

Cards for a Cause

Your Charity Foundation at work



Nancy Strohmmer

ACBL Charity Foundation President Nancy Strohmmer and the American Contract Bridge League are being honored by the Greater Houston Women's Chamber of Commerce at its annual convention in August.

"We are excited to recognize the ACBL Charity Foundation for generously

supporting the advancement and empowerment of women and girls," says Suzan Deison, GHWCC chief executive officer, president and founder. "We are especially honored to recognize Nancy for her support and leadership."

The ACBL Charity Foundation recently approved a \$10,000 grant to support three of the chamber's development programs for underserved girls and professional women.

"We will be awarding our scholarships at the conference, and our STEAM Town USA students will be there as well," says Deison. "This grant money helps fund these initiatives, so we want Nancy and the ACBL to be a part of the scholarship presentation. Together, we are changing the trajectory of these students' lives."

With a mile-long resume of volunteerism and community accomplishments in Houston that stretches back almost 40 years, Strohmmer brings a strong service and organizational ethic to the bridge community. "For me," Strohmmer says, "the ACBL offers the perfect marriage: I get to play bridge and work toward charitable causes."

The ACBL Charity Foundation – the giving arm of the ACBL – seeks to improve the quality of life in members' communities by supporting non-bridge related, 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Strohmmer calls the Charity Foundation "the ACBL's best-kept secret," and that is something she's determined to change by more aggressively marketing the Foundation and grant application information.

Strohmmer says that any ACBL member may submit a request for grant funding on behalf of an organization. "Any member," she emphasizes. "We extend grants to animal, arts, cultural, humanity, education, environmental, health and human services organizations. The trustees are volunteers committed to providing funds to those organizations that are important to the ACBL membership."

BY SUE MUNDAY



By playing in charity games at clubs, members have supported causes as

varied as autism centers, food pantries, senior health care, ALS, equine-assisted therapy and laptop computers for schools in Kampala, Uganda and Tanzania.

"Our rules do not allow us to donate to any bridge-related entity," Strohmmer explains. "Those entities are under the umbrella of the ACBL Educational Foundation."

To respond to the needs of local and regional charities, the Charity Foundation distributes grant money to districts on a rotating basis. In 2020, Districts 5, 6, 9, 13 and 23 each receive \$30,000 to distribute. Trustees have set aside a separate fund for disaster relief. In the past, substantial contributions were made in the wake of hurricanes Irma, Harvey and Maria in 2017, the California wildfires in 2017 and 2019 and the earthquake in Mexico in 2017.

"I want us to be able to reach more areas," Strohmmer says. "We have finalized criteria on which to base our funding decisions, and we don't give money just to give it. But I feel we get so few requests, and only from a handful of districts in the know about the Foundation's work. We want everyone to be in the know."

Foundation trustees meet twice a year – in the spring and in the fall – to decide funding allocations. The deadline for submissions to be considered at the trustees' November 2020 meeting is Oct. 1. For more information, including a grant application form, go to acbl.org/charityfoundation.

Bridge Bulletin Online

One of the most commonly asked questions from members is how to read the online version of the Bridge Bulletin.

Active members have access to the MyACBL portal, located at the top of the ACBL's homepage at acbl.org. After registering and setting up a password, members can view all types of special content, including the Bridge Bulletin. Simply click on the large orange link to see the current issue of the magazine.

Looking for back issues? After loading the current issue, you may navigate to older issues using the Archive option. All issues are available through January 2005.

Looking for a particular article? The Search function allows you to explore the entire online library.