

FOR IMMEDIATE **RELEASE**

Media Contact: Michelle Vryn, Director of Development  
Email: [mvryn@naturediscoverycenter.org](mailto:mvryn@naturediscoverycenter.org)  
Phone: 713.667.6550

### **Nature Discovery Center Honors Park's Founding Donors at Twilight Gala**

BELLAIRE (11/30/16) On Friday, November 18, nature supporters from across Greater Houston gathered at the Houstonian Hotel for the Nature Discovery Center's 22nd annual Twilight Gala. Upon arrival guests were greeted by gala chairs, Jayne and Garrett Johnston. The evening honored the founding donors of Russ Pitman Park more than 30 years ago.

The gala, which included a silent auction and a big board auction led by Melissa Krauser, celebrated the trailblazing efforts of the park's founding donors. Founding donors wore green ribbons and guests were encouraged to "thank a founding donor" and exchange their park stories. Terrell Sword, owner of Sword Plumbing, was presented with the President's Award for his outstanding volunteer efforts in park maintenance. Funds raised from the gala, totaling over \$120,000, will be used to ensure that the center can continue its strong legacy of offering diverse nature-orientated programs to Houston families.

The Nature Discovery Center is currently in the last phase of construction of the Gateway Project. New details about additional park improvements were unveiled to guests. Executive Director of the Nature Discovery Center Henry Owen said,

"We are proud that early next year we will complete several game-changing nature park improvement projects. Resource Environmental Solutions, the largest habitat restoration company in the country, has agreed to donate their services to enhance and define the 4 habitat zones in the park through nonnative plant removal and native plantings. Our current center path floods each time it rains .... and we live in Houston. We will replace the path with a nature trail made from recycled rubber saving 750 tires from the landfill. The new trail will be porous allowing water to flow through and allowing visitors to enjoy the park, even after heavy rain. A raised wooden boardwalk with a birdwatching bench will be built in the prairie wetland. This boardwalk will complete our ADA accessible trail loop. A teaching deck will be installed in our cypress pond allowing naturalists to teach classes focused on pond life. Finally, professionally designed, custom interpretive signage will be installed throughout the park to ensure that all visitors to Russ Pitman Park have an opportunity to learn about its unique ecosystem."

During the evening, a video created for the event played on two large screens. Through the thirty-year timeline of images, the photo montage told the story of the founding of Russ Pitman Park and the Nature Discovery Center through the years, highlighting the volunteers and donors who made it all possible.

For more information about the Nature Discovery Center and it's programs for children and families, and to learn how you can support the Center through donations and volunteer service, visit [www.naturediscoverycenter.org](http://www.naturediscoverycenter.org).

###

#### ABOUT THE HANA AND ARTHUR GINZBARG NATURE DISCOVERY CENTER

Founded in 1988, the Hana and Arthur Ginzburg Nature Discovery Center, a 501(c)(3) organization, ignites lifelong curiosity, understanding, and respect for nature through high-quality educational programming and its four-acre outdoor classroom, Russ Pitman Park.

Photos credit to: Wilson Parish Photography.