

SAYF 2019-2020 Season

Dear Parents,

We're delighted that your young friend is a part of the Southern Appalachian Young Friends [SAYF] community. SAYF runs through the volunteer efforts of adult Friends, most of whom are parents of current or former SAYFers. We'd like to ask you to sign up to volunteer at one or more SAYF retreat per year. You can access the retreat schedule here:

<http://awesomesayfers.org/schedule.shtml>

To initiate the process, please fill out our short Youth Worker form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/NLylBc2X0l5AlwyU2>

For the safety of all SAYFers, all adult volunteers are required to pass Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association's [SAYMA] background check.

There are other ways to support the program. You might consider offering snacks, sending a potluck dish, or shopping for groceries, if needed by Lead FAN. If you'd like more ideas for how to help, contact Autumn Woodward, SAYF Administrative Assistant at awesomesayfers@gmail.com or the lead FAN of the retreat.

Sincerely,

SAYF Steering and Nurturing Committees

Welcome to the Southern Appalachian Young Friends! For those who are 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 midday 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. Retreats 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. 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 SAYF guidelines, and community values. We are a Quaker organization run by volunteers. 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 attend a SAYF retreat, please contact the

Lead-FAN for that retreat so we can best facilitate your presence and role at the retreat weekend.

The SAYF guidelines and community values are included with this letter. Please be sure you and your child have read and understand these before attending a retreat. If you feel that your child may not be able and willing to uphold these guidelines-, 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 a Steering Committee clerk 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 contact that retreat's Lead-FAN to discuss your child's situation.

Information about sleeping arrangements are included in this letter as well as the current 2019-20 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

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, or fill out our feedback [survey](#). Updated program information is available on an ongoing basis at awesomesayfers.org.

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

SAYF Steering Committee for 2019-2020

Jon Saderholm (Clerk) -- Berea Monthly Meeting, KY 859-575-0527 // jsaderholm@gmail.com

Aaron Ruscetta -- Atlanta Monthly Meeting, GA 404-315-0406 // arxaaron@gmail.com

Jennifer Dickie -- Atlanta Monthly Meeting, GA 404-313-8770 // michaeljen@bellsouth.net

Sue Abbate -- Charlotte Monthly Meeting, NC 704-497-6737 // suea704@gmail.com

Paul Laudeman -- West Knoxville Monthly Meeting, TN // paul@laudeman.com

~

Autumn Woodward (Administrative Assistant) // awesomesayfers@gmail.com

SAYF Nurturing Committee Members

Mandy Abbate ~ Co-Clerk
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SAYF Community 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 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, and include a note on the registration form. Unless the Lead-FAN is notified by the parent or guardian, Young Friends are allowed to choose their sleeping area based on their own personal comfort levels and leadings.

SAYF Community Guidelines

Approved, August 2012, Amended August 2013, 2014, 2017 & 2019

Introduction:

SAYF guidelines were created by fellow members of the community because we feel that these specific things are important to keeping SAYF a strong, thriving, loving community. They are not rules, but we ask you to respect them and use responsible judgment because infractions of these guidelines could potentially put you or others in danger, and damage the community as a whole.

So the community asks that you:

Don't bring or use restricted substances at SAYF, and don't come with them in your system. This includes alcohol, tobacco products, and drugs. (If you bring medication, use it responsibly and only for its intended use.

- These substances can hinder the reactions and behaviors of their users. This is bad for SAYF because we want all members to be physically and mentally aware of the community. These substances may also be illegal and not be in the comfort zone of many community members. Using restricted substances at SAYF creates a divide in the community.

Don't bring weapons of any kind to SAYF. Do not commit any violent act towards others in the community, including harming them physically, or using violent language to harm them emotionally. Please remember, words are weapons too.

- Nonviolence is a very important testimony that is not only important to us, but to Quaker communities around the world. This is a community that stands as a safe place for many people and we don't want to endanger that.
- Violent language isn't fun or funny and doesn't have a place in the community either. Humor and language that is rooted in means of oppression are not welcome, for example slurs that pertain to gender, race, sexuality, ability, etc.

