

Dear Friends Everywhere,

We are the Middle School Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

We gathered at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, New Jersey from July 24th to July 28th, 2019 for Annual Sessions. We grew as a community and expanded our knowledge by learning about the LGBTQIA+ and people of color communities. We learned about microaggressions and how to work as a community by talking about our disagreements and vulnerabilities with Pushed Learning Media.

We made connections, shared different thoughts, and played fun games during mealtimes. During meals, we had very meaningful conversations about LGBTQIA+ terminology and preferred gender pronouns. MSF feels that preferred gender pronouns are so important to one's identity as well as being a basic human right. We leaned into the discomfort of talking about LGBTQIA+ issues and microaggressions. We are very happy with the growth we had during these difficult conversations.

We enjoyed outdoor activities and ultimately, worked through small challenges that resulted in everyone feeling included. We learned how to fix the slip n slide and we were brought together through this challenge.

We found beauty in community and friendship. We all created a family-like bond... James Bond.

We worked together and guided each other to design Vespers for the wider community. During the Vespers planning experience, we expressed what was important to us through writing and speaking. In our written pieces for Vespers, we hope our spirits were shared with our audience. This week, the spirit moved through the community making deep and meaningful friendships amongst us.

When we think of what MSF means to us, we think of: community, friends, Elizabeth, food, family, home, deep conversations, Frank, music, dancing, and acceptance.

Love,

PYM Middle School Friends