

The Aviat Project: Introduction

Named in honor of St. Leonie Francis de Sales Aviat (1844-1914), an Oblate Sister of St. Francis de Sales who worked with young girls and women in need of material, moral and spiritual support during the French Industrial Revolution, the Aviat Project aims to transform an existing space at Gesu Parish in Toledo, Ohio, into a center suitable for use by Gesu students, the Girl and Boy Scout troops of Gesu Parish, the Gesu Underground (high school parish group), the Gesu Young Adults (parishioners ages 24-35), and potentially by other groups under the auspices of Gesu that minister directly to the younger members of Gesu Parish including the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), the Gesu Boosters, and Gesu Athletics.

Goals and Outcomes

The Aviat Project aims to see that the current Scout Room at Gesu Parish is renovated and made into a dedicated space - a youth ministry center - for ministry and gatherings of parish students, scouts, teens and young adults. Over the past twenty-five years the room has fallen into poor condition and is unsuitable for use, most recently due to a leak in the church boiler system (which has been repaired). Renovations include the removal of unusable, worn or unnecessary furnishings, removal of deteriorating carpeting, cleaning, painting of the walls, removal of carpet glue, and placing of epoxy finishing on the floors, installation of a drop ceiling with updated lighting fixtures.

Additional objectives include the placement of area rugs, a conference table and chairs, furnishings including sofas/couches, end tables, recliners, refrigerator, flat screen television or smart board with projector and internet access for the purpose of catechesis for the youth, teens and young adults that will primarily use the room. The prospect of making the room's technology accessible for supervised students use will also be explored when these technologies are obtained.

Timeline

The Aviat Project will take four major phases to bring the room up to a standard to permit regular meetings and gatherings to take place:

1. Cleaning – Organization of Scouting materials in the room currently; removal of furnishings unsuitable for use or unnecessary; washing of walls, floors and ceiling; removal of deteriorated carpeting (begin August, 2009)
2. Painting – Painting of walls; removal of glue residue on the floor where carpet had existed; etch and epoxy floor (begin as funds allow).
3. Drop ceiling installation – install both updated ceiling light fixtures and acoustical tiles in a drop ceiling frame to absorb echo created by cement walls, floor and ceiling (Start date is pending receiving funding and/or donations).
4. Begin seeking donations of furnishings, area rugs, etc. (October, 2009 until completion).

The final phase, phase five, will take place over time as resources are made available with the goal of being completed by October, 2010.

5. This phase will include:
 - a. Internet access installation
 - b. Addition of a refrigerator for storage of refreshments and snacks
 - c. Obtaining a smart board and projector or HD television with DVD/Blue Ray player for providing media to be used in ministry programs for children, teens and young adults.

Comprehensive Youth Ministry: Community Life

After Phase 3 is completed, the room will be dedicated in honor of St. Leonie Aviat. An image of St. Leonie will be installed in the room to promote knowledge of her life and dedication to the Salesian charism. Rededicating the Scout Room in honor of St. Leonie Frances de Sales Aviat promotes awareness of both the Oblate Salesian charism, through which Gesu Parish is administered, and witnesses to the commitment of Gesu Parish, celebrating ninety years as a parish in 2010, to its future as a parish and to the wider mission of the Universal Church to youth. It is an investment in the New Evangelization of which Pope Benedict XVI states we are obliged to advance through new initiatives.¹

Throughout its history, the Church has created safe places for its members to gather. In the Twenty-first Century, the need for safe places that promote the gospel remains. Youth especially seek places to create community. Creating a space dedicated to youth and young adults provides an alternative community gathering space at the parish that reinforces the importance of being Church. It extends the liturgy, the gathering to celebrate Eucharist, beyond the walls of the church into the activities and relationships of youth and young adults. An investment of this nature signals how important youth are to the life of the parish and the Universal Church.²

In February, 2009, Gesu Parish opened a Parish Synod. Parishioners gathered and developed eight areas to be addressed by the pastor and the parish leadership. One of these areas singled out the youth of Gesu. Parishioners fashioned goals particular to the youth of Gesu, Gesu School and Gesu religious education. Parishioners voiced a desire to see more done with the teenaged members of the parish and, in conjunction with the Synod, a young adult group emerged as well.

Audience: Youth and Young Adults

Scouting for girls and boys has been a part of Gesu Parish for many years. Currently the scouts are without a meeting space because of the poor condition of the scout room. The girls and boys are active and receive both scout and religious formation through their respective activities and merit awards.

Before the Parish Synod formally opened in February, 2009, two Gesu Parish high school seniors met with the Parochial Vicar seeking on their own initiative to form a youth group that would include times for prayer, social events and service of the greater-parish. The youth group, Gesu Underground, today includes a network of approximately fifty high school students. Because the parish does not sponsor a high school, it believes expanding a vibrant ministry to its teens is essential for keeping them tied to the greater-parish community, the touchstone of life in the Church.

