

Welcome New Friends to SAYF!

For those who are new, here is some background: SAYF is a self directed program of 7th-12th grade teens centered around 6 retreat weekends held throughout the school year, plus a special retreat integrated into our yearly gathering (SAYMA) in 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, spirituality and equitable process. Retreats may include activities, service, workshops, and worship planned and led by teens and adults, as well as unstructured time to rest and socialize. 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 Nurturees (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, including our Covid-19 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.

There will be times when retreats include off-site trips or activities where we are not able to maintain the same level of supervision as in a closed setting such as a Meetinghouse. If this concerns you, please contact that retreat's Lead-FAN to discuss your child's situation.

Information about sleeping arrangements is included below as well as the current 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 Program Coordinator, 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,
Jennifer Dickie, Clerk