

# SAYF 2023-2024 Information Packet

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Adult Friends,

**Welcome!** We're glad that your young Friend is a part of the Southern Appalachian Young Friends [SAYF] community! At the start of each year we send a letter reminding and updating our adult community about what SAYF is all about!

## **SAYF welcoming new young Friends**

Through many seasons, we are struck by how SAYF is able to persistently generate a culture of inclusive, caring, and intentional community. Many of the committed young Friends who were with SAYF through COVID graduated in June, yet we continue to see Spirit moving as SAYF revitalizes and welcomes in the new. Over the course of the past year 15 young Friends came to their first retreat, and six young Friends joined the Nurturers who plan and support the youth-led retreats. They bring new energy and are excited to continue and create anew the magic of SAYF. We look forward to continuing this growth in the upcoming retreats. Retreat rates have been raised by \$5 to \$40 per teen, to more accurately reflect retreat costs amidst rising inflation. We remain committed to ensuring youth can participate in SAYF regardless of financial situation, and scholarships continue to be available for any families who request them. We are also instituting a new family rate of \$100 total per retreat for families sending 3 or more SAYFers.

## **Managing COVID in a new era**

As COVID continues to wax and wane in our communities, we have deeply considered what precautions we should keep, and which ones are no longer necessary. We ask that youth skip retreats if they have COVID, or are still within the 5 day window of testing positive for COVID. If a participant develops symptoms of a contagious illness during a retreat, Friendly Adult Nurturers (FANs) will follow our guidelines to minimize the risk of exposing others, and if needed, will contact parents. Please see our updated policy below.

## **Volunteer Progress!**

The SAYF Support Committee and Steering Committee continues to look for additional volunteers to ensure we can support SAYF for years to come. If you haven't had a chance to attend our FAN Training, please consider attending! We invite all adult members of the community, including parents and guardians, to participate, as it will give you a good sense of what SAYF is all about and how you and other adults can participate in helping us to build and keep the program strong and safe for young Friends. We welcome parents and guardians to become FANs, and the steps to do so are below. There are other ways to support the program as well, such as being a night shepherd, providing snacks, sending a potluck dish, shopping for groceries, or making a donation. If you'd like more ideas for how to help, contact Autumn Woodward, SAYF Program Coordinator, at [awesomesayfers@gmail.com](mailto:awesomesayfers@gmail.com) or the lead FAN of any retreat.

## **Steps to becoming an adult volunteer:**

1. Youth Worker application: If you are new to SAYF volunteering please initiate the process, by filling out this short Youth Worker form: <https://goo.gl/forms/NLylBc2X015AlwyU2>
2. Background Check: All adult volunteers, including night shepherds, are required to pass Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting and Association's [SAYMA] background check.

3. FAN Training: All Friendly Adult Nurturers [FANs] are required to complete a 2-part virtual FAN training (4 hours total).
  - a. **Fall SAYF FAN Training (parents welcome)**  
**Wednesday September 27, 6:30-8:30pm Eastern time**  
*or, alternate date:*  
**Sunday October 1, 3:30-5:30pm Eastern time**  
Zoom link for FAN Training: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82394247720>  
Meeting ID: 823 9424 7720

While this may seem like a lot of hoops, we take the safety and wellbeing of our young Friends and the SAYF program very seriously. We know that these steps help us toward that end!

In an effort not to clutter your mailbox, if a SAYFer hasn't attended for a year, we will take them off the mailing list - however, if you still wish to receive SAYF mailings you can! Simply email the SAYF program coordinator at [awesomesayfers@gmail.com](mailto:awesomesayfers@gmail.com). (If we haven't seen you in over a year, this letter will be the last.)

Sincerely,  
SAYF Steering and Nurturing Committees

#### **Attachments**

1. New SAYFers Background Letter (p. 3)
2. Contacts for SAYF Steering and Nurturing Committee (p. 4)
3. SAYF Calendar 2023-24 (p. 5)
4. SAYF Community Values and Sleeping Arrangements (Updated 8/22) (p. 6)
5. SAYF Community Guidelines (p. 7-9)
6. SAYF Covid-19 Guidelines (updated 8/23) (p. 10)

## **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 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, 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](mailto: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](http://awesomesayfers.org).

