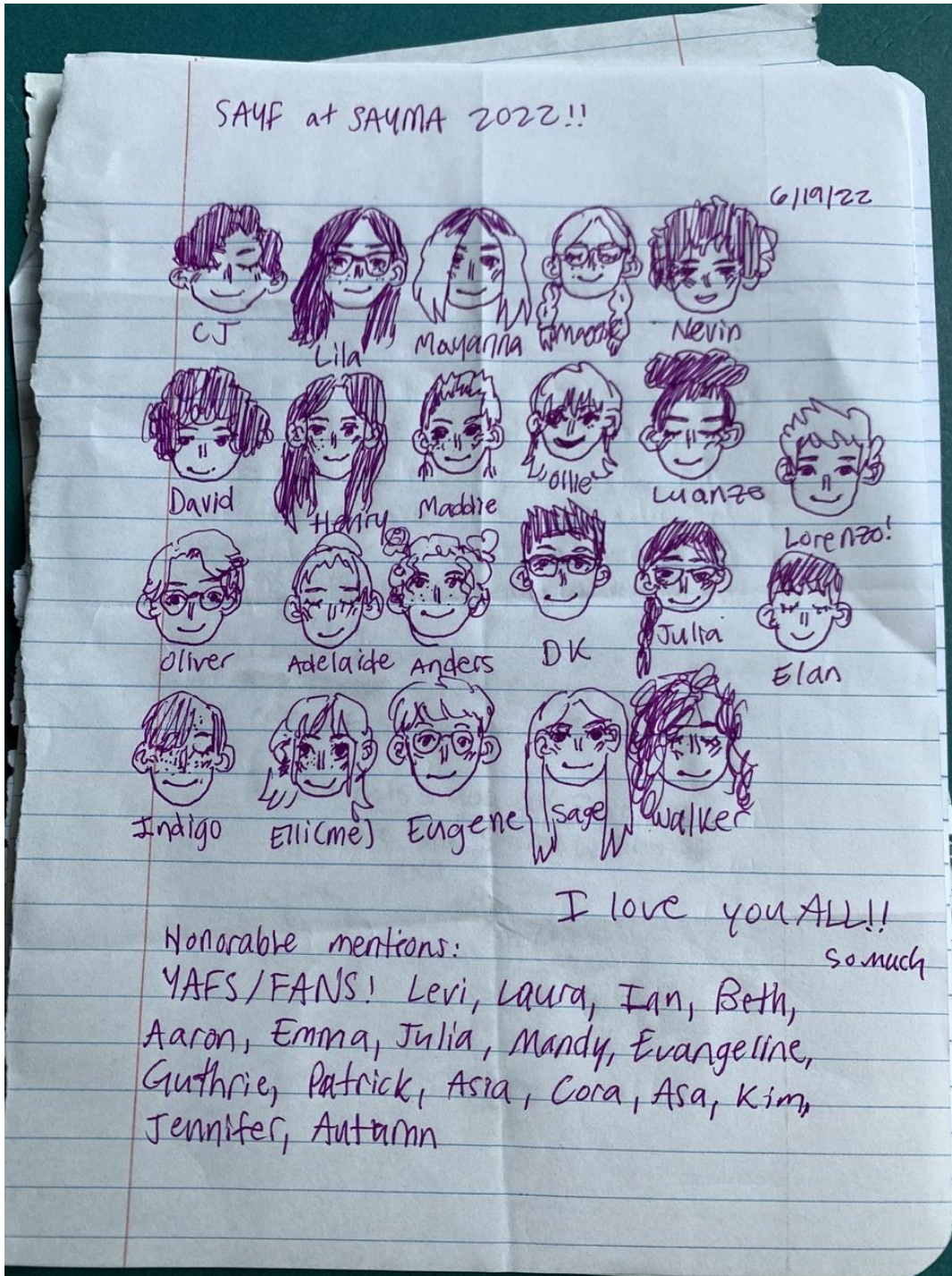


**SAYF Worship Journal**  
June 2022 Retreat  
SAYF at SAYMA Yearly Gathering  
Warren Wilson College, NC

*On the weekend of June 16-19, 2022 the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at Warren Wilson College, NC. This is our witness. This is our story.*



SAYF at SAYMA 2022!!

6/19/22



I love you ALL!!

so much

Honorable mentions:  
YAFS/FANS! Levi, Laura, Ian, Beth,  
Aaron, Emma, Julia, Mandy, Evangeline,  
Guthrie, Patrick, Asia, Cora, Asa, Kim,  
Jennifer, Autumn

Dear SAYF,

I will miss you all so so so very much. You all are like a second family at SAYF to me. Anytime it was a SAYF weekend I would get so happy to see each and every one of you. Whenever I was sad or having a ruff time the people at SAYF would lift me up and make me so happy when I saw you. All the hugs at SAYF there and at the end would fill me up with so much love. I am so happy I came to SAYF. Some of my favorite games at SAYF were playing Wink and Bear. I am so happy I became a nurturer. SAYF will always be my home and place and it has always been since I came here. Take care of SAYF while I am gone.

