

SAYF Report SAYMA Sessions & Retreat 2023

I hope, after the March representatives meeting, that Friends returned to their monthly meetings with the good tidings from SAYF as well as our concerns. Because our success and concerns from March continue to be the same, this report will recap the March report with updates where needed.

We continue to encourage monthly meetings to reach out to young Friends and families to draw them back to Meeting for Worship after the pandemic years when family patterns shifted away from Sunday morning Meeting in person. Young Friends from monthly meetings are the young Friends who attend SAYF. When they and their families are not involved in monthly meetings, it is hard for us to build a vibrant SAYF program. We rely on monthly meetings' work with their own youth to help build a robust SAYF program. While we have grown this year, we are still a small crew of young Friends. Next year we will have no teens from Nashville, Knoxville, nor Memphis. Here is a reminder - if there are upper elementary or middle school young Friends in your Monthly Meetings, SAYF would like to know about them so that we can work on our outreach to your community specifically.

We have been building our Friendly Adult Nurturer capacity this year adding as many as 12 FANs - some of whom only act as night shepherds and others who are becoming more regular adult presences with our teens. Unfortunately, as we headed into SAYMA Sessions and Retreat this year, we found that we had few attending adults who volunteered to support SAYF with night shepherding. This leaves our daytime FANs at a distinct disadvantage because they do not have the nighttime support needed to get good rest. If you have gone through the Adult Volunteer process and would be willing to take a slot night shepherding (3-4 hour shifts) please let me know.

We have engaged young adult Friends in the role of lead FANs at SAYMA this year again after the success of last year. SAYF Steering Committee is offering these young adults a stipend to help cover their costs, as some of them are students, working in jobs without vacation pay, or living out of the SAYMA region. Covering these costs has allowed SAYF to broaden its adult capacity for leadership and is a shift toward equity.

SAYF's expenses regularly exceed our income from retreats because we are committed to maintain an affordable registration fee for families for the 6 monthly young Friend retreats. Historically we have made up the difference with the annual allocation from SAYMA (\$2000) and regular donations from several monthly meetings (~\$800). Due to 3-years of loss because of lower participation numbers, increased costs, and reduced support from SAYMA during the pandemic including zero financial support in 2021-22, for the first time, we will spend down our reserve to what we consider the minimum acceptable amount, \$4000, which is about half a year's expenses. We have shared our concerns with

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the SAYMA finance committee in hopes of temporarily increasing our allocation for the next two years to \$3000.

We hear regularly from young adults (and some who are not so young any more), who passed through the SAYF program that SAYF was an essential part of their spiritual formation and contributed in meaningful ways to their adult world view. Many of the young Adult Friends who are attending SAYMA Sessions this year are former SAYFers.

As always, the SAYF Steering Committee thanks you for what feels like unwavering support for this program.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Dickie, Clerk SAYF Steering Committee