

**“MARCH MEMBERSHIP MANIA” PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL,
AMES GOLDEN K KIWANIS CLUB
by Larry Trede and Bob Sperry, Membership Co-Chairs**

Our Kiwanis Club, Ames Golden K Kiwanis Club, suffered a loss of membership due to the pandemic and normal attrition caused by a lack of interest/attendance and death of members. As we into the post-pandemic era, we felt that we needed to re-vitalize the pre-pandemic interest and enthusiasm of our club to the Kiwanis mission and put us on a path of membership growth and retention.

We had heard about Brad Boyd’s presentation, “Building Blocks for Virtual Success: Moving Forward in Age of Uncertainty” and after viewing it, we were impressed with the content and ideas presented. In late September 2021, Brad shared virtually (via ZOOM) his presentation with our club members who were equally impressed. Likewise, we felt that we needed to hear from a sociologist about the impact of the pandemic on the ‘American culture and social institutions’ including service clubs. Dr. Paul Lasley, retired Professor of Sociology, Iowa State University, had spoken to our club many times in the past and agreed to speak again on the societal and cultural impacts of COVID. We then started brainstorming, defining, and refining program components and topics, identifying potential speakers, and developing a timeline for program delivery. Our comprehensive program, **“March Membership Mania”** was presented to the club’s Board of Directors for review and approval with program delivery to coincide with the annual popular and exciting ‘March Madness’ theme. All program speakers including testimonials from club members were scheduled over a 5-week period from February 24 - March 31, 2022.

Several of the program topics were remarkably successful. Dr. Lasley highlighted the Kiwanis mission ‘serving the children of the world’ to alleviate some of the societal and cultural impacts of the COVID era with the goal of fostering a better understanding and ensuring a healthy future for children to prosper.

Gary Wattnum, District Membership Committee Chair, and Don Fritz, District Governor, both spoke to club members offering ideas, suggestions, encouragement, and inspiration. Jody Melcher, Division 11 Lt.Gov. attended and participated in all club meetings and spoke at the concluding meeting reflecting upon her Kiwanis experience and relationships. She also inducted “prospects” as new members at the conclusion of the project.

The **“Magnificent Kiwanian”** retention portion of the plan was extremely popular and quickly instituted by developing an information form and having members fill out information about themselves. Club members then guessed the identity of their peers. Winners received a ‘packet of M&Ms’ which became the trademark of our program! The Magnificent Kiwanian will continue until we have covered our entire membership.

At the outset of our program, a competitive ‘contest game’ was set up dividing the club into two teams: namely, Redbirds and Goldfinches. Teams would compete to see which one would be the most successful in recruiting new members. The Board of Directors provided \$750 to the first-place team (Goldfinches) for a donation to the ‘charity of their choice’ and \$250 to the second-place team (Redbirds) for their charity of choice. Charities needed to be one of the 17 charities in our Charity Donation Program. Winning charities were **Ames Boys’ and Girls’ Club (\$750) and Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance Program (\$250)**

The **“Membership Recruitment”** portion of the program also has been phenomenally successful. Over the course of the program (5 club meetings), 13 different spouses attended one or more of the meetings, 10 additional first-time visitors attended one or more meetings. **Best of all, 15 new members have decided to ‘belong’ to our club, and 3 additional ‘great’ prospects still being recruited.**

Pictured below are the 11 individuals who have decided to 'belong' to our club as a result of our effort. Prior to the beginning of the program 4 person had decided to 'belong' making a total of 15 new members since October 1, 2021. **These 15 members are providing 30 "hands for more service and fundraising for the Ames Golden K Kiwane Club."**

In summary, "March Membership Mania" built a strong cornerstone from which our club can continue to grow and flourish. Likewise, the program laid the framework for making membership recruitment and retention an on-going and continual process with support and commitment from all club members!! Program details are available from Larry Trede, larrytrede@gmail.com or Bob Sperry (rsperry58@gmail.com).



(l to r): Jeff Witt, Judy Peter, Lynn Dreyer, Lana Hood, David Splatt, Dean Ulrichson



(l to r): Don Skinner, Howard Shepherd, "Lit" Litwiller



Bob Larson



Keith Peterson