I will miss you all so much  
Love Sun Shine Wilton  
aka  
Julia  
in case you didn't know

SAYF,

It's interesting, all weekend I've wondered what I should write in my epistle yet I'm just as lost as I was 3 days ago; so I guess I'll start with the basics. Thank you all so much. SAYF has been such an amazing experience and I'll miss all of you so much. When I first joined, I had no idea this is where we'd end up yet I'm glad it is. You all mean so much to me. They really weren't lying when they said SAYF is like a family, because it is. I think I've always been the type that's afraid of change, afraid of leaving things behind, however I'm looking forward to all the YAF stuff and moving forward. Thank you for giving me a place where I feel safe to be myself. You all are such amazing and kind humans and I am so thankful I joined. You're all such special people.

I love you all so much  
-Maddie

When I graduated from SAYF 11 years ago, I knew that there was 0% chance that any community would ever mean as much to me as SAYF did. And so far, I've been right. The love and intimacy and vulnerability and radical compassion and grit and goofiness and warmth and unfailing determination to question the status quo and nourish every single soul in the room - nothing has ever matched SAYF in those. And now, returning as a FAN more than a decade later (a fact that makes me want to throw up), those same qualities are as strong as ever.

Never stop loving. Never stop healing. Never stop laughing. SAYF never leaves you, and these friendships last a lifetime (mine have, anyway).

Thank you all for the warm welcome back. I didn't know how much I needed this.

Love love,  
Ian Saderholm (the ACTUAL coolest Saderholm)

Dear SAYF,

Graduation always hurts. I remember my very first, when I cried rivers of tears over Levi leaving. I probably had my best hug ever on that pavilion, as Kenny and I held each other, sobbing. I've struggled with keeping in touch with SAYFers outside of SAYF time, and so the idea that this wonderful group won't just magically continue to be at SAYF is difficult to fully accept. I want to remember not just the big things though, but the little ones too, so without further ado I'll begin my list-style recount.

1. Sleeping in the hammock with Elli was nice after an emotionally draining day
2. My official name has now expanded to Ollie Olive Oil Pong Pool Gonzuma, plus like 10 more I'm probably forgetting.
3. I got to go down memory lane about Animal Jam w/ Lila and CJ
4. We got some great free standing rock towers by the river
5. Be warned: Ping Pong room has been known to cause both Doofyness and Doopy Eyes.
6. I shared some deep stuff w/ a person I've never met in the sound healing and the discomfort pushed through to a profound experience.
7. It was so nice to see so many YAFs here, shout out Atlanta for covering costs and shout out to Laura for being awesome
8. Speaking of emotionally powerful meetings, fishbowl also hit pretty hard this time. Henry, I can't thank you enough for the hug you gave me.
9. Damn, now I'm half of Ollie gang and half of Juice police. I hope the world will be able to recover from this loss.

Ok once I start writing on the back of the paper I know I've rambled on like a hybrid meeting for business, so I'll wrap it up. Aaron, thank you a million times and more for your incredible and lasting contributions to this community. I'll sing the "Wake up, Get up! Get up for your lives" song in your honor to torment the next generation of sleepy co-ed morning SAYFers.

Love y'all,

Ollie Pool Ping Danger Wingate Gonzuma Schneiderholm something something

I'm calm, but at the same time anxious, this is the end of my time as a SAYFer and it saddens me that I won't get to see you as often. You all mean the world to me and all have a powerful place in my heart. This community has given me so much, and I'm glad I was able to give back to it. I'm reminded of a quote, I can't remember quite who said it, but it goes something like "The world never seems so spacious as to have friends at a distance, they make up the latitudes and longitudes." You all make up my world, I'll see you at next SAYMA, or maybe sooner, to kidnap one of you. Keep this community thriving everyone.

