

Neighbor

Comics

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Sandbox archeology

Stones and bones link kids to past

BY JESSICA CENTERS
Daily Herald Staff Writer

Twenty-one kids dug for fossils last week on the campus of Aurora University.

They didn't find any dinosaur bones in the sandbox or the baby pool they huddled around, but they did unearth a few bits of knowledge about archeology.

Fossils and other artifacts were hidden in the sand for the students in the Young Scholars' Stones and Bones class to dig up.

"It gives them some notion of the amount of care and time it takes to do field science," said Mary Kennedy, collections curator at the university's Schingoethe Center for Native American Cultures.

Kennedy hid glass beads, stone tools, teeth, pottery pieces and charcoal in the sand. The kids had to document everything they found, then figure out what their findings could mean.

Third-grader Kayleigh Hood of Naperville said she learned how important each individual job was digging, measuring and recording.

"We each took turns," said fourth-grader Ariel Campos of Naperville. "We treated the things we found with care because they're ancient remains and we didn't want them to get hurt."

Ann Butcher, director of the Young Scholars program, said the courses were started 15 years ago as a way for graduate students to put into practice what they had learned. Now the classes all are led by master-level teachers, she said.

Most of the students are enrolled in a gifted program, recommended by a teacher or show a great interest in the subject, Butcher said. The classes are mostly science-oriented, but some feature topics such as fine arts and language. Stones and Bones and Blood and Guts are two popular classes.

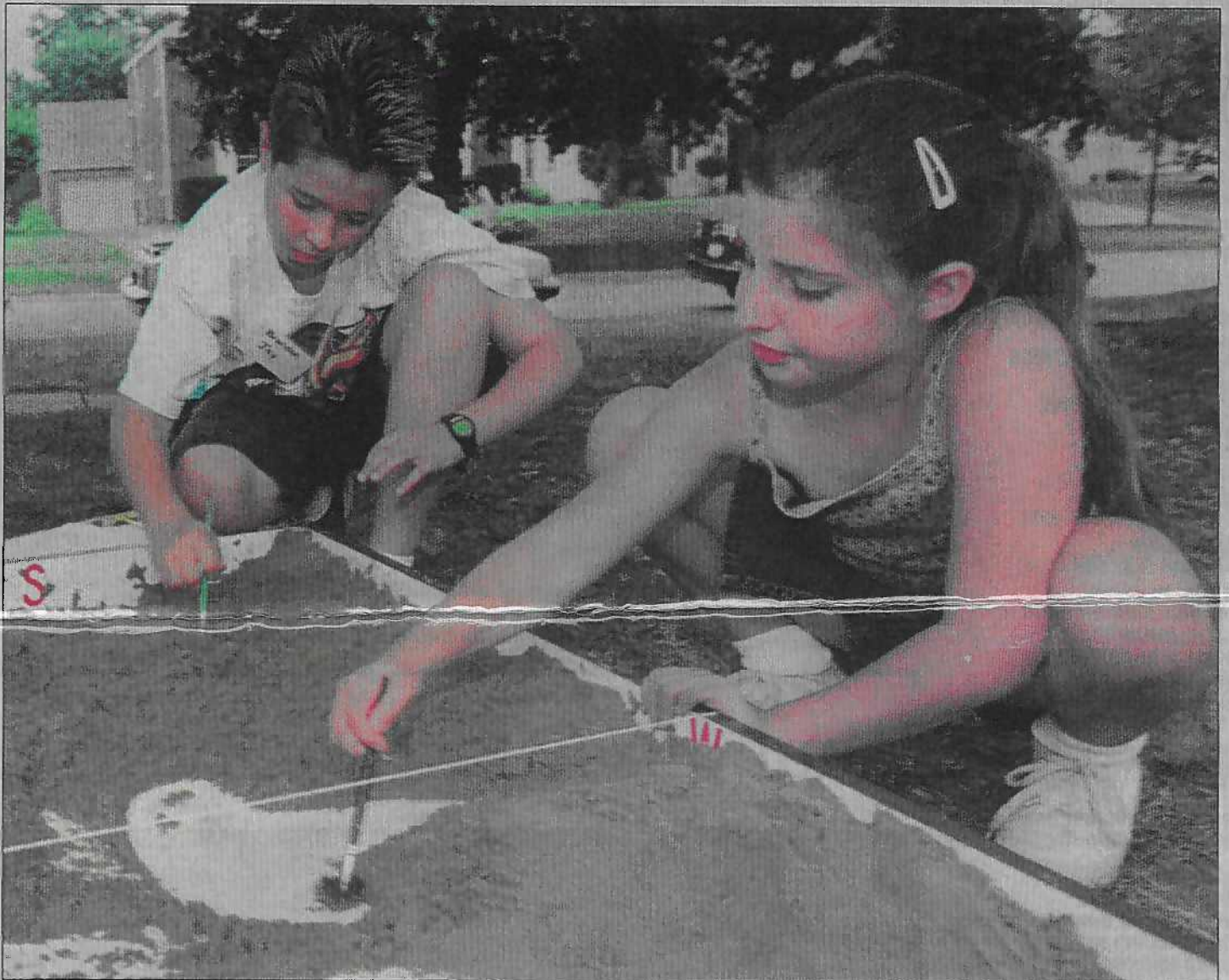
The kids sign up to be Young Scholars for both the social aspect and their desire to learn.

"I thought it would be really fun and it is so far," said Aurora third-grader Spencer Buyansky, who wants to be a doctor when he grows up.

Third-grader Emily Fagan of Aurora has been taking the Young Scholars Primary Pond class for a couple years. This is the first year she's taken Stones and Bones.

"I like learning about bones and stones and stuff, and meeting new friends," she said.

Stones and Bones teacher Jann Licandro of Naperville said the class emphasizes problem solving. The classes are of-



Aurora University's Young Scholars Program taught Brandon Jay, 10, of Batavia and Donna Janowski, 9, of St. Charles and others in the Stones and Bones class a little bit about archeology. At bottom left, Jann Licandro measures the spot where Jeremy Chew, 7, of Darien found an artifact and shows Soencer Buyansky, 7, of Aurora how to record it.

ferred because students are interested and are somewhat career-oriented.

The archeological dig last week was more than just fun, Licandro said. It was designed to show students there is more to archeology than just digging. The documentation and analysis are essential. Emily took that lesson away from the class. She said she learned it takes more than one person to do all the different jobs involved in artifact hunting.

The two-week Young Scholars Program, concluding today, has classes for a range of ages. Aurora University also offers a Saturday Scholars program in the fall. Most of the classes are based on science and technology, but there also is a

language class. For details, call (630) 844-3833.



Students of the Young Scholars program dig for artifacts during the archeological class, Stones and Bones, at Aurora University.

"We treated the things we found with care because they're ancient remains and we didn't want them to get hurt."

Ariel Campos