

**Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) Support Committee Report to SAYMA**  
**Submitted by Laura Lane, clerk**  
**June 2023**

After a strong year of programming at SAYMA last year, we were excited to move to Berea this year. Due to anticipated numbers, we offered a JYM for ages 6-12 and Playcare program for ages 2-5. We also offered babysitting for children under 2 years of age.

We were disappointed in low attendance in the JYM/playcare program this year, with only four families with children under 12 years registering. All of the families have attended SAYMA and JYM/Playcare in the past, with no first-time attendees. There were 6 children (ages 5-10) registered for the JYM/Playcare program. The kids represent Meetings and Worship groups from Asheville, Atlanta, Columbia, and Macon.

We did some outreach to families to try to discern why attendance was so low. The date seemed to be the main factor. Because of the change in venue, the date was set much later than usual. Several families already had trips planned that conflicted with SAYMA. Location was another factor— Atlanta and Asheville have the biggest groups of kids, and Berea is farther from both places. Many meetings have not built back consistent groups of kids post COVID.

Based on last year's strong numbers, we decided to have Playcare and JYM return to being separate programs. We hired a coordinator and assistant for each program. Unfortunately, we have to complete the process of hiring staff before registration opens, which means that we are overstaffed this year. One of the assistants chose to move to part time, but we will have 3.5 staff, and the group will again be combined.

Our staff this year included Asa Kramer-Dickie from Atlanta (coordinator of the JYM), Abigail Gross from the Atlanta Friends school (coordinator of Playcare) Kim Wagner from Asheville (assistant to JYM) and Hugh Thomforde from Cookeville (assistant to Playcare). We are also supported by the JYM support committee and volunteers and families from the broader SAYMA community.

Childcare at SAYMA does many things:

- Allows parents and guardians to attend SAYMA adult programming
- Builds a community among our youngest friends through nurture and play
- Allows parents and guardians to share in a Quaker parenting community
- Engages other adults in SAYMA with our young friends through volunteer opportunities

The JYM support committee continued meeting through zoom this year, meeting monthly through the winter and spring.

Last year we shared our proposal to hold family retreats a few times a year, to continue to allow families and children to connect with each other throughout the year. We are pleased to report that we held our first family retreat in May at the Atlanta meetinghouse. It was attended by 6 families, representing 4 different meetings. It was a joy filled weekend with activities at the meetinghouse and an outing to Arabia Mountain Park. There was time for both adults and kids to connect. We also learned some valuable lessons that will make future retreats even stronger.

We plan to hold retreats in the fall and the spring next year. We believe that these retreats will strengthen the JYM community and hope they will encourage higher attendance at SAYMA in future years.

We continue to believe that childcare at SAYMA creates opportunities that nurture the spiritual life of children and adults that will encourage families and other Friends to continue to attend as their children grow.

Laura Lane (Asheville), clerk

Kim Saderholm (Berea)

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