A
n Argentinian farmer, a Middle East ambassador, a Kenyan parliamentarian, and an American high school student: What could they all have in common?

It’s hard to conceive what would bring this diverse group together. But imagine the interactions that could take place when 1,200 people like these—dreamers, policymakers, and hands-on practitioners from 60 nations—intentionally gather. And when such a gathering focuses on agriculture and other STEM fields? With that, you have the World Food Prize.

Each October in Des Moines, IA, science, education, business, and political leaders honor the new World Food Prize laureate—or laureates. Norman Borlaug, the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and “Father of the Green Revolution,” established the World Food Prize in 1986. His aim was to establish it as the Nobel Prize equivalent for food and agriculture. The World Food Prize Foundation, a public–private partnership, ensures this legacy 30 years later.

Although Borlaug passed away in 2009, his ghost is everywhere during the Borlaug Dialogue encompassing the World Food Prize. His image is on banners lining the streets of Des Moines and in the genetics passed to the Borlaug family in attendance. Throughout, Borlaug’s words are invoked: “Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world. If you desire peace, cultivate justice, but at the same time, cultivate the fields to produce more bread; otherwise, there will be no peace.” And over and over again, “Take it to the farmer.”

Training the Next Generation of Great Thinkers

Borlaug’s spirit also permeates the outreach aspects of the week, inspiring and welcoming the next generation of great thinkers. Nearly 400 high school students attend the concurrent Global Youth Institute to address future food security. These students join the larger symposium for lunch and dinner.

Membership

World Food Prize Inspires ‘Gray Matter’ to End Hunger

by Martha Pings

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