The 350-acre Lay Center for Education and the Arts is a nature lover’s dream. Visitors are welcome to explore the grounds, which offer art and history amid a beautiful setting.

Guests can walk in a sculpture park; read, play and picnic in a themed children’s area; and visit a peaceful cemetery that dates back nearly 200 years — all in an atmosphere that invites learning and reflection.

There is no fee to visit the Lay Center.

In addition, the center hosts academic fieldwork and tranquil retreats for the Saint Louis University community, and it is available for private events.
HENRY LAY SCULPTURE PARK

The sculpture park is surrounded by meadows, wooded rolling hills, lakes and streams. A well-maintained path takes guests on a five-mile, gravel walking trail that winds through a primarily oak-hickory forest, a historic cemetery and, of course, sculptures. Throughout the trail, signage has been posted to help guests identify the seasonal flora and fauna. This path is perfect for science class field trips.

STORY WOODS

A special part of the sculpture park is Story Woods, which invites guests to experience literature and artworks as various artists interpret them in natural settings. This children's area provides a place where imagination and learning can be stimulated through visual and tactile encounters.

MEET, LEARN, REFLECT

Lay Center offers a variety of spaces for reunions, classes, parties and retreats. The spacious auditorium provides seating for up to 75 people, while four smaller classrooms (two of which are laboratories) seat up to 20. The classrooms are perfect for science workshops and teacher enhancement training. In addition, Lay Center provides sleeping accommodations for up to 48 guests.

DINING

The cafeteria is available for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and can be used as a meeting space, with a seating capacity of more than 50. The kitchen is complete with all cooking amenities, and food service can be provided.

HISTORY

Saint Louis University’s Lay Center for Education and the Arts is located in historic Louisiana, Missouri. This Mississippi River town, founded in 1808 by French settlers, is known for its rolling landscapes, gracious historic homes and the state’s most intact Victorian streetscape.

John McElwee, a Revolutionary War hero, and his wife, Rhoda Black, first settled the land that is now Lay Center in 1832. McElwee and his 12 grandchildren are buried on the property in the McElwee-Stewart-Carr Cemetery.

Henry Anthony Lay (1941-2000), an alumnus of Saint Louis University School of Law, purchased the property in 1996. Lay’s generous support of the University has enabled hundreds of young people to further their quest for knowledge and improve themselves through education.

The Lay Center for Education and the Arts is the culmination of Henry Lay’s dream of establishing a place where literature and art are combined with the beauty of nature to stimulate learning and imagination.