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Camp Fremont camper Dylan Clivio (center) finds a dinosaur fossil during a "Mad Science" fossil dig at Ellis School in Fremont on Tuesday. Mad Scientist Christine Latino (left) and camper Jesse Riel look on.

Photo by [Jackie Ricciardi](#)

Kids dig being 'Mad Scientists'

By EMILY QUIRK
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FREMONT -- Using tiny brushes and a "trowel," young paleontologists sweep the sand off the bones of Tyrantisaurus Rex.

This isn't an excavation scene in South America, it's a project at the Camp Fremont summer program at the Ellis School in Fremont this week. As part the themed "Mad Scientist" week campers learned about everything from dinosaurs to volcanoes.

On Tuesday, Christina Latino of the southern New Hampshire franchise of Mad Science, a leading science-enrichment organization offering unique hands-on experiments for children, visited Camp Fremont to enlist the help of budding paleontologists for her dinosaur research.

"Back at my Mad Science laboratories I'm doing a lot of research on dinosaurs and I need your help," Latino said. "They've (dinosaurs) left some cool things behind for us to study."

In two sessions the camp 15 children learned more they ever dreamed about dinosaurs. The learned that meat-eating dinosaurs are known as carnivores while plant eaters are called herbivores. The dinosaurs that eat both meat and plants are called omnivores. They also discovered that a T-Rex was 18-feet tall and had teeth that were as sharp as a knife and as much as eight inches long.

"Whoa, that's huge," the kids said in unison.

"All those dinosaur teeth are sharp," 6-year-old Dylan Clivio said.

After getting all the background on one of the biggest dinosaurs on earth, they made a plaster mold of a fossil. Latino showed the campers a "copy" of a large portion of a T-Rex tooth.

Using a cup full of sand, campers pressed the tooth into the sand to make an impression and Latino poured the plaster into the cup. About an hour later, the "copy" was made of a T-Rex tooth. Campers were given the teeth to take home and paint as they wished.

"This is neat," said Hayden Robinson, 8. "My parents will come to me and say 'you have a real dinosaur tooth?' And I'll say no, it's just a cast of one."

Latino said Mad Science does after-school programs, summer camps and birthday parties. "Learning about science is so important," she said. "It teaches kids important stuff in an engaging way."

After making their own tooth, campers got a chance to see what it's like to be a paleontologist. Latino provided each table of campers two Rubbermaid containers filled halfway with sand and brushes and spoons, which served as trowels. Buried in the sand were bones of a model T-Rex.

Campers used the brushes and trowels to dig up their finds. After finding all the pieces campers discussed the jaws, rib cages, feet, legs and arms they found on their dig.

"We don't know what dinosaur it is until we find all the pieces and put them together," said 9-year-old Zack Matthews. "I'm positive it's a T-Rex."

"They have been dead for millions of years and people are amazed by them because they are so big," said 10-year-old Rachel Bettencourt.

Camp Fremont director Jen Jaquith said "Mad Science" week is just one of the many theme weeks at the camp.

This past week campers built volcanoes, made rock candy, created soda geysers and soaked eggs in vinegar until they became rubber. Themes for the following weeks include Adventure Week with canoeing and rock climbing; Fitness "Fun"atic; It's a Jungle Out There; Beach Party Bingo; and Kooky Karnival.

For more information about Camp Fremont or to register for a week of the program call Town Hall at 895-8693 or e-mail Jaquith at missj1133@yahoo.com.

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