In addition to the formation of a youth group at Gesu, two young adult members of the parish simultaneously began efforts to coordinate a ministry to the young adults (ages 24-35) of Gesu. They recognized that while a university parish exists near Gesu Parish for the University of Toledo community, and while some young adult ministry is accomplished at the diocesan level, that no individual parish was reaching out to its young adults in a coordinated effort. The Gesu Young Adults' Group currently includes a network of approximately twenty

¹ Joseph Ratzinger, "Address to Catechists and Religion Teachers," Jubilee of Catechists, 12 December 2000.

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Ministry of Community Life," *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*.

(20) young adults. This group is open and has been joined by young adults from neighboring parishes.

Budget

The budget includes essential items and materials needed to advance phases 1-3 of the Aviat Project and creates an initial suitable community gathering space for youth and young adults. They are expenses which require the work of the parish maintenance staff and/or efforts of parish volunteers.

	Cleaning Supplies	Paint	Carpet Glue Remover	Epoxy Floor Coating	Acoustical Tile Ceiling	Light Fixtures
	\$150	\$600	\$100	\$800	\$3,200	\$900
CYFUSA Grant	<i>Application Pending.</i>					
Dana Holding Corp., Toledo, Ohio	<i>Response to request not yet received.</i>					
Gen's Hallmark Toledo, OH (Dec 5/6, 2009)	0	0	0	\$25	0	0
Gesu Boosters	<i>Considering financial support at next general meeting before year's end.</i>					
Gesu General Operating Fund	\$150	\$600	\$50	0	0	0
Gesu Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)	<i>Offering an unspecified amount of financial support by end of fiscal year (June 30, 2010) because a request was made after the PTO 2009/2010 budget was planned.</i>					
Gesu Underground	0	0	0	\$280	0	0
The Home Depot	0	0	\$50	0	0	0
Individual Donations	0	0	0	\$350	0	0
Knights of Columbus	<i>Considering financial support after January, 2010.</i>					
Subtotal	0	0	0	\$170	\$3,200	\$900
Balance Remaining	0	0	0	\$170	\$3,200	\$900

Remarks: \$4,000 is being requested from CYFUSA to ensure phases 1-3 may be accomplished, to continue the momentum for and interest in the Aviat Project, and to allow for further solicitation of individuals and organizations during phases 4 and 5 which will include technology/media items and furnishings. The budget above only refers to monetary donations and does not put a price on donations of labor or materials (in kind); e.g., parishioners from a neighboring parish who attend Saturday morning Mass at Gesu have provided the Aviat Room a refrigerator and freezer, and another donor provided a 52" flat screen monitor on November 6, 2009.

Alternate Funding

The budget above lists organizations both in and outside Gesu Parish. Realized and potential sources of income for this project through all five phases are listed.

- Limited funding/materials have been and will be provided by the parish in the form of some painting materials, paint and carpet glue remover, a conference table and a smaller round meeting table.
- The parish will be soliciting the assistance of the Knights of Columbus because of their connections with Scouting, and their promotion of vocations and youth ministry.
- Several parishioners are also employed by Dana Corporation and they have suggested that the parish apply for grant funding through their employer which has been done.

- A local branch of The Home Depot was solicited for assistance in providing materials and/or merchandise credits. The Home Depot awarded \$50 in merchandise credit for this project.
- The Gesu Underground conducted a haunted house fundraiser on October 24, 2009.
- Gen's Hallmark in Toledo has agreed to donate 10% of its subtotals toward this project the weekend of December 5-6, 2010, when customers present a flyer from Gesu.
- Barnes & Noble offered the parish a chance to raise funds through gift wrapping on December 6, 2009. This proved to be unsuccessful bringing in \$70 which was used for a teen retreat day.
- Once phases 1-3 of the Aviat Project are completed, individual parishioners and local businesses will be solicited for donations of furnishings and media technology.
- If funding from Catholic Youth Foundation is not realized, the project timeline will have to be extended to allow for both outside and internal solicitation of funds for phases 1-3 and then phases 4-5. Having phases 1-3 completed through a grant awarded by CYFUSA, will ensure that our envisioned timeline will be met.

Key Personnel

Fr. Shaun D. Lowery, OSFS, Parochial Vicar
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Evaluation

Success of the project will be determined based on the following criteria:

1. Project phases are completed through the primary collaborative efforts of parishioners, including the youth and young adult members and parishioners at-large.
2. Once completed, the Aviat Room is used weekly by at least one group related to youth and young adult ministry at Gesu Parish.
3. The Aviat Room becomes a fuel for the growth and expansion of youth ministry at Gesu through increased participation by youth and young adults in the general life of the parish (i.e., an expanded visible and active presence in liturgical, service and educational ministries of the parish).

Collaborators

- Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, Toledo Detroit Province – providing priest personnel to Gesu Parish (Pastor and Associate Pastor).
- Boy Scouts of America, Swan Creek District, Cub Scout Pack 71, Toledo, Ohio
- Gesu Underground – provided labor during phase 1; planning fundraising efforts.
- Gesu Young Adults – provided labor during phase 2.
- Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, Gesu Troop, Toledo, Ohio

Previous Awards

Gesu Parish (Toledo, Ohio) has not previously applied for a grant from Catholic Youth Foundation USA or the National Foundation for Catholic Youth.