



Bridge - The Game That Gives Back

National Institute of Canine Service and Training Receives ACBL Charity Foundation NABC \$5000 Donation

The ACBL Charity Foundation made a \$5000 donation to the National Institute of Canine Service and Training, a local organization that trains medical and wellness service dogs.

Mark Ruefenacht founded Dogs4Diabetics, a precursor to NICST, in 2004. “We were the first organization in the world to produce a dog that could smell the biochemical changes of low or high blood sugar in advance of any medical device,” Ruefenacht said. “In 21 years we have provided 250 dogs to type 1 diabetics.”

They also provide dogs trained to support first responders dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Concord CA-based organization builds a community of support for the people who receive their dogs. “Our slogan is ‘Never walk alone’ in your disability,” Ruefenacht said. “You’ve got not just a service dog but the community with you.”

Tournament Chair Anne Hollingsworth said the San Francisco host committee chose NICST because they were looking for something that might impact bridge players, and many older people are diabetic. Julie Burnett, a bridge player who volunteers for NICST, brought the organization to the committee’s attention.

“They’re a small organization with a big impact,” Hollingsworth said. “The money would have more of an impact” than at a larger charity.



The ACBL Charity Foundation and local NABC Committee present a \$5000 check to the National Institute of Canine Service and Training. From left: Anne Hollingsworth, tournament chair; Mark Ruefenacht, president of NICST; Kathy Kimmerling, secretary of the Charity Foundation; and Jane McLaughlin, charity chair of the host committee.