Don't engage in sexual conduct at SAYF. This includes sex, making out, inappropriate touching, and anything else that could potentially cause others to feel uncomfortable.

- We are given the privilege of having co-ed sleeping arrangements. Please respect this and don't

negatively take advantage of it.

- Coupling off sexually creates divisions in the community, and we want to be welcoming to all

Don't climb trees or buildings. Everyone's physical safety is of the utmost importance. While one may know their own physical limits, others may not and will follow suit and so it is important to set a good example.

Respect that mandatory activities are mandatory! Go to them AND participate.

- Attending activities and actively being a part of them is a large part of a SAYF retreat. It is not fun for anyone to have people who decide that they don't want to be a part of community activities. The activities are planned by fellow SAYFers because they want the retreat to be fun and spiritual for everyone. (If you feel that you really cannot participate in a particular activity or event, you may ask to be excused from that specific event by a FAN.)

Be where you are supposed to be, especially during lights out. Don't wander off.

- Leaving the meetinghouse without permission, going into places that have been put off limits, or wandering off during activities is not allowed. It leaves you in a position where FANs do not know where you are, and possibly in a situation where you could get lost or hurt. Remember that all of the guidelines are for the safety of all SAYFers and the community as a whole.

SAYFers are not to go off site unless it's a designated activity. It becomes very stressful for the adults who are responsible for young friends to keep track of SAYFers who are not with the rest of the group

- If it's for an emergency, speak with a FAN or a Nurturer and something can be arranged

Do not use fire in non-designated activities. There are activities, like opening circle, when fire is allowed. Don't have fire during other times of the day. This includes lighters. They will not be needed at retreats, so if you have one, don't bring it out.

- It could be possibly destructive and unsafe.

Be consistently and consciously inclusive and welcoming. Everyone being and feeling that they are a part of the community is very important to SAYF and its members. Don't be a passive bystander to those feeling excluded.

- Being inclusive is an easy way to help everyone feel more like they belong or just to make them have a better experience. It is also a great way to widen the community and make fantastic friends.

Honor confidentiality. Part of SAYF is being able to love and trust everyone in the community.

Confidentiality is really important to our community. It keeps people feeling that they are in a comfortable and loving space so that they are able to freely share anything.

- This is held to be true unless you hear that someone might be planning to harm themselves or someone else, at which point you immediately contact a FAN or a Nurturer. In addition, if you have been hurt emotionally and/or physically, you may also alert a FAN or Nurturer. The situation may be brought to the wider SAYF community or parents, if needed for adequate support.

Most importantly, respect the spiritual community, including:

Property

- Of both members of the community and of the meetinghouse or space that you are in.

Other members of the community

- By being especially mindful of your actions and language because of the spectrum of comfort levels, ages, identities and beliefs in the community.

- If you think your actions and language might be uncomfortable to others, ASK! It shouldn't have to be awkward to ask if someone wants to hug or cuddle.

Needs of the community...

- By cleaning up after yourself and participating in other community chores. Make sure that no member of the community is left with a disproportionate work load, and make sure to listen when people are asking for help.

The wider community...

- By being responsible for your actions and remember that we represent Quaker youth and that our actions reflect upon us and the wider Quaker community.

And yourself...

- Don't do things that will make you uncomfortable or cause you harm. Remember that if you don't respect yourself, it then becomes harder for others to respect you and take you seriously.
- Remember to also respect yourself physically-- FANS have extra hygiene products (toothbrush, deodorant, etc.) upon request.

Respect and uphold the Friends Testimonies (SPICES): –

Simplicity – Keep things as simple as possible and have a minimal environmental impact.

Peace – Behave and speak non-violently.

Integrity – Act by your moral compass.

Community – Work with others in a loving, productive and efficient manner.

Equality – Value each person's beliefs and identity the same.

Stewardship – Give back to the community, and help further the unfolding experience.

Conclusion:

Although there are many guidelines, they should be easy to follow by remembering to use common sense and not do stupid things. We should all be here to bring each other up, and with the intention of growing as both individuals and as a community. Have fun and make the most out of each retreat, while also respecting the needs of the people and the blossoming community around you.