how I can put those hundreds of things aside, and what I might gain from sacrificing things - material and mental - to make SPACE for those I love. To make space to attend to simple things with joy. I experience simplicity when I drink a cup of tea when it is hot. (and not cold and abandoned from running after tasks). I experience simplicity when I have my hands in bread dough, and then have to wait for it to rise. I experience simplicity when I take the time to pause and actually absorb the face of someone I care about whom I'm talking with. I experience simplicity when I watch the dusk settle, and listen to tree frogs, when I watch the rain. I experience simplicity when I allow myself to focus on just one thing. I experience simplicity when my heart can soften into love, out of stress, and when I can feel the solid, happy baby in my arms or the breeze coming in the window. I wish you all goodness, and safety, and simple connection to one another during these times we are living in.

P.S. Here are some epistles from years past in SAYF.

### *FROM THE VAULTS OF SAYF:*



2006

***On the weekend of January 18-20, 2013, Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Atlanta Friends Meeting. This is our witness. This is our story.***

SAYF,

This was an amazing retreat. It was so great to see everyone after missing the November retreat. The waffles on Saturday morning were just what I needed to get going. The soap scraping was just as fun if not more fun than it was described to me from last time. The rhythm workshop was good too, but it would have possibly been better had we had an instructor. Although I'm still sad I missed Zumba. I also wish I hadn't snacked so much so I would have been hungry for the pizza, because it looked really good. Both wink and the

talent show were wonderful. Everyone was so good at what they did in the show. Nurturers, I'll see ya in a few weeks, everyone else, I can't wait to see you in a few months, which is way too long.

Love y'all,  
Asa

Every retreat I seem to get closer to someone. Soon I hope I will be one of the older kids that watch over little ones like me. One day I hope I will be someone in SAYF that the newbies look up to and be like family to them. Because right now there are a lot of people who are role models to me, and people I think of as family. Most of the retreat I was thinking about that. It makes me very sad to see friends grow up and leave. I know they must and I wish them the best but I wish time wouldn't move so fast. I want to hold them close and never let go. But I am learning to let go. So to everyone that will soon leave, I wish you a happy and grand adventure in life. And in my head they're not leaving. Not really.

-Julia

*This retreat was kind of just what I needed in my life. Since the last retreat so much has happened, being here with people like you guys makes me have a sense of hope for happy people a lot of the time in my everyday life I see a lot of unhappy people but not at SAYF, here everyone is so nice and "happy." I still haven't gotten all the way used to it but I hope that at one point I will be closer to a lot of you and I'm trying not to seem mean or cold towards anyone but I'm just not used to people as nice and amazing as you guys even if I've been to more than a few retreats. I love this place and I love you guys.*

-Sarawila C. Villatoro-Weir

## **On the weekend of September 17-19, 2004 Southern Appalachian Young Friends met in Chapel Hill, NC. This is their story.**

Wow, so me, Christy & Alexa spent so much time yesterday remembering the old days, the good and bad, its weird, it made me feel freakin old. Like seriously old. But anyways this was an awesome retreat. Props to the planning committee! I almost didn't come cause I was gonna go see a Cinderella story avec my buddy but this was way better. Its weird being here and looking back at all the countless other CH retreats & how much fun they were & this is my last one. Its really sad like cry worthy, almost. I wish I could just scoop up the entire Sayf community & hide you in my cleavage so you could go to college with me & Christy. But alas, all of you wouldn't fit. It's ok though cause I still have the rest of the year with you all & we can so make the best of it! AND I get to spend that time chillaxin with the newbs, who are so crunk it's past the point of hilarity. Alas I must go back into the world of all nighters & Princeton review classes but I shall see you all in a month hopefully.

**LURVE,**

Maria

PS Molly I love you, you are fabuloso.

PPS Erikkkk you rock my world.

HaHA look at Max

Just out of curiosity, how many people got the lemon juice to come through the peppermint sticks?

*I was able to deal with my antisocial tendencies at school by not bringing a book, but I think it may be slightly more difficult for me to actually feel social here.*

*Rachel L-M*

*Okay since I couldn't find another pad of paper I will just write my humorous anecdotes here. First of all, no one here is a tiger, as you all seem to believe with your "I'm a tiger" words ☺*

*I went to a camp where one of the teachers had a 3 year old who commonly said that. Now isn't that ironic. ☺ Oh, jeez, it's cold! It's only September, we don't need icy cold winds now! I'm being completely and totally random now. Hm...I slept by the air conditioner last night and woke up several times feeling very cold.*

*Rachel L-M (again) ☺*

*By the way, cheers to the healthy retreats! So far, they've worked great!!*

*- same person again*

*Oh yes, smiley faces are NOT meant to be dripping blood from their mouth...that's not at all quakerly. Smiley faces should not die!!!*

☺

This trip was truly a fruitful experience. I enjoyed the free food. I learned how quakers make decisions, and I learned why you have to pay 3 life for deep analyses (please don't ask). I am in fact very hungry right now and I would like some tacos. Tacos with green sauce is good. I should probably stop talking about tacos before the nice people from H&R Block find me. I did not know we were going to the graveyard so I did not bring my Necronomicon. If I do not know if this is good o bad. I think it is good. Today I arranged my Magnets of Doom to give me mutant lobster super powers. Lobsters are cool. I will now stop writing stuff. Good day and scary monkeys for all.