Many thanks, SAYF Steering Committee,  
Christopher de Beer, Clerk

## SAYF Steering Committee for 2023-24

**Chris de Beer, Clerk** -- Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting, NC 828-275-4366 // [debeer1@mac.com](mailto:debeer1@mac.com)

**Kelly Askins** -- Memphis Friends Meeting, TN 901-240-9819 // [friend.kaskins@gmail.com](mailto:friend.kaskins@gmail.com)

**Maia Carter Hallward** -- Atlanta Friends Meeting, GA 301-518-3246 // [maigrace@yahoo.com](mailto:maigrace@yahoo.com)

**Jennifer Dickie** -- Atlanta Friends Meeting, GA 404-313-8770 // [michaeljen@bellsouth.net](mailto:michaeljen@bellsouth.net)

**Jennifer Killen** – Durham Friends Meeting 919-749-5416 // [jenkillen2@gmail.com](mailto:jenkillen2@gmail.com)

**Asa Kramer-Dickie** – Atlanta Friends Meeting 404-520-6216 // [asa.kramerdickie@gmail.com](mailto:asa.kramerdickie@gmail.com)

**Beth Myers** – Berea Friends Meeting 859-248-7303 // [beth@schinhofen.net](mailto:beth@schinhofen.net)

**Ian Saderholm** -- Berea Friends Meeting, KY, via Chicago, IL 859-358-3427 // [ian.saderholm@gmail.com](mailto:ian.saderholm@gmail.com)

**Robert Sears** --Berea Friends Meeting, KY 541-891-8028 // [robertsears29@yahoo.com](mailto:robertsears29@yahoo.com)

**Brent Wolff** – Atlanta Friends Meeting 404-797-2781 // [rbkwolff@gmail.com](mailto:rbkwolff@gmail.com)

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**Autumn Woodward (Program Coordinator)** // [awesomesayfers@gmail.com](mailto:awesomesayfers@gmail.com)

## SAYF Nurturing Committee Members

Name		Meeting
Sage	Hallward	Atlanta
Bax	Henderson	Durham
Michael	Killen	Durham
Mason	LaMotte	Swannanoa Valley
Nevin	Myers	Berea
Adelaide	Utz	Asheville
Anders	Utz	Asheville

# Tentative SAYF CALENDAR 2023-2024

*Updated August, 2023 – information subject to change.  
Please check [awesomesayfers.org](http://awesomesayfers.org) for calendar updates.*

- Aug. 18-20, 2023**      **Nurturing and Steering Committee Mtg.**  
**Swannanoa Valley Meetinghouse**  
Lead FAN: Chris de Beer
- September 15-17, 2023**   **SAYF Retreat**  
**Atlanta Friends Meeting, Atlanta, GA**  
Lead FAN: Asa Kramer-Dickie  
Planners: Atlanta Young Friends
- October 13-15, 2023**      **SAYF Retreat**  
**West Knoxville Friends Meetinghouse**  
Lead FAN: Beth Myers  
Planners: Berea Young Friends
- Nov. 10-12, 2023**      **SAYF Retreat**  
**Asheville Friends Meetinghouse**  
Lead FAN: Layla Wagner  
Planners: Asheville Young Friends
- Jan. 12-14, 2024**      **SAYF Retreat**  
**Atlanta Friends Meetinghouse**  
Lead FAN: Asa Kramer-Dickie  
Planners: Atlanta Young Friends
- Feb. 16-18, 2024**      **Nurturing and Steering Committee Mtg.**  
**West Knoxville Friends Meetinghouse**  
Lead FAN: Chris de Beer
- March 2024 TBD**      **SAYF Retreat**  
**Arthur Morgan School, Celo, NC (tentative)**  
Lead FAN: Mari Ohta
- April 26-28, 2024**      **SAYF Retreat**  
**Durham Friends Meeting**  
Lead FAN: Jennifer Killen
- June 14-16, or June 21-23**   **Yearly Meeting (SAYMA)**  
**Berea College, Berea, KY**

