

Dear friends from all ends of the earth,

We the Junior High Yearly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting met in Castleton Vermont at Castleton University from August 4-August 9 2018. Our theme this year was "in fear and trembling be bold in God's service" and we tried to understand and embody this theme through our actions and reflection this week.

JHYM started of the week by leading intergenerational worship, where we shared anonymous reflections about how JHYM has helped us on our way to overcoming fears. Even though it was often hot we immersed ourselves in many fun outdoor activities like capture the flag, badminton, and tower of power. Some of us would play on the pool table and most of went to, and enjoyed, the swimming pool through our late night pool party on Sunday and free swim. We spent time reconnecting with our high school friends so our 8 graders could further understand the changes that would come in the coming year of retreats and sessions. On Tuesday we had an abbreviated trip to Bomoseen State Park were we had fun swimming, singing, and playing card games until we were faced with a torrential downpour which we then enjoyed from the comfort of a porch while eating delicious ice cream. We made beautiful and uniquely creative shirts in our t-shirt meditation and participated in a paint blot project that taught us about the intricacies of life.

We spent some time reflecting on a letter we received from an Older friend about people chuckling at a Junior higher's reflection during Sunday morning worship. As a group we had a wide range of reactions about the letter. We know that the chuckling was not meant to be hurtful. We immensely appreciate the dedication this older friend put into this considerate letter and it sparked deep conversation within our community over time.

We wrapped up the week with a coffee house talent show with many fun performances. We said goodbye to our 8th graders at a reflective and thoughtful 8th grade circle. Though we will miss our friends greatly we look forward to having more sleep and going back to our communities back home. This has been an eventful and thoughtful week of love and reflection and we look forward to the joys of next year.