

To Parents of Young Friends:
A Message About the SAYF Program for the 2018-2019 Season

Many of you are familiar with the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. For those who may be relatively new we offer a little background: SAYF is a self directed program of 7th to 12th grade teens that is centered around 6 retreat weekends held throughout the school year, plus a special retreat integrated into our yearly gathering (SAYMA) each June. Most retreats begin on Friday night, end mid-day Sunday, and gather together teens associated with several regional Quaker meetings. Teens from the host meeting plan their retreats around a theme oriented towards teaching Quaker principles, community, spirituality and equitable process. Each weekend may include special activities, service opportunities and workshops planned and led by the teens and adults, as well as time spent sharing in silent worship. Unstructured time to rest and socialize indoors and outdoors is also included. Young Friends are expected to participate in all planned activities unless excused for a specific reason.

Adult support is critical to SAYF and most of our Friendly Adult Nurturers (FANs) started out as supportive parents. Throughout the retreat weekends, the goal of our adults is to model and encourage accountability through respect for the guidelines, behavioral expectations, and community values. We are a Quaker organization run by volunteers, and parent participation is welcomed and encouraged within the intention to balance awareness of the activities of our Young Friends with their need to feel trusted and independent. It is ultimately up to the individual teen to act responsibly and strive to be a positive element in the community. Parents are welcome to attend our gatherings, when or before their child attends, to find out more about our community and to determine the program's suitability for your family's needs. If you are interested in attending one of our retreats, please contact the Lead-FAN for that retreat so we can best facilitate your presence and role at the retreat weekend.

A link to our guidelines is posted on the SAYF website home page at <<http://AwesomeSAYFers.org>>. Please be sure you and your child have read and understand the guidelines before attending a retreat. If you feel that your child may not be able and willing to uphold these guidelines for community values, consider whether your child should attend retreats at this time. When your Young Friend comes to any retreat during the year, they will indicate by their presence that they are in agreement with the guidelines and will abide by them. Young community members who are experiencing turmoil or extreme stress can still attend, but we request that you consult with the adult facilitators of that retreat or the Steering Committee co-clerks to allow for preparations. If you feel that your child could be a physical danger to themselves or to others, then they should not attend at this time.

We also note when a retreat includes off-site trips or activities where we are not able to maintain the same level of supervision as in a closed setting such as the Meetinghouse. If this concerns you, we invite you to call that retreat's Lead-FAN to discuss your child's situation.

Information about sleeping arrangements and a list of our SAYF values are included in this letter below and the accompanying packet includes a copy of the current 2018-19 calendar and contact info for Steering (adult) & Nurturing (teen) Committee members. If you have any changes to your contact information please email to Autumn Woodward, SAYF Administrative Assistant, at: <awesomesayfers@gmail.com>

As a final request for your family's participation in SAYF, we ask that you please welcome the new members of our Steering Committee and help us keep our communications open. Throughout its 20+ year history, the SAYF community has made sincere efforts to maintain a fluid balance between respect for confidentiality and the need for transparency. We continually work to improve parent communications and your thoughtful participation in the conversation is always welcome. If questions or concerns about our program arise, we invite you to call or email any of the Steering Committee members listed below.

Many thanks,
SAYF Steering Committee,
Jon Saderholm (Clerk)

SAYF Retreat Sleeping Arrangements

Our community strives to be considerate of every individual's gender identity and we provide at least 3 designated sleeping areas at retreats: all male, all female, and coed. Adults are assigned to all sleeping areas. An adult volunteer is awake and available for assistance throughout the night, and there is a designated Nurturer to help them address guideline concerns. Young Friends are required to be in their own sleeping bag/bedroll, and SAYF Guidelines apply at night as they do in the daytime. Immediate separation will occur and an accountability process may result from violating the guidelines. We encourage parents to discuss with their child any sleeping requirements or concerns they have. If you have specific instructions about the sleeping arrangements of your Young Friend, please discuss it with your child and verbally inform the Lead-FAN for the specific retreat. Unless the Lead-FAN is notified by the parent or guardian (ie: a note on the registration form), Young Friends are allowed to choose their sleeping area based on their own personal comfort levels and leadings.

SAYF Values

Love and respect the boundaries of the community and its individuals by:

- ~ Respecting people and their stuff.
- ~ Being inclusive.
- ~ Maintaining confidentiality.
- ~ Attending mandatory activities.
- ~ Refraining from using generally offensive or derogatory language.
- ~ Avoiding the expression of violence, including the possession of weapons of any kind.
- ~ Never bringing or using alcohol, drugs or other restricted substances.
- ~ Abstaining from sexual activity and inappropriate physical contact.
- ~ Respecting people's gender identity.

Love and respect yourself by being safe and aware of your surroundings.

Love and respect the environment by helping with clean-up, only using fire during designated activities, and following local rules

SAYF Steering Committee for 2018-2019

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