

AZ Insider: Dancing with Stars Champ in Phoenix

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket



Kathy Shayna Shocket has the inside scoop on the social scene and celebrities.

How JR Martinez captured partygoers hearts at a Phoenix holiday party.

JR Martinez not only set the bar on the dance floor, winning season 13 of "*Dancing with the Stars*," but he also opened up new doors in Hollywood landing a role on ABC's "*All My Children*."

He's overcome unimaginable obstacles since he was severely burned in Iraq. While serving in the Army there, his Humvee hit a land mine. Now, the motivational speaker is a role model and helps support fellow burn survivors.

His appearance in Phoenix at the "Holiday Festival of Trees" was nothing short of inspirational. The fancy annual gala benefits the Arizona Burn Foundation and JR captured partygoers hearts.

Also in the spotlight at this dinner dance were the 11 spectacular Christmas trees in the live auction. The trees which were donated and very creatively decorated by local designers in a wide variety of themes fetched a total of \$100,000 in the auction. And by the way.. the holiday celebration continued the next day when local fire fighters delivered the huge trees on their fire trucks to the highest bidders.



(J.R. Martinez with Navaz Ghaswala, Rex Maughan and Ruth Maughan)

The 12ft. tree donated by Forever Living Products sold for \$21,000. **Diane Caruso**, chief nursing officer at HealthSouth chaired the impressive gala of about 550 guests. Her husband is the respected **Dr. Dan Caruso**, chief of Burn Services and chair of surgery at the Arizona Burn Center at Maricopa Medical Center.



"Watching the many volunteers give from their heart to literally "build" this event from start to finish was awe inspiring," says Diane. "The story JR Martinez shared was uplifting and full of hope, and his interaction with our guests throughout the night was a highlight of the event," she adds.

The Arizona Burn Foundation raises critical funds for the Arizona Children's Burn Camp "Camp Courage", the Forever Courage House family shelter as well as its many outreach/prevention programs such as state-wide smoke alarm walks.



Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance **Reporter, Photographer and TV Field Producer based in Phoenix**. She has written and reported for prestigious publications such as **TIME** magazine, **PEOPLE** magazine, **MONEY** magazine, the **Hollywood Reporter** and the **New York Times**. You can reach her at redkarpetgirl@aol.com