

## “World Futures Day – what it meant to me”

4 takeaways from our big day

We asked a handful of our 2024 *World Futures Day* attendees what they thought of the event, what they took away from it, how it might be important to them in the following months... Here are a few snippets of what we heard:

**Jane Benson**, owner of Main Jane Designs and recent graduate of Strategic Foresight training, calls herself “a political activist.” She told us *World Futures Day* was full of fascinating attendees and thoughtful perspectives. “The keynote speaker, John Smart, challenged our thinking about artificial intelligence. Yes, it’s scary and it unleashes *amazing* opportunities. It’s here now, and we need to be part of determining how we will establish guardrails for it. And we need to ‘envision’ (with imagination!) what it *can* do for our work settings, schools, politics and our personal lives. It was a great morning!”



*Jane meets a new friend at World Futures Day*

**Fr. Paul Demuth**, a Green Bay Diocese senior priest, is a member of the Envision Board of Directors. Concerned with the morality of AI, he alerted us to a resource on that topic: “As a follow-up to *World Futures Day*, the recent article in *America Magazine* takes up the question of morality in the use of AI, particularly in reference to war. Our speaker consistently told us that AI was like a young child whose wisdom and conscience have not yet been formed. He suggested that such work is the task of our time. This is a good article in reference to that work”: [All is Fair in AI Warfare, but what do Christian Ethics Have to Say?](#)

**John Katers**, Dean of the College of Science, Engineering, and Technology at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay, is a former Envision board member. He noted that “the look into the future provided by John Smart evoked a range of emotions, particularly given the rate of change that is currently taking place in STEEPS.\* However, after being in higher education for nearly 30 years, I share his optimism about the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, and advocates.”

\*STEEPS = Society, Technology, Economics, Environment and Politics.



*Dinner with John Smart prior to World Futures Day*

**Beverly French**, retired Orde Advertising partner and an Envision board member, sat with a table of women ranging in age from 25 to 75. After the event, she lunched with them and made note of their collective responses, which she shared with us. “What a treat, learning from John Smart! My group focused on the issues of age and politics. We were intrigued with the ability of AI to diagnose chronic disease ten years earlier than today’s diagnoses. We noted AI’s likely influence on water quality and electric power, but we did have some questions about its application to literature. While we saw the need for appropriate guardrails for AI, we also saw how it could help us grow community partnership. Smart gave us eye-opening stats on the demography of our area, which made us hope people will ‘wake up.’ We see that diversity is not always encouraged, and some folks are actually going backward.

“What did my group of ladies think needs to change in the future? We see media as a ‘dumb doorway.’ We have to get people interested in critical issues. And we need to raise children to feel supported. And, of course, we need to promote thinking about equity and equality and encourage diversity. Our community needs more day care for children, more elder care, and better wages for those caregivers. We simply need to take better care of our young and our old. And, finally, we wonder: Are we preparing our children to be curious and ready?”