

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **Stevens Point Journal**

[Back](#)

Educators hold forum with community members

By Shenandoah Sowash
Journal staff July 27, 2007

"There's a real disconnect between children and their communities. Today's children are a generation everywhere but nowhere," said Jeremy Solin, Wisconsin school forest education specialist.

Solin said despite endless access to the world through the Internet, a majority of America's children only experience the world through their computer monitors and televisions.

Educators and community leaders gathered for a forum Thursday at the downtown Stevens Point Farmers Market to discuss the importance of connecting students to their natural environments.

The forum was featured as part of a five-day course called Community-Based Education in Your School Forest, which emphasizes the use of school forests as assets to improving education across curriculum.

Twenty-five teachers are participating in the course and will leave with numerous resources to bring back to their classrooms.

"It's been a wonderful opportunity," said Stevens Point Area Senior High mathematics teacher and course participant Jill Reed. "While many of the teachers here are from the science fields, the material is very relevant to my teaching also."

Reed mentioned a hands-on exercise in which students would use mathematical reasoning to determine the number of sticks needed to make a log.

As part of the forum, course participants conducted interviews about community activism and environmentalism with local leaders including city council members, school board representatives, company presidents, farmers and university professors. When participants return to their classrooms, they will have their students conduct similar interviews with community leaders.

After the interviews ended, participants gathered to discuss what they had learned and to find overlap and connection between various interviewees' opinions. Many emphasized critical issues, such as water, budget cuts and locally grown food.



[buy photo](#) [zoom](#)

Jasia Steinmetz from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, right, talks with Steve Gustafson from Glidden and Tracy Cassidy from Armstrong Creek on Thursday at a community forum. *THOMAS KUJAWSKI/STEVENS POINT JOURNAL*

Advertisement

"We're asking you to make a relationship with your community," Hylla said.