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## Education Section

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Michelle Wesley with Paige Academy students Rasheed Aminashaun, 6, and Khalif Yahya, 8, examines a Nubian chapel on a trip to "digNubia" at the Harriet Tubman House in the United South End Settlements.

# Digging archeology

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**A**rcheology and Nubia. The words summon images of shifting sands, distant lands, and exotic tombs.

But the designers of a new traveling exhibit want young students to know more than the words; they want them to experience firsthand the process of unearthing an extinct civilization.

"digNubia" — on display until June 28 at the Harriet Tubman House in the United South End Settlements — lets students explore an archeological dig meant to replicate real fieldwork in Meroe, Sudan.

"People view science as this hard, scary immutable thing," said Kristen Bjork, digNubia's project director. "The nice thing about archeology is that it's changing and you can meet hard science with history, and art history."

The exhibit begins in an empty hallway where students hear a voice on an intercom telling them they're on a plane to the desert. "We are making our final descent into the Sudan," the voice says.

Then, entering the exhibit room, they find a field tent



Five-year-old Cameron Rodericks examining tools at the exhibit.

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/WENDY MAEDA

complete with tinned food, notebooks open on a desk, field glasses — and even safari shirts and hats they can wear while they look around. Authentic tools, maps, and pictures of the site bring the students deeper into the experience. They can test their archeological skills by piecing together a life-size replica of an ancient Nubian chapel with foam "bricks" scattered on the site.

"It's a puzzle," said Jazmin Sauls, a 9-year-old student visiting from Paige Academy in Roxbury.

The exhibit features activities meant to teach students how to apply techniques used in archeological research. Students date pottery shards by comparing their patterns and shapes to a chart and determine heights and genders of ancient people using fragments of skeletons. "The queen is bigger than me," observed 6-year-old Kenae Power, of the Paige school. "I looked at the bone, measured the bone, typed in numbers, and that's how I learned how tall she is."

The program developers and sponsors say they particularly hope to draw children of color to the exhibit.

"Nubia is a sort of forgotten culture," Bjork said. "And it's

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## Ancient civilization brought back to life

forward to her students enlarging their knowledge of Nubian life and culture.

"I hope they learn more about Nubia: how to define the place, define the people, the artworks and the artifacts, and also have fun," she said.

Fun and learning seem to mesh at digNubia. Sauls walked from activity to activity in a large work shirt and canvas hat she'd found in the field tent.

"I'm an archeologist," she said. "I got to learn about new stuff. Nubia's a good place."

As the Paige students left the exhibit, 11-year-old Michael Re-free ruefully sighed. "I don't want to go back to America."

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a source of pride for many African-Americans."

Sandra Furey Gaither, the president of United South End Settlements, said, "It's important for members of the community to understand and learn about their own cultures. We want them to learn about the world and how it relates to them."

A detailed interactive Web site designed for children — [www.dignubia.org](http://www.dignubia.org) — enhances and expands on topics. A 30-minute videotape provides a glimpse into the reality of Meroe's fieldwork.

Althea Kugener, a teacher at Paige, says the exhibit is looking



Thaddeus Clark, 7, and Jazmin Sauls, 9, examining pottery shards at the "digNubia" exhibit at the Harriet Tubman House.

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