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INDUSTRY LEADERS TO BE PRESENTED WITH THE TORCH, HUMANITARIAN SPOTLIGHT AND BEACON AWARDS AT THE WESTERN FOODSERVICE & HOSPITALITY EXPO

Registration Now Open for Tradeshow and Conference to be held August 28-30 in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, CA, June 13, 2022 – Chef Jet Tila, non-profit Restaurants Care, and food-tech leader Jennifer Stojkovic will join a list of prestigious icons when they are recognized at the [Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo](#), August 28-30 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The Torch Award will be presented to **Jet Tila**, internationally celebrated chef, Emmy and James Beard nominee and best-selling author. The Humanitarian Spotlight Award will be presented to **Restaurants Care**, a non-profit that provides financial relief year-round to food + beverage workers across California. The Beacon Award will be presented to **Jennifer Stojkovic**, founder of Vegan Women Summit (VWS) and author of *The Future of Food is Female*.

Jet joins a list of prestigious past **Torch Award** winners, including Chef Marcus Samuelsson, Chef Roy Choi, American Iron Chef Geoffrey Zakarian, CEO Danny Meyer, Chef Curtis Stone, Restaurant Owner Drew Nieporent, Chef Thomas Keller, Chef Norman Van Aken, and others. The Humanitarian Spotlight Award was created in 2022 and **Restaurants Care** joins philanthropist Nate Mook, CEO of World Central Kitchen (WCK) who was honored in March at the International Restaurant & Foodservice Show of New York. Jennifer joins past **Beacon Award** winners including Jilly Stephens, CEO, City Harvest; Kelly Valade, President, Chili's Grill & Bar; Sara Moulton, Chef, Cookbook Author and TV Personality; and many others.

"We congratulate these three leaders and look forward to honoring them with our prestigious awards. Each of the award winners has had a significant and positive impact on our industry we invite our attendees to make plans to join us at Center Stage to hear their remarkable stories," said Rita Ugianskis, Vice President, Clarion Events Food & Beverage Group. "In addition to the Torch, Humanitarian Spotlight and Beacon Award presentations will also be featuring a keynote discussion with NBA Veteran Scottie Pippen and Napa Wine Legend Dave Phinney, as well as several culinary demonstrations, and cooking and beverage competitions."



The Torch Award honors talented chefs and/or restaurateurs for the brilliance of their careers and the impact they have had on the industry and their surrounding community. From battling the legendary Masaharu Morimoto on Iron Chef America, opening Encore Hotel in Las Vegas and guiding Anthony Bourdain through many markets and restaurants, **Chef Jet Tila** grew up in the first family of Thai food and then later attending both French and Japanese culinary schools, Jet is a born educator and storyteller. Jet was appointed as the inaugural Culinary Ambassador of Thai Cuisine by the Royal Thai Consulate,

the first-ever chef to represent his country's culture and cuisine. Chef Jet's culinary operations includes VP Culinary of Pei Wei Group 148 restaurants & Managing Partner Dragon Tiger Noodle Co in Las Vegas. He has partnerships with Compass Group, Schwan's & NBC

Universal/DreamWorks. His food reaches millions of people a year. The Torch Award will be presented on Sunday, August 28 at 12:30 pm on Center Stage. Following the presentation, Chef Jet will do a culinary demonstration and sign copies of his new book *101 Thai Dishes You Need to Cook Before You Die*. For information on the Torch Award, [click here](#).

The brand-new **Humanitarian Spotlight Award** was created to recognize a company or individual who exemplifies philanthropy and gives back to the foodservice and hospitality industries. This award will be presented to Restaurants Care, a relief fund for California food and beverage workers operated by the California Restaurant Foundation, a nonprofit organization serving the people at the heart of restaurants since 1981. For the last five years, Restaurants Care has been providing stability grants to those in our community facing injury, illness, natural disaster, housing disaster, or death in the family. They have been a life-line to 1,829 food and beverage workers and their families. The goal of these relief grants is to keep people stable as they find their footing again. Grants of up to \$2,500 keep people in their homes, keep food on the table, and keep families together as they work through a crisis. Following the award presentation, taking place on Monday, August 29 at 12:30 pm, Restaurants Care presents an enlightening panel on why supporting our restaurant community is vital to our success.



The **Beacon Award** recognizes female leaders who have truly served as a Beacon in the industry through their leadership, contributions, and inspiration. This year's Beacon Award recipient, **Jennifer Stojkovic** is a food-tech leader, founder of Vegan Women Summit (VWS), and author of *The Future of Food is Female*. In 2020, Jennifer founded Vegan Women Summit (VWS), a global media and events platform focused on empowering women to build a kinder, more sustainable world. VWS produces The Vegan Women Summit flagship conference, VWS Pathfinder, the world's only pitch competition for women founders in the plant-based and animal-free industry, and VWS Connect, the industry's food-tech job networking series. Since inception, VWS Pathfinder has reached over 1,000 women founders across 31 countries, while VWS Connect has connected over 2,000 jobseekers with major employers in the industry including, Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, and Miyoko's. The VWS community reaches over 40,000 women professionals across six continents, including founders, investors, executives, and industry advocates. The Beacon award will be presented on Monday, August 29th at 1:30 pm on Center Stage. For details on the Beacon Award, [click here](#).



From Sunday, August 28 through Tuesday, August 30 the [Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo](#) and [Coffee Fest Los Angeles](#) will showcase hundreds of leading vendors, at the Los Angeles Convention Center, demonstrating and sampling the newest food products, technology and equipment for the restaurant, foodservice, specialty beverage and hospitality markets. In addition to the show floor attendees will have access to the brand-new Food & Beverage Academy, offering program tracks for all segments of the industry – from independent owners to chains to specialty coffee and tea. Registration is now open at www.westernfoodexpo.com with early bird rates available until July 26th.

The [Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo](#) is owned by [Clarion Events Food & Beverage Group](#) and sponsored by the [California Restaurant Association](#). **Clarion Events** (us.clarionevents.com) produces 37 events across thirteen sectors of both trade and consumer events. The Clarion Events Food & Beverage Group also includes the [Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show](#), [the International Restaurant & Foodservice Show of New York](#), [Coffee Fest](#) and [The NGA Show](#). Clarion Events acquired PennWell in early 2018, bringing 4 Tradeshow 200 events into the U.S. portfolio and supercharging the already rapid growth. Clarion Events has offices in Trumbull, CT; Kennesaw, GA; Boca Raton, FL; Tacoma, WA, and Fairlawn, NJ.