

## **SAYF Worship Journal**

March 2017 Retreat

Celo, NC

***On the weekend of March 24-26, 2017, the Southern Appalachian Young Friends met at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. This is our witness. This is our story.***

Many, many thanks to:

Mari - for everything

Miranda - for patiently teaching us how to do stuff

Tal - for the bagel-making lesson and delish bagels.

Carpathian Spruce - for the beautiful sounds

The wonderful Newbies - for going with the flow

My Co-Fans - who are so good to do this work with

And to SAYF - for being a good space for us all.

with love,

Mary Linda

To whomst it may concern,

This retreat felt really different from the others. I guess it was because so many regulars to SAYF didn't come. Maybe this one was different because I'm hardly able to come. Even though these things may be true, I know that SAYF will pretty much always be the same great community it has always been.

Dearest Friends,

What a blessing to have all of you come to Celo for the retreat. I hope everyone enjoyed the activities and the beautiful mountains. I will cherish the special time I had with you!

With the theme Self Expression in mind, I feel like I was able to express myself more thoughtfully in words. I was also able to express myself more spontaneously without being too self conscious.

Everyone here is very dear to me and I hope to see you very soon. Thank you for being who you are.

Peace, Mari

Dear SAYF, it feels so wonderful to be reunited with the purity of this community again; it's surprising to think that it's been almost a year since I was here last. Your faces have changed but the nurturing and accepting environment is still equally as present as it was a year ago. I so enjoyed seeing how you all have grown. I unfortunately will not be able to make it to many more SAYFs given my distance. Regardless, please know how much I care and cherish this community and the people in it. Thank you all for being who you are and expressing it so beautifully; don't stop doing what you're doing. I love you.

- Miranda Klein

Dear SAYF,

This retreat has been an amazing way to kick off my spring break. I had been looking forward to SAYF all week, and wasn't disappointed. SAYF is such a beautiful, thriving, wonderful place, and I'm so glad I get to be here, and be a welcomed member of this community. Lately I had just been lonely and I haven't really been in a good place. A lot of it was struggling with who I was, and how others saw me. But multiple times this weekend, I received the same advice, all from different people, and was told that once I choose to start putting myself out there and once I start loving myself, and embrace who I am, I'm going to attract the people who I want to. I tried that out a little this SAYF, and it was amazing. I sung my heart out at the bonfire. I was a lot more comfortable and happy. When I first arrived at Celo, it was 11:11, and I wished to have an amazing weekend. My wish came true, so I'm ok with saying my wish. I can't wait for next retreat, and the love and warmth I've received this weekend is enough to fuel me for the rest of the month.

Love,

Matilda

This is my first time writing an epistle, but I was inspired by Levi's from last retreat. Realizing that I've only got a year left in this community has really inspired me to form bonds with each and every one of you. I needed SAYF this weekend more than ever before, and I'm happy to say I think I'm walking away with a few new friends! Y'all mean so much to me. I've laughed and danced and hugged so much in this retreat and I cherish those moments as I carry this SAYF love back into the real world.

'Till next time,

XO - Evangeline

SAYF is my safe spot. I come here to be with people I love, and escape the outside world. This SAYF was fun. I liked the cows and the burritos whose meat came from cows. I love you all! Stay awesome always, or at least until I see you next.

Hello everyone,

When we first arrived I was not aware of the beauty in which I was surrounded by because it was quite dark. In the morning, I went outside and was greeted by the most superb view. THERE WAS A HUGE MOUNTAIN AND IT WARMED MY HEART!!! This place, along with people I was so lucky to have in my presence, is truly astounding. This is only my second retreat and I feel so welcome and fortunate to be accompanied by all the love that comes with SAYF. I hope to come to many, many more.

with lots of love,

Lily Ophelia

This SAYF was quite radical. Between the animals, mountains and bros, I thoroughly enjoyed Celo for my first time here. More than anything, I love the people here. This group is one of the most unique collections of people I've ever met, and I love SAYF for that. The friendships I've made here are friendships I intend to keep, even after SAYF.

- Annie

PS: The burrito dinner was AI.

*I honestly don't know how to describe how pleased I am with this weekend. Thank you to those who I had meaningful conversations with, thank you to every dancer who let loose, and thank you to all who joined in to sing around the campfire in such a blissful moment. I care about all of you so much. So until next time, keep smiling that beautiful smile.*

