

Students explore archaeology at Mission San Luis

By Kate Schofield
DEMOCRAT WRITER

"I have seen all the Indiana Jones movies and that really inspired me because he has done all the archaeology stuff, so I decided to come here to find out about archaeology," said 9-year-old, Holden Crumpler, a student at Holy Comforter Episcopal School.

Crumpler is one of a dozen campers at the junior archaeology camp held at Mission San Luis this summer.

This is the first year the archaeology camp has offered a session for 8- to 10-year-olds. It previously was offered only to 11- to 13-year-olds.

"We were thinking it was great for the older kids, why not have one for younger kids?" said Mission San Luis education supervisor Lindsay Skelly. "The younger kids are clearly interested — (the camp session) immediately filled up."

The campers spend the week with real archaeologists in a lab to gain insight into the profession.

"I am hoping that they will get a general overview of archaeology," Skelly said. "There is a lot of hands-on stuff."

The camp tries to do interactive activities to illustrate what archaeologists have to go through. During the week the campers made a pot, painted it, smashed it and then had to attempt to reconstruct it. This activity tried to demonstrate how difficult it can be to reconstruct artifacts.

"The kids were getting frustrated, because it's not as easy as it seems," Skelly said. "Normally, you don't find all the pieces."

Indiana Jones admirer Crumpler said it was trickier than he expected.

"I learned that putting pots together is very hard," Crumpler said.

The camp also takes the students on field trips to broaden their knowledge about artifacts. They went to Wakulla Springs and the Museum of Florida History. The camp tries to foster the campers' curiosity.

"We try to (put) them with the archaeologists, give them the in-lab experience," Skelly said. "The archaeologists are good; they let the kids touch everything. We make it as interactive as possible."

"I love looking at things from the past; it fascinates me," said 9-year-old Killearn Lakes Elementary student Allyson Collyer.

Eight-year-old Lauren Collins, a Hawks Rise Elementary student, liked the camp because it fueled her curiosity about archaeology.

"I hadn't learned about it and I wanted to know a couple things about it," she said. "I like to learn new things."

Registration for next year's Mission San Luis archaeology camp session will be available online at www.missionsanluis.org in January or February. Visit the site or call 245-6406.