## **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**

There are two designated sleeping areas: late-night and early-to-bed. Additional sleeping areas will be arranged by FANs and Nurturers at any retreat at the request of young Friends or parents/guardians. 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 (i.e. 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 Community Guidelines

*Approved, August 2012, Amended August 2013, 2014, 2017, 2019, 2022, Updated & Affirmed 2023*

## **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:**

**Practice self advocacy.** Self advocacy is the ability to communicate your individual needs when you are comfortable. Our guidelines are written to embody the needs of the whole SAYF community, however, if a group or individual requires accommodations then advocating for yourself or the group is appropriate and necessary.

**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-identity, 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 sleeping arrangements that allow us to sleep in community - not separated by gender or other identities. 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:***

We trust you will be able to follow these by remembering they are for the safety of you and the community, and we hope you come to us with any questions. 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

## **SAYF Covid-19 Guidelines for in person retreats (version 4)**

The following guidelines were developed understanding the evolving circumstances and science surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic. SAYF Covid-19 guidelines will be adjusted to meet changing safety standards as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control. SAYF respects local Friend's rules and expectations within Friend's Meetinghouses. These guidelines therefore will also be responsive to local Friend's Meeting's expectations for use of Meetinghouse space during SAYF retreats.

SAYF understands that Covid-19 continues to be present and its prevalence waxes and wanes as the disease evolves. As the risk of mortality or serious illness have dramatically reduced, especially for populations without exacerbating risk factors, SAYF requests families to consider their own comfort with having youth attend in-person retreats. Parents and young friends are best positioned to understand their own risk factors for illness and weigh them against the social/emotional and spiritual benefits of engaging in the SAYF community. We ask that families be conscientious in minimizing the risk of spreading contagious illness into SAYF retreats, following the guidelines below:

1. We highly recommend all participants of SAYF retreats, young Friends and adults, have received at least two vaccine doses in the primary series and at least one booster dose.
2. Do not attend retreats if:
  - a. You are sick or expressing symptoms of illness that could be contagious.
  - b. You are currently testing positive for COVID, or tested positive within 5 days of a retreat.
3. Please follow CDC guidance for testing, including confirming COVID status with a rapid test if you have symptoms within five days of a retreat.
4. Masks at SAYF retreats will be available, and participants who develop symptoms while on a retreat will be asked to wear a high-quality mask and/or isolate depending on the severity of the symptoms. If FANs do not feel they can safely manage a young Friend's symptoms, they will contact the guardian to develop a plan for safe return home.
5. All attendees of SAYF retreats will follow local Friend's Meeting Covid-19 protocols for groups visiting the Meetinghouse while in and around the Meetinghouse.
  - a. The SAYF program coordinator will procure the guidelines prior to the retreat.
  - b. These guidelines will be shared with the Lead FAN and YF planning committee and other FANs attending, prior to the retreat.
  - c. If any of the local rules are unduly burdensome or in conflict with CDC guidance, the lead FAN, in consultation with the clerk of SAYF Steering Committee, may request from the local meeting, that the rule be adjusted or waived for the SAYF retreat. If such an adjustment is not allowed, then the lead FAN and SAYF SC clerk will determine if a different venue is required.
  - d. The lead FAN is responsible for sharing the applicable local meeting Covid-19 guidelines with nurturers and adult volunteers at the retreat.
  - e. All Nurturers, FANs and other adult volunteers must be familiar with the local meeting Covid-19 guidelines as well as these SAYF guidelines and assist in compliance.

If financial support for purchasing a rapid test is needed to determine if a young Friend can attend a retreat, please contact the SAYF Program Coordinator, Autumn Woodward.