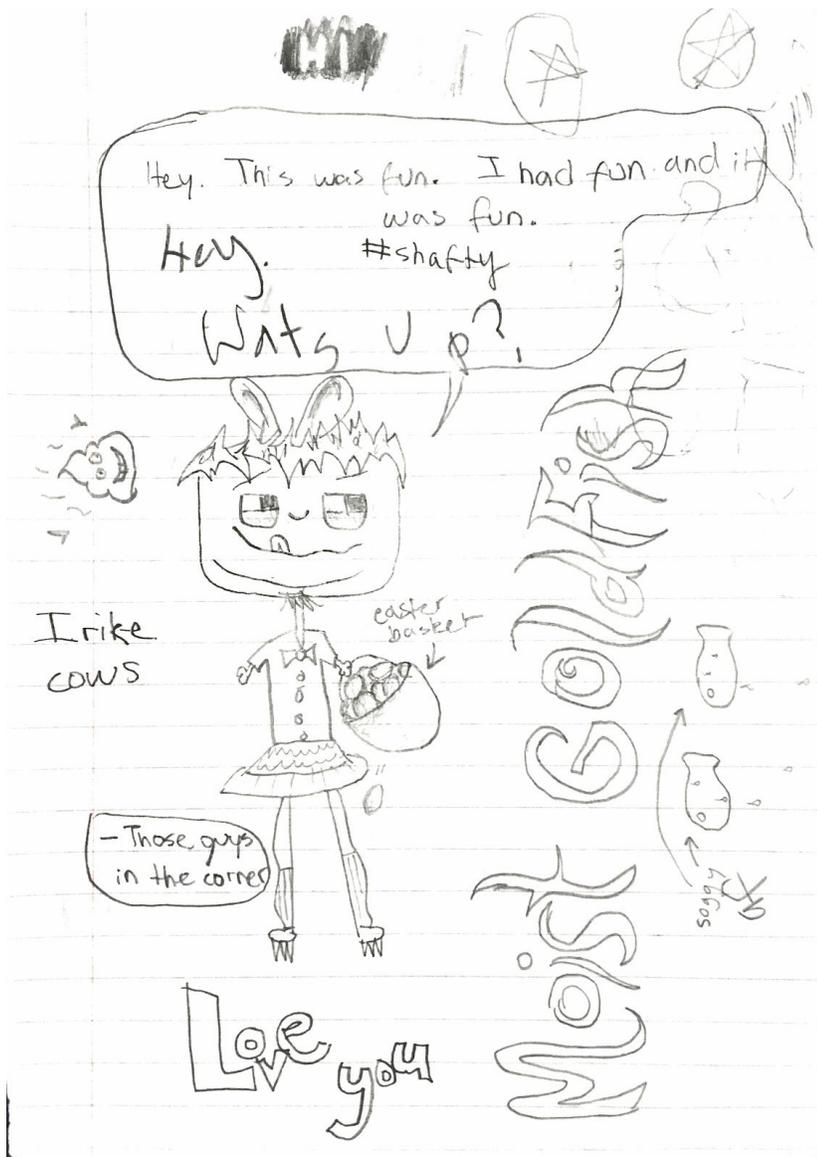
*Your friend, Mama SAYF (you may also know me by my undercover name Julia)*

Hello Dearest SAYFers,

Hot diddly darn. What an amazing retreat!!! It was incredibly moving to witness live music here and to see everyone dancing. It filled my heart with so much gratitude to be able to know this perfect bunch of people. I believe my favorite part was the satisfaction of going on the longest, hardest, most exhausting hike I've ever been on. Sitting on that deck thing and looking at the incredible world we have almost made me lose my shit. In a good way, of course. The interactions that took place a top the mountain, that feeling of community, was everything to me. Thank you all for being alive. I don't know where I would be otherwise.

I love you all SO much!!!

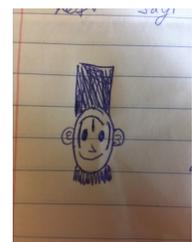
- Kenya Clo (P.S. Sheeps with monkey heads are rad)



I grabbed an electric fence with Jacob and fell over, I had a headache, my ear got infected by a cheap earring and Patrick's chest got spray painted, I don't regret a single moment of this weekend I spent with all of you amazing people and it saddens my heart to once again leave and have to wait another month to meet you all again.

With love - David Myers

This is my first SAYF retreat and on the way here I was kind of nervous, there were going to be lots of older kids that I didn't know and that can be nerve



wracking. However, when I got here I was welcomed and everyone was so nice to me. I made lots of friends and I am so looking forward to the next SAYF retreat.

This retreat was more tiring than even a normal Celo retreat with a hike, but it was very fun. The water tasted good, which is a pretty big deal, and hanging out with the youngins, and all you guys is always epic. I'm also really glad we had a decent amount of cereals.

Cheerios that aren't honey nut are just pieces of synthetic whole wheat bread that went stale, that is then sold back to you, but Honey. Nut. Cheerios have a sweet outer layer that fixes everything. So yeah thank God for that.

- You've probably guessed who I am already  
"It's breakfast time" - a cool kid

A thought,

As I rode in the van to Celo, we got turned around, google maps had once again led us astray. I was getting to the point of frustration, since it was almost 1 o'clock in the morning, & I was yearning to see my SAYFers. In my exasperation, I began a little ritual I very often perform. I stared out the window and tried to memorize every turn of the road, every tree and driveway, so that if we ever found ourselves lost on the way to Celo in the future, I might be the one to help steer us the right way. This little ritual was one I was well acquainted with, since our mixup Friday night was certainly not the first time we had gotten lost, and knowing some of the Berea drivers (cough cough Jonathan) it probably wouldn't be our last.

Then it dawned on me, maybe it would be my last. Years of SAYF car rides had taught me to unconsciously retain information that would, in time, be of some use, but this is my second to last retreat and the time is nigh where I won't need any of these little bits and pieces, because I'll be gone. I'm not 100% sure what the meaning behind that is, and maybe these words are the mere ramblings of a sentimental senior, but I do think it is noteworthy that no other community has made me care so deeply about directions.

Much Love,  
Levi

