



For Immediate Release

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Golden Gander Club Builds on a Legacy of Community Giving
New men's giving group aims to pool resources and support projects that benefit the entire community

OSKALOOSA, Iowa — The idea started with a simple question at a potluck dinner at the YMCA last fall.

After members of the Golden Goose Club, an all-ladies giving group, shared how their giving model had supported projects across Oskaloosa and Mahaska County, someone sitting next to Bill Ludwick asked why there was not a similar group for men.

Ludwick, now president of the Oskaloosa Golden Gander Club, first brushed off the comment. Then it stayed with him.

"I just kind of passed it off, but later I got thinking about it, and I thought, 'Well, yeah, why not?'" Ludwick said.

That question has grown into the Golden Gander Club, a new community giving group organized under the umbrella of the Golden Goose Club. The group is modeled after the Golden Goose approach, which has operated for just over 10 years and awarded more than \$615,000 in grants to support community projects.

The Golden Gander Club is still in its early stages, but organizers say the purpose is already clear: to gather people who want to contribute financially and direct those resources toward projects that benefit the broader community.

Ludwick said the model appealed to him because it was practical, simple, and focused on service.

"It just seems like such a good service to the community," Ludwick said.

The club will not be designed around one annual project, one sponsoring organization, or one narrow cause. Instead, organizers expect local groups and entities to bring funding requests to the Golden Gander Club. Members will then consider whether those requests meet the club's purpose.

"The projects that we would approve to fund would be ones that serve the whole community, not just a particular club or organization," Ludwick said. "We're open to almost anything along those lines."

Joe Ryan, vice president and secretary of the Golden Gander Club, said that communitywide focus is the heart of the effort.

“What we are looking for is organizations that are interested in seeking funds that will enhance the community, not just one group, but the entire community,” Ryan said.

For Ryan, the new club is not meant to compete with other service organizations or replace the work already happening in Oskaloosa. It fills a different role. Other civic groups often identify projects and organize volunteer efforts. The Golden Gander Club is being built as a funding source for ideas brought forward by others.

Ludwick said that distinction is important.

“The Golden Ganders wouldn’t necessarily go out looking for projects where other service organizations might,” Ludwick said. “We ultimately hope that people come to us requesting funding.”

The idea began after a Golden Goose presentation at the YMCA. Ludwick knew the effort would take more than one person, so he reached out to Ryan, whom he knew through the YMCA. Ed Sullivan later joined the organizing effort.

“These two guys have really been instrumental in getting this thing off the ground,” Ludwick said.

The group held an initial meeting at the end of May. Ryan said the club already has about 25 members and has raised more than \$5,000 before holding its first meeting with potential grant applicants. The group meets quarterly.

Membership is designed to be straightforward. Members complete a form and pay annual dues. The regular annual contribution will be \$400, which members may pay in a single payment or in quarterly payments of \$100. Because the group started in the second quarter of 2026, this year’s dues are prorated to \$300, plus a \$10 a year contribution to cover administrative expenses.

There are no immediate volunteer requirements, Ryan said, though members may eventually be asked to help review funding requests when questions arise about whether a project meets the club’s criteria.

The structure mirrors the Golden Goose Club, which Ryan said has built a strong record of impact in Oskaloosa and Mahaska County.

“The Golden Goose Club has for 10 years had a big impact in our community,” Ryan said.

Ryan said the Golden Gander Club hopes to grow steadily by building on personal connections. Once the initial group is established, organizers hope members will invite others to take part.

“Everybody knows somebody that might be interested,” Ryan said.

That word-of-mouth response has already encouraged Ludwick. He said he has not spoken with anyone who dismissed the idea.

"I haven't talked to anyone, yet that hasn't said, 'Hey, that's great, count me in,'" Ludwick said.

For now, organizers are focused on building membership, developing a website, and preparing for the first round of community conversations about potential funding requests. Ludwick said the larger goal is simple: bring people together, pool resources, and add another source of support for ideas that make Oskaloosa stronger.

"It's just a group of community-minded people that can put their resources together and make a difference," Ludwick said.

Ryan said the long-term hope is that the Golden Gander Club can grow to match the Golden Goose Club's level of giving, effectively increasing the community's ability to support projects that might otherwise wait for funding or never happen at all.

For Ludwick, the effort still comes back to that first question at the YMCA. Why not?

If enough people answer it by joining, the Golden Gander Club could become another way Oskaloosa residents quietly turn shared generosity into visible community improvements.

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About the Golden Gander Club

The Golden Gander Club is a 501(c) (3) men's organization based in Mahaska County, dedicated to making a positive impact on its community. Established in 2026, the Golden Gander Club is under the umbrella of the Golden Goose Club. They exist to fund projects and are a driving force for community betterment.

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For more information, contact:

Golden Gander Club
Bill Ludwick, President
wludwick2@gmail.com
641-660-3442