An ancient craft
Museum teaches Native American pottery

By REILINA MARCUS

Young people decorating pots and learning about the art of Native American pottery were the focus of a special event at the Museum of Natural Science on Saturday.

Thirteen kids showed up to make pottery in the same way as prehistoric Native Americans. They used tools such as a wooden paddle and clay to create their own pottery.

The ancient craft would have been used by early Native Americans, said Rachel Watson from the Louisiana Division of Archaeology.

These people were the first pottery makers and wore it as part of their clothing and used it to store food they grew, which was also a way of trade.

Like their prehistoric counterparts, the young people recreated their community and culture with their finished pottery.

They decorated pots with images of animals and plants, the teacher said.

Hamish Chen, a third-grader at LSU Lab School, made a bowl with a drawing of a bird on the front.

"I learned how to make pottery by looking at the shapes and sizes," Chen said.

Sydney Roberts, a fourth-grader at Southside Elementary, made a pencil holder. She decorated it by painting it across its surface.

"It took me a long time to do it," she said.

Sometimes the young people collapsed while sculpting their pottery, but they did not give up easily.

"They would have started teaching their children as early as kids when they were very small," Watson said.

After learning how Native Americans in Louisiana made bowls from clay, they went to the LSU Museum of Natural Science to learn about the pottery they had just made.

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