



## **Florida Citizens for Science**

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### ***Flagler teacher gets kids to dig archaeology in Belize***

By Brandon Haught @ 6:57 am. Filed under [Education](#)

"It was a rush going through there," said the Flagler Beach teen, recalling his trip deep inside a Belize cave, part of a summer archaeological program for local students. "Even if there wasn't any Mayan history inside, just being in the cave was amazing ... there were all kinds of formations."

The journey was a far cry from Bentley's earlier summer plans — landscaping homes around Flagler County to save up for college.

The journey into the cave — named Actun Tunichil Mucnal — was just a small fraction of the experiences Bentley and four classmates had on a two-week archaeology trip to Belize earlier this month. They also helped excavate centuries of history hidden underground.

Next year, Bentley's high school teacher, Mat Saunders, is hoping more students from local school districts will join the trip.

Flagler Palm Coast junior Amber Tetley, 16, said she learned practical things, like how to distinguish a rock from an artifact, and how to catalog the objects. Then there was the experience of uncovering pottery made more than 1,000 years ago, or seeing the tiny living space that was a Mayan home.

"Even in documentaries, it was nothing like being there in person," she said.

For Tetley and Bentley, it also solidified their interest in history and archaeology. Bentley plans to start at Stetson University this fall with a major in anthropology.

Bentley said one signal of his interest in the field came when he uncovered a religious tool called an obsidian bloodletter, made out of volcanic glass. He recognized it from a book he'd read because the tool was used for sacrificial ceremonies.

"I felt like I had a link with the past," he said. "When you find something, it really brings you in touch with what happened there."