



HOUSTON HOSPICE  
*Life Matters*

**For Immediate Release**

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**Army Veteran, Burn Survivor J.R. Martinez Joins 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spirit Award Dinner  
Benefiting Houston Hospice**

HOUSTON - Houston Hospice today announced that J.R. Martinez will be the featured speaker for this year's Spirit Award Dinner. The 23rd annual celebration is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2021, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the River Oaks Country Club, 1600 River Oaks Blvd., Houston, Texas.

J.R. Martinez is an Army veteran, burn survivor, actor, motivational speaker, New York Times best-selling author and Dancing with the Stars season 13 winner. As this year's featured speaker, the world traveler will share his remarkable journey through life's battles with dinner guests from all walks of life. As an added bonus to employees and volunteers, J.R. will speak during a private breakfast at the United Way of Greater Houston as part of the Houston Hospice Wellness Initiative, the following morning.

"J.R. Martinez is an amazing human being," said Aida Matic, Vice President of Development and Community Engagement, Houston Hospice. "His message of courage, resilience, and triumph has been received throughout the world and reminds us to take time for self-care and rejuvenation as we continue to heal from our own personal challenges as well as the effects of COVID-19," continued Matic.



"As a U.S. Army veteran, J.R. comes at a momentous time for our organization," said Matic. "Houston Hospice has reached Level 5 of We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, and in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. At the highest level of this program, Houston Hospice is dedicated to Veteran-centric education, advocacy and mentorship in our 13-county service area and beyond."

The Houston Hospice Spirit Award Dinner is an evening filled with gratitude for local business and civic leaders who have made positive contributions across Greater Houston. This year's Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award will be presented to Native Houstonian Rose Cullen in recognition for her lifelong dedication towards a wide range of charitable causes.

"It is our privilege to honor Philanthropist Rose Cullen with the Laura Lee Blanton Community Spirit Award," said Rana McClelland, President & CEO, Houston Hospice. "Her exceptional leadership and compassion for vulnerable people make her an excellent choice as this year's award recipient."

For more information, please visit [www.houstonhospice.org/SpiritAwardDinner2021](http://www.houstonhospice.org/SpiritAwardDinner2021)

**About Houston Hospice**

Houston Hospice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides uncompromising, compassionate, end-of-life care to all patients and families across 13 counties in the Greater Houston Area. Established in 1980, we are the oldest, largest, independent, nonprofit hospice in Houston and a member of the Texas Medical Center.

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