

JQ International, Inc.

## PRESS RELEASE

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### GLBT Haggadah Presents the Story of Passover Retold in a New Context

WEST HOLLYWOOD, California, March 25, 2008

This year, a new Haggadah will codify traditions created by Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered (GLBT) Jews during Passover.

Each year, Jews around the world gather round their tables at for ritual dinners called Seders. These Seders signal the beginning of the Passover holiday. Led by the Haggadah, the book used to guide the Seder, Jews retell the story of the Exodus.

Seders take on many forms depending on tradition.

JQ International will publish and make available a nondenominational and fully integrated GLBT Haggadah. Whereas previous Haggadot contained some GLBT-specific information, this Haggadah has GLBT Jewish content woven throughout.

The GLBT Haggadah is a provocative telling of the Passover story that opens a new chapter in the story of liberation and oppression. This new Haggadah brings new relevancy of the Passover holiday to GLBT Jews everywhere. The story of the Exodus of the ancient Hebrews as told in the Magid will be paralleled with stories relevant to GLBT Jews in modern times. Common themes include the GLBT Jewish quest for equal recognition and full participation in the greater Jewish community around the world.

While Haggadot exist in many forms, some with portions of GLBT content, JQ International believes this to be the first fully integrated GLBT Haggadah.

Developed by JQ International in collaboration with Hebrew Union College's Institute for Judaism & Sexual Orientation and made possible by a grant from The Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles, the GLBT Haggadah creates new traditions in the spirit of ancient ones, such as a GLBT-specific Seder plate.

The traditional Seder plate features items such as an egg, a symbol of sacrifice and loss. Yet to some it also symbolizes the full cycle of life, and therefore hope and rebirth. On the new GLBT Seder plate, a coconut symbolizes the challenges of living in the closet, with a sweet inside and a tough outer shell in order for the GLBT individual to shield themselves from the judgments and homophobia in the outside world.

Along with the traditional "four questions," this Haggadah features an additional question to make five questions. The traditional questions lead to an understanding of the traditional Passover customs, such as why Jews eat matzah. The new fifth question asks why GLBT Jews gather for a special Seder.

The new GLBT Passover Haggadah will be made available by Passover, April 2008, to communities across the nation. JQ International will be using the Haggadah to produce a GLBT Seder in collaboration with the Los Angeles area Hillels, hosted by Hillel at the University of Southern California on April 26.

The Haggadah will be made accessible to anyone anywhere. Interested parties can e-mail [marketing@jqish.org](mailto:marketing@jqish.org) for an electronic copy. It will be available for free download via JQ International's new interactive website expected to debut in September 2008.

#### *About JQ International*

JQ International is a membership-based organization dedicated to the advancement of Jewish equality of sexuality and gender identity via social and educational programming, community service and activism. Committed to providing quality programs and services catering to GLBT Jews in their 20's and 30's, JQ International creates an atmosphere that fosters understanding and tolerance under the realization that all Jews are a dynamic force in American society and a valued asset in the Jewish communal and spiritual worlds.

JQ International is proudly funded by

#### *About The Foundation*



Established in 1954, the Jewish Community Foundation is the largest manager of charitable assets and the leader in planned giving solutions for Greater Los Angeles Jewish philanthropists. The Foundation currently manages assets of \$790 million and ranks among the ten largest Los Angeles foundations (based on assets). In 2007, The Foundation and its 1,200-plus donors distributed \$77 million in grants to more than 1,700 organizations with programs that span the range of philanthropic giving.