

JQ International to honor Jewish LGBTQ advocates

LGBTQ and allied adults and families with the advocacy group JQ International (JQ) will hold the Third annual JQ Awards to honor prominent members of the community who have worked as role models for inclusion of LGBTQ minorities. The brunch will be held on May 22 at a private residence in Beverly Hills where previous honoree and comedian Bruce Vilanch will serve as emcee.

JQ is an industrious group that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) Jews and allies by providing community events and educational programs.

Rabbi Jon Hanish of Temple Kol Tikvah is a writer and educator who helped found the Jewish Queer Straight Alliance (JQSA) teen program alongside Bill Kaplan, executive director for the Shalom Institute. Both men will be recognized with the JQ Community Leadership Award for developing the JQSA program. The program is the first of its kind in the Los Angeles area for Jewish LGBTQ and allied teens to interact in a fun-



Rabbi Jon Hanish

damental, educational and social environment, while discussing LGBTQ issues through a Jewish lens.

“In our schools and Jewish camps, we are seeing more and more Jewish teens exploring their identity and now the JQSA provides these teens and their allies a forum for support, connection, and education,” Kaplan said.

Mastaneh Moghadam will also

be recognized with the JQ Inspiration Award for her work as an activist for the Persian LGBTQ community. Mastaneh visited to the White House recently where she was recognized for her work.

“This award brings a voice and visibility to the work I do within the LGBTQ Iranian community that feels very significant to me, as I am an activist that fights for justice for underserved minority communities,” Moghadam said.

Previous honorees include “Transparent” lead writer Faith Soloway, Rabbi Barbara Zacky, Ron Galprin, Todd Shotz, Inez Tiger and community leader Andrea Meyerson.

“As a product of the Jewish community in L.A., I had the highest caliber Jewish role models growing up, but no role models that were Jewish and gay. This was a missed opportunity, and as a result I struggled with how to integrate my Jewish and gay identities in a healthy way,” said Asher Gellis, JQ executive director and cofounder.

To buy tickets and for information, visit <http://jqinternational.org>.