

SAYF Report to SAYMA June 5, 2024

Southern Appalachian Young Friends (SAYF) held 6 regular retreats during the past retreat cycle, August 2023-May 2024, with SAYF at SAYMA retreat upcoming. There were two Nurturing Committee retreats in August and February, meeting jointly for business with SAYF Steering Committee. SAYF will meet in Berea, KY on June 20-23, 2024 for SAYMA's yearly gathering. We have averaged 24 Young Friends (YF) per retreat across the six regular retreats during the school year, compared to 19 per retreat in the previous year, showing a positive direction for recovery of the program post-Covid emergency.

40 different teens attended at least one retreat during the past year. Some Young Friends attended all 6 retreats and others attended only one. Details of each retreat are summarized below.

Most retreats were hosted at Meetinghouses, but we also gathered at Arthur Morgan School in Celo, NC. We are deeply appreciative to Friends for allowing us to use their facilities. Also, we are thankful to Durham and Atlanta Friends Meetings, and individual SAYF families, whose generous donations have helped support scholarships for SAYF, and contributed to nourishing the program.

SAYF Retreats:

Retreat	Location	Participants	Theme
Steering, Nurturing and Support Committee Retreat	August 2023 Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting	7	<i>Nurturing Retreat</i>
SAYF Retreat	September, 2023 Atlanta Friends Meeting	27	Metamorphosis: Grow into Your SAYF Self
SAYF Retreat	October, 2023 Berea Friends Meeting	14	Fostering Inclusion
SAYF Retreat	November, 2023 Asheville Friends Meeting	20	Gratitude and Adventure
SAYF Retreat	January, 2024 Atlanta Friends Meeting	30	Quaker Values and Civil Resistance
Steering, Nurturing and Support Committee Retreat	February, 2024 West Knoxville Friends Meeting	9	<i>Nurturing Retreat</i>
SAYF Retreat	March, 2024 Arthur Morgan School, Celo, NC	27	Reconnecting
SAYF Retreat	April, 2024 Durham, NC	28	Wealth Inequality

Sample of Retreat Overviews or Activities

November 2023 - Asheville

We started the retreat Friday evening and waited for guests to arrive from other states. We then went over sleeping guidelines, and headed to bed. In the morning after breakfast, we discussed the query of this retreat, followed by meeting with attention to business. After lunch we went into Asheville for a scavenger hunt intended to bring attention to the everyday beauty around us. Upon arriving back at the meeting, we prepared for Friendsgiving, which we started with information on the original thanksgiving, and how the spirit of the holiday has changed. Sunday morning we cleaned the meeting house, and started singing.

January 2024 - Atlanta

Flyering & chalking in Decatur square, Stop Cop City, Palestine, Board Games, Chalk Talk

March 2024 - Celso

27 Young Friends and 10 FANs gathered and enjoyed the early spring retreat with the theme of Re-Connecting. The schedule stayed flexible with the weather. Planning group gave much consideration to wholesome food with little waste. The activities included nature identification walks and group singing around the campfire connecting our soul to earth and our heritage. AMS campus was conducive to playful exploration to nature and community building.

April 2024 - Durham

Nurturers hosted the first SAYF retreat at Durham Friends Meeting in about 6 years. We have two buildings with a playground in the middle and the youth really enjoyed all the space. At least a third of the youth answered the query Saturday morning. One speaker spoke about the causes of wealth inequality and another talked about the difficulties folks face when they come out of prison. There was a walk to and picnic lunch in Duke Gardens. We packed Welcome Home boxes for prisoners. One SAYFer's early graduation was overflowing with love. Bear was fun! Visiting and local FANs shared their experiences and ideas for working with youth and children. We have four new Nurturers!

Nurturing + Steering + Support Committee Retreats

August 2023, Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting

Nurturing Committee Members: 7

We conducted the business meeting to plan for FY24 retreats. We had only one nurturer who had attend the last August nurturers retreat, and 6 nurturers who were new from last year, two of whom had never been to any nurturers' retreat. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm to take on the leadership of SAYF. We spent time thinking about how to be inclusive of attendees who are on diverse places of the neurological spectrum, and may struggle to engage socially in the same ways. The nurturers learned about and practiced leading a clearness committee. We had a wonderful dinner provided by the Swannanoa Valley Friends Meeting.

February 2024, West Knoxville Friends Meeting

Nurturing Committee Members: 9

The nurturers' retreat was a productive planning weekend. As a combined body we discussed how FANs can make more space for nurturers to lead during retreats and reviewed how the process of adding new nurturers has changed from the handbook.

Young Friend Queries

1. How can we create peace in a hostile world?
2. How do you stand firmly against inequality? How do you peacefully challenge problematic social norms?
3. How do you create and nurture community?
4. How do you practice good social work while nurturing your well being and what avenues exist between those?
5. What do you do that harms/affects the environment and how can you better such impact
6. In what ways do you use your voices and express your perspectives?
7. How do we support people's identity and growth?
8. When do you reevaluate your perspective?
9. How do you remain grounded in a materialistic society?
10. How do you reconcile simplicity and self expression?
11. How do you apply Quaker values to your social media presence?
12. How does your energy change as you enter adulthood?
13. What is the light? Where do you find that in your life?
14. How do you identify as quaker and how do you explain that to your peers?
15. To whom do you extend your compassion?