

I remember my first time going to Ferrwood Music Camp. My brother had just started playing saxophone and his instructor told him he should go. My brother ended up going, and as the little sister, I tagged along. I will never forget the first day of camp. I was sitting in the kitchen of one of the most beautiful buildings I had ever seen, with a bunch of strangers who I had never met before. Phil Latella played “The Duck Song,” which I had honestly never heard of prior to Ferrwood. The room filled with people singing the lyrics, and I just remember smiling and feeling like I belonged. After, Latella asked, “What does the Duck Song have to do with Ferrwood?” I didn’t have a response, but everyone else in the room replied, “Nothing,” and he smiled and asked again, “What does the Duck Song have to do with Ferrwood?” and everyone replied, “Everything.” It did not take my long to realize exactly what they meant. Ferrwood is a place where people are too able to express their true self. We then listened to “Little Boxes”, covered by Walk Off the Earth. I remember going home that night and just listening to every song that they had ever covered. We are not put into little boxes at Ferrwood, we are not separated at all.

One of my favorite memories I have at Ferrwood was in 2019 when Phil Latella opened up the opportunity to read, “The Little Prince”, written by Antoine De Saint- Exupéry, with him. A few other kids and I took about an hour of time out of our free time at Ferrwood to analyze this book. Personally, I hate reading, but reading this book along with the group of people I was around, made me enjoy reading for the very first time. Many of those who go to Ferrwood feel as if they do not fit in in school or extracurriculars. Or they feel judged, whether in be at home or in public. Ferrwood is a safe space where all feelings are valid. It is easy to be yourself at Ferrwood and feel as if you are able to be your true self. You are able to talk to others about how you feel, and they all get you. When reading The Little Prince, I learned that it is important to obviously grow

up, but never grow up all the way. Let yourself be happy and do not let adulthood and responsibilities cover just how amazing life truly is.

Ferrwood is where I have met/became close with all of the people who are currently in my life. I have been able to make connections with other students from around the world, and I have had amazing opportunities to work with talented musicians. Ferrwood will always be a part of my life and I will always consider every single person who has ever gone there to be a part of my family. Thank you to everyone who has ever been a part of Ferrwood and thank you to all of those who make Ferrwood possible!