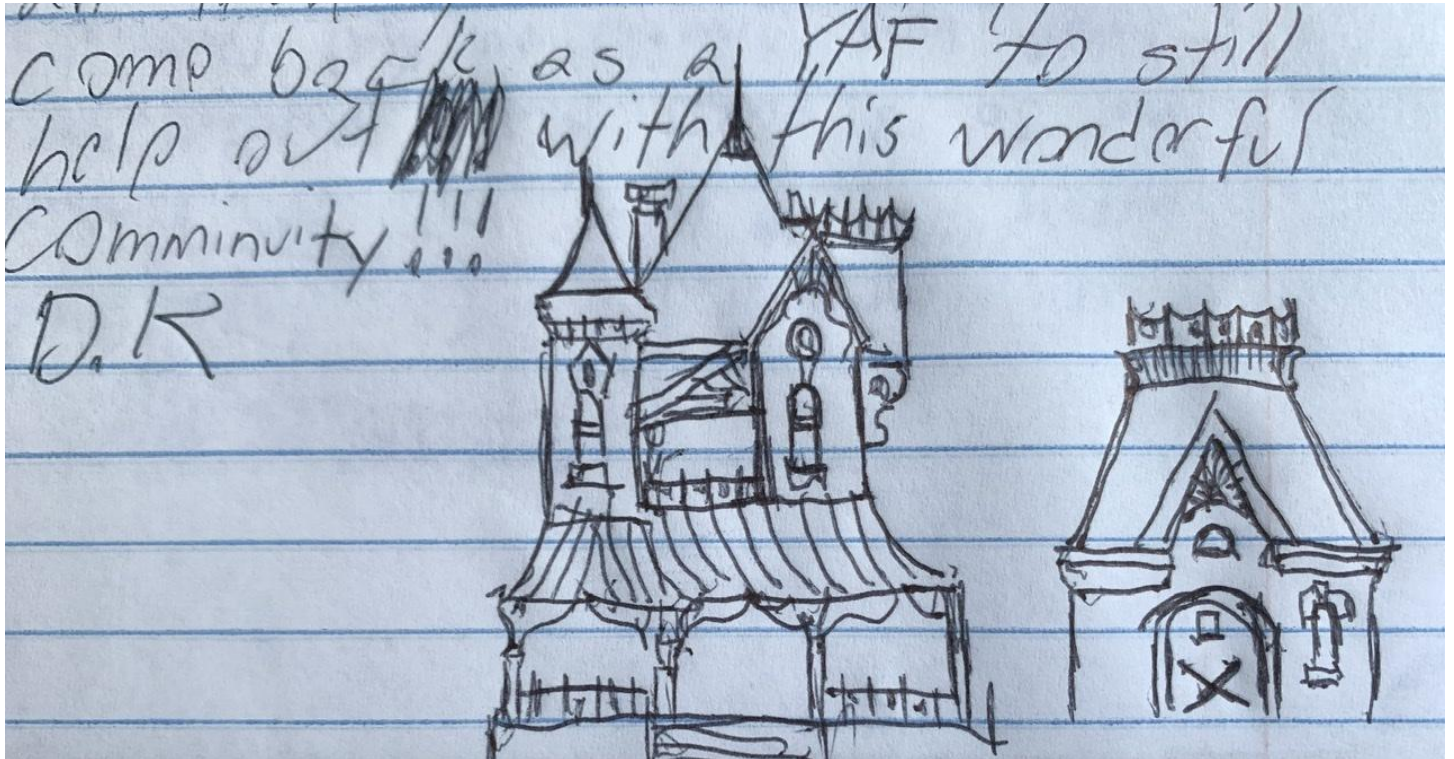
With more love than any words can express - David Myers

Dear SAYF,

There was a reason I brought sunglasses to my graduation last night...it was my funeral for my last bit of teenhood I had left.

I want to apologize for how I have said things, being loud and obnoxious, and saying things at the wrong time...but I truly want to thank you for dealing with my loud ass for all these years and hope to come back as a YAF to still help out with this wonderful community!!!

-D.K.



Hi Everyone,

It's Indigo here! Don't usually write to y'all here but I'm graduated now so I guess this is goodbye for now. SAYF has taught me that Normal is overrated, kindness is greatness and that indeed anything can go on a cake. One of the most important things I've learned from this community is that a love based and rooted society is possible. When we throw away materialism, societal forces, and Judgment we create a better us. ANYTHING is possible when we lead with pure, gritty, unconditional love. SAYF met me at a time when I was on the verge of a dark place. Whether it was a gentle hand hold from Oliver, a bear hug from David, loving words and mother vibes from Walker, or annoying but caring vibes from Aaron: SAYF SAVED MY LIFE (NOT HYPERBOLE).

- Thanks y'all, I love you and will miss you.

SAYF,

For some reason, in this moment, I am reminded of Iris by the Goo Goo Dolls. Specifically this verse:

“And I’d give up forever to touch  
you  
Cause I know that you feel me  
somehow  
You’re the closest to heaven that  
I’ll ever be  
And I don’t want to go home  
right now.”

I feel shaky writing this. Whether it’s the lack of sleep, surplus of raw emotions, or sheer love in my heart, I will still hold onto this feeling as long as I can. I know each and every one of the graduates will do such great things for this world. I have never been so infatuated with one group of people more in my life. It is with grief but also immense joy that I wish all of you a grand, adventurous life. I love you, SAYF.

