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Nicole Antonucci/Recorder staff Jenny Buccos, owner and founder of Project Explorer, speaks to

wallcandy arts

the sixth grade class at the Fonda-Fultonville

Middle School Thursday.

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F-FCS students explore issues on a global scale

Friday, June 13, 2014 - Updated: 9:27 AM

BY NICOLE ANTONUCCI

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FONDA -- For the past three weeks, sixth-grade students at the Fonda-Fultonville Middle School have been meeting to discuss global issues that affect them right at home, as part of an enrichment program called Project Explorer.

The program is led by ProjectExplorer.org founder and FFCS graduate Jenny Buccos, who travels the world to make educational videos for students on topics that range from environmental protection to the cost of importing food from other countries.

"The goal is to make sure that students grow up more globally aware," Buccos said. "Even if they don't have the ability to travel, they grow up with some understanding of the world."

Thursday's lesson began with a short video on transportation in Thailand but evolved into a discussion about the science of fossil fuels and how much it takes to fill up a midsized car. The lesson also involved a discussion about alternative energy sources such as wind energy.

Fifteen empty 1-gallon water containers were placed at the feet of the students to represent the average amount of fuel it takes to fill up a midsized car. The students were then asked a variety of questions including how many cars each student had in their family and how many miles an average car travels on a tank of gas.

The students also discussed how much fuel is used to power their homes and other facilities which then led to a discussion about alternative energy sources such as wind energy that can be used to supply electricity.

To put it in some perspective, the students were asked what they would do if the supply of oil ever ran out. This seemed to surprise some of the students.

"I never thought we could run out of oil," said Elizabeth Anderson of Fultonville.

For a take-home assignment, students were asked to do an assessment of the type of car they have and how much fuel they are consuming as a family. They were also asked to do an energy assessment of their house and find all the things that require nonrenewable energy sources.

Even with homework, the students were excited about the discussion as well as what they learned about Thailand.

"I didn't know a lot of things," Dylan Livingston of Fultonville said. "It was really interesting."

Livingston particularly like learning about the Tuk Tuk, a type of rickshaw used in Thailand, and said we should have them

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here.

Ryan Courtney of Fonda planned to talk to his parents about using renewable energy, such as solar panels.

"Today got me thinking that we should use more reliable resources," Courtney said.

The students said they enjoyed the Project Explorer program and would advise their friends to go on the website to watch the videos.

"It's interesting and you can learn a lot," Anderson said. "People should know about the world."

English and Language Arts teacher Laura Hayes-Bowles said the program is beneficial to the students because it gives them a chance to learn about things they may not learn in the classroom.

"We don't spend a lot of time on world culture," Hayes-Bowles said, adding that the program also spans multiple subjects including history, math and science. "I particularly like the connections of humans affecting the environment."

Project Explorer is a four-week program that is only provided to the sixth-grade students. Hayes-Bowles said the program was an effort to provide additional enrichment activities to the students.



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