

SAYF Worship Journal

March 2016 Retreat

Arthur Morgan School, Celo, NC

On the weekend of March 18-20, 2016, the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at the Arthur Morgan School in Celo, North Carolina. This is our witness. This is our story.

Dear reader,

This is a postcard. A postcard of a moment in time, captured in this letter. Hearing murmured voices, crinkling pages, breathing and readjusting, we sit on the floor across the circle from the other half of the collective. The residual taste of my breakfast cereal lingers in my mouth and my heart is light and springy though my eyelids are heavy. Everyone here is so wonderful. Some of us are so chill and laid back while others of us' heads bubble with aspirations and amalgams of feelings. It's been a great retreat. When I go back to home, I hope to take – I will take – the spirit of SAYF with me to fill me up when necessary. I love you all. I really enjoyed meeting the newcomers this retreat as well as seeing familiar faces once more. The theme – Out of the Box – of this retreat was really cool, but questions linger. What is this box? Conformity? Familiarity? And what does it mean to step outside of it? To act deliberately and not by default when deliberateness means autonomy? To stretch our perceptions of the world? To remove oneself from routine and begin passing time in swooshes and curves?

Pondering.....

Until April,

Love!

Ella

SAYFers,

And not totally in the ways that everyone thinks. I love you because of the way your laugh sounds as you lay awake, half asleep. I love you because of the rush of happiness I get as another SAYF starts, simply because I get to see everyone's beautiful SAYF.

I'm excited to grow more friendships with people here. Whether it's because we were all stuck at a random gas station in the middle of nowhere or complaining about Trump. It might be because I find new moms and dads. (I now have many.)

Please remember to stay healthy and happy and that I love you all much.

-Matilda

SAYF,

Love to all, but especially Ben C., Ruben, Matilda, Mari, Mary Linda, Jennifer, and Aaron. The new faces here against the backdrop of the gorgeous mountains, bring such happiness to my heart. I hope each and everyone of you feels supported and love. I look so forward to seeing you again soon.

endless love

and anticipation,

Laura Kelley

Hi. It's been awhile...

I think I can easily say that I am finally happy. It's been a while since I felt that. It's funny thinking that most of you guys/girls know me 1 million times more than the people I see on a day-to-day basis. Those people, even though they're consistently they're in my life, they still make no comparison to the group of people I just wait to see around every month. You guys really seem like the sturdy part of me. Thanks for that.

I love you,
Aldo

P.S.:

#caution,wideload

#onelikeequalsonedeaddgorilladog

#prayforJohn

Great sense of community.

I'll miss it til next time!

*It's a sacred thing to watch
our teens growing.*

Coming to this retreat means a lot to me. Only being able to come to two retreats this year (excluding SAYMA) is a big deal. My absence from the community is really disappointing. It was amazing to see people that I haven't seen in so long, and to get to meet even more. I don't know if I'll make it to April, but I know that I'm already hyped for SAYMA.

-Miles L.

Dear SAYF,

Once again, you all have left me feeling tired, happy, and inspired. Everyone here is so smart and beautiful and you all make me feel so proud to be a part of this community.

Now that I have become one of the older people in SAYF, I am so excited to step up as a nurturer. I have basically grown up here and so I am so ready to give back and further foster love, support, and fun.

In reflection of my last year of SAYF, I have noticed that I have become more appreciative of the very fact that I am around people I love. I am no longer the stay-up-all-night-goldfish at 3am crazy kid. I've matured a lot and I'm glad that I am now enjoying SAYF in a different sort of way.

The hike was truly fantastic; it was so beautiful and everyone was beaming. Thank you so much Celso for letting us run around all weekend.

Much love,
Tallulah

Hello lovely SAYFers,

As some of you, know I can't come to Atlanta at retreat next month. That means this is my last normal retreat, ever. It feels so weird to write. I have been trying to ignore that fact but at the bonfire, with everyone singing "Lean on me," it hit me. This community has done more for me than any of you all can ever realize. At SAYF, I feel at home. This retreat was perfect - the food was delicious, the Arthur Morgan School is gorgeous, and special shoutout to the FANs who stuck with me on the hike.

I don't know what the future holds for me or any of us. What I do know is that without SAYF, I would not be who I am today. To quote Wicked (the musical), "Who can say if I've been changed for the better? I do believe I have been changed for the better. But because I know you, I have been changed for good." Thanks for letting me grow up with you all. See you at SAYMA.

Much love,
Wynne

Dear SAYF,

I missed you! School has been unfairly busy these last few months, but I am purposefully scheduling my summer school so as not to miss SAYMA. Celo is so beautiful. I love living in the city, and wouldn't give it up for anything, but sometimes I need someplace calmer. Looking out at the mountains with Friends and SAYF family surrounding me, it is hard to imagine the world as anything except a beautiful, worthwhile place.

I love you all. Please stay happy and safe until I see you again in April.

**Love,
Charlie H.**

P.S. Pretty cool how there's another Charlie now, huh?

What a nice retreat. I can't believe it's already over. All of you newbies and twobies are great. you are the future of SAYF, and you'll do fantastic. I'm sad that people are graduating but I'm not worried about how it's going to be after. You all are amazing, interesting people. Until next time,

Julia

SAYF friends,

It was wonderful to have everyone here in Celo at Arthur Morgan School. Thank you for being a patient and having the positive attitude when plans were changing.

I love going to Physics Playground. We had silent worship attention to bowling balls. We listened to the sound of pendulum. Watching the pendulum go through the cycle of each pattern made me think of my life...

Thank you sushi makers! Sushi tasted great! Thank you Celo SAYFers, especially Miranda for all your thoughtful and hard work.

In the Light,
Mari

I wrote this song in 1973 when I was 8 years old. It just came to mind and fits today.

Love - makes the world go 'round,
Love - makes you smile or frown,
Love - makes you happy and gay,
Because, it's a very special day!
You're special, too,
Just because you're you!

With love,
Mary Linda

Dear SAYF,

This was my first real retreat back in a long time, and I forgot how special this place is. Seeing all your faces after so long was so special, and it truly felt like home. Despite the crazy events of the first night that caused me to return home and leave again the next morning, I felt like I got everything I could have out of this retreat. I am exhausted from all the walking, happy from all the talking, and it's sad to have to leave.

I would also like to note that this retreat felt like déjà vu almost the entire time. I felt like we got back to the basics, the fun, loving community that I felt my first few retreats. Even wandering around with Laura, taking photos, reminded me of my first ever Knoxville retreat. The large amount of heys and hugs I received when I arrived reminded me of my first retreat ever, where I felt for the loving embrace of this community for the first time. And I'm glad that I am feeling these things, these powerful emotions of compassion, because soon, for me, I will have to leave, say goodbye one last time, have this experience one last time, before I begin the next chapters of my life. So thank you, SAYF, for being the shoulders I can always lean on. The love I can always count on, and the laughter I know will make my sides hurt.

Sincerely, for one of the last few times,
Benjamin