Now for my usual.

Sincerely,

Elli

*(see drawing, page 1)*

General stupid life advice:

- Be funny. Watch funny things, surround yourself with funny people. Poison your sense of humor until nobody knows what you joke about and you can make fun of anything.
- Cook or buy or find a good meal, take a hot shower, and get lots of sleep. Seriously the worst shit will be much more tolerable through this and the insignificant worries will go away.
- Make a bunch of friends that are 2-4 years older than you. Talk to them about the boring stuff. They know what’s up.
- Genuinely, don’t compare yourself to others of “The Other” (i.e. society’s expectation) it won’t usually be worth it.
- Tofu is good when fried and seasoned.
- Try to practice finding things interesting as well as funny. Be like “Wow COOL! A T-REX IS EATING ME - HOW EPIC IS THAT”. Being eaten will be more fun.
- Regular people are at SAYF. They all seem so cool because SAYF is like a mini-society that encourages people to be cool.
- Try to make spaces like SAYF for other areas of your life.

- Be extra mindful of others but give yourself grace too. Try to view other people screwing up or being evil as less of a moral outrage and more of a pain in the ass piece of work you need to do, like an unpleasant chore or something.
- Play the cards you are dealt and be proud even if you lose the round. The important thing is playing optimally.
- Don't underestimate just showing up. Out of time right now so no other nuggets of wisdom but these are a good start.

You are loved and worthy of it,

Henry Schneider

Chapel Hill Friends Meeting

The one last final rhyme  
For the one last final time  
The end of this collection of mine  
of many stupid little lines

For every year there has been a new rap  
And every year it has gotten more crap  
so as this journal sits on my lap  
I hope I do not bore you into a nap

I remember Henry Chapman mentioning "dang!"  
and in those lines it is sang  
"I can't keep on losing you"  
and now to lose is all that there is left to do

It hurts to watch your friends walk out the door  
but when it comes to be your turn, it hurts even more  
Nothing could've prepared me for this  
No longer getting to experience but only to miss

A kanye west plastered dorm  
and a few nights that were a little too warm  
a linovo laptop and a loud guitar  
just like old times that feel not so far

The bugs that seemed to follow me

The odd space anomaly  
The hardwood floor under my aging knees  
I blow out the candle and it is only fear I can see

As this bad song comes to an end  
I will finish in the way I always have friends  
For one very last final epistle line  
Thank you all for a damn good time.

~Luanzo

SAYF -

I feel like there's this Big pressure to write one last epistle, but I honestly can't find the words. I'm speechless, you all have left me speechless. Looking around this room, I see so much beauty in every one of you. You each are so unique, and I'm so lucky to have had the opportunity to meet you all (this includes FANs, too).

I guess what I really want to say is thank you. Thank you for giving me a safe space to grow, express myself, and make some of the best friends anyone could ask for. Attending these retreats has been such a core part of me growing up, you will all have a special place in my heart and in my memories. It really hurts knowing there's a chance I may never see some of you again, but I really hope that's not the case. This community is just so special, I don't think I could make bonds like these anywhere else. My only regret is missing retreats. If I could go back in time and attend those weekends, I'd do it in a heartbeat.

Thank you all for creating such a positive, loving community; I don't know where I'd be if I had never attended my first retreat March 2018. Keep supporting one another, and loving one another. And please INVITE YOUR FRIENDS!!! I wish I had invited more of mine. I feel like every kid should have a family like SAYF.

I guess this is it. I love you all more than words can describe, and I'll miss you until every bone in my body aches.

Much, Much Love  
Ollie

Merely to witness this community and you people has been an honor. Thank you all for caring for this place that I once cared for, you have made it better.

Love, Levi

Dear SAYF Community,

From the bottom of my heart - thank you so much for inviting me to join you this weekend! I feel so honored by the trust you put in me as a FAN. This weekend was full of nostalgia, learning, and making new (precious) SAYMA memories. Seniors - all my love and light on the next steps on your journey. If you need anything, I'm only a call/text/email away. SAYFers – I feel so relieved that SAYF is in your capable and caring hands.

love and appreciation,

Laura

PS - the book is Finance for the People by Paco de Leon

Dear SAYF,

This SAYMA has reminded me of my love for this community and everyone in it. I have so many great memories with all our lovely graduates and veteran SAYFers, and I look forward to making more with those new to the community and those of you I already know. So many of the graduates defined my experience here, especially as a young SAYFer and I'm going to miss every one of you at the next retreats. The next time I'll be in this room will be as a graduate myself and I'm looking forward to enjoying my last year with all you wonderful people.

Stay doofy, stay cool

- Maggie :)