

Beat: Politics

Chef Jose Andres and the WCK, Princess of Asturias Award for Concord

For his humanitarian work

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USPA NEWS - Having become one of the most renowned chefs in the world, in 2012 Jose Andres founded, after having traveled to Haiti in 2010 to provide humanitarian aid, the World Central Kitchen (WCK), an NGO with which he carries out various cooperation projects with the kitchen as the central element. This Wednesday, the renowned chef was awarded the Princess of Asturias Award for Concord awarded in Spain.

Jose Andres and the WCK workers use their experience in the gastronomic field to develop exemplary forms of humanitarian assistance, attentive to helping the most disadvantaged in the most extreme situations, and serve as catalysts for the collaboration of agents from different fields in pursuit of a more just and sustainable society.

Jose Ramon Andres Puerta was born on July 13, 1969 in Mieres (Asturias, North of Spain). Better known as Jose Andres, he was a disciple of Ferran Adria in the late eighties. Since his arrival in the US in 1991, he has managed to become a reference among American chefs. Owner of more than twenty restaurants, he has participated in numerous publications and television programs related to cooking, thus helping to spread and popularize Spanish gastronomy.

In 2020, Time magazine dedicated the cover of a special number to him on the threat caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In it, the magazine praised his role as a leader in this crisis, particularly in the US, and his contribution to feeding the victims. Andres converted six of his establishments in Washington D.C. and New York in community kitchens, and WCK coordinated food distribution with various partners. He is an ambassador for the World Alliance for Clean Stoves, led by the United Nations Foundation, and his work extends to other initiatives, such as the Diplomatic Culinary Association of the US Department of State or the D.C. Central Kitchen against hunger. He has designed courses for Harvard and George Washington Universities. During Donald Trump's term, Andres was very critical of the US administration's immigration policy, an issue that gained international media coverage.

Named Outstanding American in 2014 by former US President Barack Obama, he has received, among other accolades, the McCall-Pierpaoli Humanitarian Awards (US, 2014), Humanitarian of the Year from the James Beard Foundation (US, 2018), Julia Child (US, 2019), American Express Icon (Singapore, 2019), the Grand Prize for Gastronomic Culture of the International Academy of Gastronomy (France, 2020) and the Basque Culinary World Prize (Spain, 2020). He was listed among the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2012 and 2018 by Time magazine.

The power of food

World Central Kitchen (WCK) uses the power of food to nurture communities and strengthen economies in times of crisis and beyond. Since its founding in 2010 by chef Jose Andres, WCK has created a new model for responding to disasters through its work helping devastated communities recover and establish resilient food systems. WCK has served more than 50 million fresh meals to people affected by natural disasters and other crises around the world in countries such as the Bahamas, Indonesia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Venezuela or the United States.

WCK's resilience programs in the Caribbean and Central America have trained hundreds of chefs and school cooks, promoted clean cooking practices, and provided grants to farms, fisheries, and small food businesses, while providing training opportunities and to establish contacts. World Central Kitchen is an immediate response team that prioritizes food supply, mobilizing with the urgency of the moment to bring meals to those who need it most.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, WCK activated thousands of restaurants and kitchens to provide more than 40 million meals to underserved and vulnerable communities and frontline healthcare professionals in more than 400 cities in the United States and Spain. WCK knows that a nutritious meal in times of crisis is much more than a plate of food: "it is hope, it is dignity, it is a sign that someone cares about you and that you are not alone." This year, the organization has also supported affected communities in places like Mamuju, Indonesia after the earthquake; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines after the volcano eruption; the borders between the

United States and Mexico, and between Venezuela and Colombia; Gaza after of the airstrikes and Miami after the Surfside building collapse.

The Princess of Asturias Awards are intended, according to its Regulations, to reward "scientific, technical, cultural, social and humanitarian work carried out by people, institutions, groups of people or institutions in the international arena." In accordance with these principles, the Princess of Asturias Award for Concord is awarded to "the work of defense and generalization of human rights, the promotion and protection of peace, freedom, solidarity, world heritage and, in general, of the progress of humanity." In this edition, a total of 35 candidates from 16 nationalities attended the Concordia award.

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