- K. Bliss

***On the weekend of March 24-26, 2017, the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. This is our witness. This is our story.***

Dear SAYF, it feels so wonderful to be reunited with the purity of this community again; it's surprising to think that it's been almost a year since I was here last. Your faces have changed but the nurturing and accepting environment is still equally as present as it was a year ago. I so enjoyed seeing how you all have grown. I unfortunately will not be able to make it to many more SAYFs given my distance. Regardless, please know how much I care and cherish this community and the people in it. Thank you all for being who you are and expressing it so beautifully; don't stop doing what you're doing. I love you.

- Miranda Klein

This is my first time writing an epistle, but I was inspired by Levi's from last retreat. Realizing that I've only got a year left in this community has really inspired me to form bonds with each and every one of you. I needed SAYF this weekend more than ever before, and I'm happy to say I think I'm walking away with a few new friends! Y'all mean so much to me. I've laughed and danced and hugged so much in this retreat and I cherish those moments as I carry this SAYF love back into the real world.

'Till next time,

XO - Evangeline

Dear SAYF,

This retreat has been an amazing way to kick off my spring break. I had been looking forward to SAYF all week, and wasn't disappointed. SAYF is such a beautiful, thriving, wonderful place, and I'm so glad I get to be here, and be a welcomed member of this community. Lately I had just been lonely and I haven't really been in a good place. A lot of it was struggling with who I was, and how others saw me. But multiple times this weekend, I received the same advice, all from different people, and was told that once I choose to start putting myself out there and once I start loving myself, and embrace who I am, I'm going to attract the people who I want to. I tried that out a little this SAYF, and it was amazing. I sung my heart out at the bonfire. I was a lot more comfortable and happy. When I first arrived at Celo, it was 11:11, and I wished to have an amazing weekend. My wish came true, so I'm ok with saying my wish. I can't wait for next

retreat, and the love and warmth I've received this weekend is enough to fuel me for the rest of the month.

Love,  
Matilda

Hello everyone,

When we first arrived I was not aware of the beauty in which I was surrounded by because it was quite dark. In the morning, I went outside and was greeted by the most superb view. THERE WAS A HUGE MOUNTAIN AND IT WARMED MY HEART!!! This place, along with people I was so lucky to have in my presence, is truly astounding. This is only my second retreat and I feel so welcome and fortunate to be accompanied by all the love that comes with SAYF. I hope to come to many, many more.

with lots of love,  
Lily Ophelia

*I honestly don't know how to describe how pleased I am with this weekend. Thank you to those who I had meaningful conversations with, thank you to every dancer who let loose, and thank you to all who joined in to sing around the campfire in such a blissful moment. I care about all of you so much. So until next time, keep smiling that beautiful smile.*

*Your friend, Mama SAYF (you may also know me by my undercover name Julia)*

Hello Dearest SAYFers,

Hot diddy darn. What an amazing retreat!!! It was incredibly moving to witness live music here and to see everyone dancing. It filled my heart with so much gratitude to be able to know this perfect bunch of people. I believe my favorite part was the satisfaction of going on the longest, hardest, most exhausting hike I've ever been on. Sitting on that deck thing and looking at the incredible world we have almost made me lose my shit. In a good way, of course. The interactions that took place atop the mountain, that feeling of community, was everything to me. Thank you all for being alive. I don't know where I would be otherwise.

I love you all SO much!!!

- Kenya Clo (P.S. Sheeps with monkey heads are rad)

I grabbed an electric fence with Jacob and fell over, I had a headache, my ear got infected by a cheap earring and Patrick's chest got spray painted, I don't regret a single moment of this weekend I spent with all of you amazing people and it saddens my heart to once again leave and have to wait another month to meet you all again.

With love - David Myers

A thought,

As I rode in the van to Celo, we got turned around, google maps had once again led us astray. I was getting to the point of frustration, since it was almost 1 o'clock in the morning, & I was yearning to see my SAYFers. In my exasperation,

I began a little ritual I very often perform. I stared out the window and tried to memorize every turn of the road, every tree and driveway, so that if we ever found ourselves lost on the way to Celo in the future, I might be the one to help steer us the right way. This little ritual was one I was well acquainted with, since our mixup Friday night was certainly not the first time we had gotten lost, and knowing some of the Berea drivers (cough cough Jonathan) it probably wouldn't be our last.

Then it dawned on me, maybe it would be my last. Years of SAYF car rides had taught me to unconsciously retain information that would, in time, be of some use, but this is my second to last retreat and the time is nigh where I won't need any of these little bits and pieces, because I'll be gone. I'm not 100% sure what the meaning behind that is, and maybe these words are the mere ramblings of a sentimental senior, but I do think it is noteworthy that no other community has made me care so deeply about directions.

Much Love,  
Levi

### **Young Friend Queries - written by SAYF nurturers 2018**

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge problematic social norms?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well being and what avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the environment and how can you better such impact
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your perspectives?
7. How do we support people's identity and growth?
8. When do you reevaluate your perspective?
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic society?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as quaker and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?