

## **“Iowa Peace Heroes - Fighting Hunger” Excerpt from *The Goldfinch*, September 1991**

### **Fighting Hunger**

When Dr. Norman Borlaug (BORE-log) helped feed hungry people, he worked for a more peaceful world. Born in 1914, Borlaug was raised on a farm near the small town of Cresco, Iowa. In college, he decided to become an expert in plant diseases. He wanted to improve the lives of poor farmers by making their crops more resistant to diseases.

In 1944, Borlaug went to Mexico. There he found many farm plants and animals suffering from disease and insect damage. Mexican farms provided their people with only a fraction of the food U.S. farms produced. Most Mexican farmers, for example, produced only 11 bushels of wheat per acre compared to 17 bushels of wheat in the U.S. For 20 years, Borlaug developed a special kind of wheat to increase production on Mexican farms. His goal: “To help put bread in the bellies of hungry Mexicans.”

By breeding different varieties of wheat, including one from Japan, Borlaug succeeded in developing wheat that could resist rust disease and produce 105 bushels per acre. Borlaug developed his special variety of wheat with the help of scientists from around the world. In 1970, Dr. Norman Borlaug received the Nobel Peace Prize. People wondered why he received that prize, rather than one of the Nobel science prizes. Through his lifelong fight against world hunger, Borlaug truly worked for peace.