

To Parents of Young Friends: A Message About the SAYF Program 2016-2017

Many of you are familiar with the Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) program. For those of you who may be relatively new to our program, we offer a little background: There are 6 SAYF retreats held throughout the year in addition to a special teen program at our yearly gathering (SAYMA) each June. Most retreats begin on Friday night and end mid-day Sunday and gather teens from several different Meetings. Retreats are planned around a theme, oriented towards teaching Quaker community, spirituality and process. Each weekend includes special activities and workshops planned and led by the teens and adults as well as time spent in silent worship. There is also unstructured time to rest and socialize indoors and outdoors. Young Friends are expected to participate in all planned activities, unless excused for a specific reason.

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. The adult nurturers of SAYF endeavor to balance awareness of the activities of our Young Friends with their need to be independent and to feel trusted, thus it is ultimately up to the individual teen to act responsibly and strive to be a positive element in the community.

Our guidelines are posted on the SAYF website (www.awesomesayfers.org). Please be sure you and your child have read and understand the guidelines before they attend 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 that when the retreat includes an off-site trip, we frequently can not keep the same level of supervision as when the retreat remains in a closed setting such as the Meetinghouse. If this concerns you, we invite you to call that retreat's Lead-FAN (Friendly Adult Nurturer) to discuss your child's situation.

You are welcome to attend our gatherings, when or before your child attends, to find out more about our community and to determine the program's suitability for your family's needs. We are a Quaker organization run by volunteers, and appreciate parent support and involvement. If you are interested in attending one of our retreats feel free to contact the Lead-FAN for that retreat so that we can better facilitate your role in the retreat weekend.

If you have any questions about our program, you may call either of our Steering Committee co-clerks:

Wren Hendrickson: wrenhendrickson@aol.com or 919-490-8950

Jennifer Chapman: jennifergchapman@gmail.com or 919-491-0450

If you have any address/contact information changes please contact the SAYF Administrative Assistant: awesomesayfers@gmail.com.

Information about sleeping arrangements and a list of our SAYF values. Included in this packet is also the 2016-17 calendar and contact info for Steering (adult) & Nurturing (teen) Committee members.

Many thanks,
SAYF Steering Committee

SAYF Sleeping Arrangements

There are 3 designated sleeping areas: 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. 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 tell a FAN or contact 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, which includes 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.