

Selection Committee,

I have been approached by several colleagues of Nathan Ritz in coordinating a 40 under Forty nomination for the current selection period. It was an honor to put together this application packet and bring to light all of the amazing work he does.

I know first-hand how selflessly he serves the entire Greater Des Moines Region. I attend almost all of his events and hear about his work at home as we share highlights from our day. On many occasions you will find him at his events putting others in the spotlight first as he stands quietly behind the scenes; whether it is an individual, board member, student, or program volunteer, it is their time to shine, gain experience, and recognition. When he does speak or gain recognition he is quick to first and foremost say 'we' whether it is for the Iowa Asian Alliance, his Youth Leadership team, or when Des Moines gains a new accolade that he contributed to personally. Everything is a team win for Nathan.

His biggest area that I feel should earn this recognition is his students. He has single-handedly mentored over 150 students over the past 5 program years with YLI (not including the ones outside the program he works with). He has taken YLI a step further and created a community of leaders, business leaders and program graduates alike that now work as a team to offer support, guidance, encouragement, and positive influence to these young aspiring leader's lives. Nathan often gets calls, emails, and text messages from his students and their parents alike asking for advice and guidance, and no matter the time, he is there 100%. He often spends his weekends and evenings showing up to the events they invite him to. Maybe it is a performance, a sporting event, a speech, or even an award ceremony. He is there, smiling, (sometimes with tears in his eyes) sharing in their joy and accomplishment. I have heard two statements that sum up Nathan in reference to his youth leaders. Once a random parent asked him how many kids he had at an event because he was running from one end of the school to another, and he answered "150, but only 12 are here today." Another time a friend asked him why he took the time to show up at his students events, since it was outside of his 'job description,' to which he replied, "I want to be sure if I am invited I do my best to attend, sometimes I am the only person there for that student in that moment." Nathan has adapted the YLI program to be accessible to ALL students, and now has 25 eligible schools to participate in the program, he has increased funding to ensure the program is 100% tuition free (a \$1,500+ tuition cost), and all students have an opportunity to realize and reach their full potential. Nathan can now accommodate 42 students as opposed to the 34 the program could fund in 2012 when he took over. Last year he had more than 3x as many applicants as he could accept (158 for 40 seats), a record number to which he replied, "we need to figure out how to fund a 2<sup>nd</sup> class!"

Nathan shines when he talks about Iowa and Des Moines; he truly loves his job and the community. He gives back and as he says, 'Models the Way' (one of the 5 values he holds closely) when it comes to service. He wants to model the behavior he hopes to see not only in his students but his friends, colleagues, and even strangers. Ask him to do something, he will be there. If he can't commit, or if it does not align with his passions, he will help you get the resources you need and consult on your program in order to set you up for success. He often meets with college students in the morning for coffee, and loves hearing about their next steps and connecting them to other resources in the community.

Finally, Nathan is driven. He comes from a father that is a welder and mechanic; his mother cleaned houses for a living, and then worked in a school cafeteria. There is nothing wrong with these careers, and he will be the first to tell you that because they loved that they did, but he was raised to aspire to bigger things, and he has. Nathan is the first person to earn a college degree, not only did he do it once, but twice with the highest of honors, and each time as his class' representative (all while working full time). Next summer he will do it for a third time earning both his Master's and HR certification. He speaks often that no one is restricted by the circumstances they are born into. The only limits we have are those we set for ourselves in our own mind. He also believes that every child is one caring adult from being a success story, and he is that person for so many, far beyond just his students, but for all ages of people that look to him.

Please find attached several letters of recommendation:

- Attachment 1
  - This letter of support
  - Nathan's professional resume
- Attachment 2
  - Letters of support from the Greater Des Moines Partnership CEO Jay Byers & Executive VP Mary Bontrager
  - Letter of support from Amy Jennings, Executive Director of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute
- Attachment 3
  - Letter of Support from Rona Berinobis, VP of Inclusion & Organizational Development for Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
  - Letter of Support from Nu Huynh, Executive Director of the Iowa Asian Alliance
- Attachment 4
  - Letter of Support from Lori Gelhaar, Division Manager for Palmer Group and past 40 under Forty honoree

Thank you for your time and consideration

Cody Lenz Ritz

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

I am a highly motivated individual with a passion for developing people to realize and reach their full potential, supporting organizational strategic objectives, while promoting corporate responsibility & community development. I am a believer that community is not only a place to plant roots, but also where to passionately serve through giving, advocating, challenging, and volunteering.

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## **PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY**

- 14 years: Facilitation, Curriculum Development, Business/Technical Writing, People Management, Performance Improvement, Leadership, Recruitment, and Public/Corporate Relations
- 13 years: Diversity & Inclusion Leadership, Event Planning, & Customer Service Leadership
- 12 years: Program Development, Grant Writing & Consulting

## **PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

### **Greater Des Moines Partnership, Des Moines, IA**

*Director: Regional Workforce Development /Education; Youth Leadership Initiative Director, Mar '12 - P*

- Director of Attraction & Recruitment: Attend 40+ college/university career fairs annually in targeted locations as well as other events around the nation (Big 10, SXSW, etc.) to promote the Greater Des Moines region, CarpeDM, career opportunities for 5,700+ employers, and manage intern recruitment programs. Build and maintain relationships with employers, talent acquisition staff, and career services professionals. Consult with career seekers of all levels to discuss goals, skills, and evaluate resume. Conduct executive-level attraction tours for affiliate businesses. Assist in the execution of quarterly 'Welcome to Des Moines' receptions. Partners with Iowa College Access Network conducting college/workforce readiness seminars at Central Iowa high schools. Serves as the 'face' of ICAN videos. Plan, coordinate, and/or conduct webinars/seminars on behalf of Workforce Development/Education pillar to benefit small-mid size businesses pertaining to HR topics, trends, and industry changes.
- Director of the Greater Des Moines Inclusion Council and its book of work. This council represents approximately 35 community and business leaders representing a cross-section of the region. Organize bimonthly council meetings. Produce quarterly multicultural receptions attended by 250-500 participants including sourcing of co-sponsors, contracting vendors, and marketing the event. Conduct/facilitate monthly webinars, bi-monthly Roundtable Discussions. Plan and execute annual Summit on Diversity & Inclusion including identifying themes, contracting keynote presenter, booking breakout sessions, contracting vendors, and raising funds via sponsors. Produces the biannual INclusion Magazine in collaboration with local publisher Business Publications. Conduct annual career fair targeting diverse and under-represented demographics. Manage, identify and award the Partnership's annual Inclusion Award in three business categories, including feedback sessions for non-finalists. Attend diversity-related events in the central-Iowa community while keeping a pulse of national and global events.
- Direct the Youth Leadership Initiative program (and Executive Committee) including, marketing of the program to prospective participants and schools, planning monthly curriculum, managing budget, fundraising, grant writing, identifying and contracting program sponsors, recruiting student/volunteer applicants, and managing selection process including acceptance/denial communications. Build trusting relationships with the teen participants to develop personal skills including leadership potential. Currently 42 students from 22 Central Iowa schools in the program, 420 alumni representing 26 schools. Manage and collaborate with 47 program volunteers. Serve as the face of the YLI program including print, radio, television, and special event appearances. Attend student's events such as sports, choir, theater, debate, and award ceremonies.

### **Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Des Moines, IA**

*Sr. Business Training Consultant, HR, Jan. '12-Mar '12*

- Lead facilitator for National Underwriting and Production Risk Management
- Education and professional development for 1,017 employees of all levels in 8 states
- In classroom facilitating 70%, remaining 30% allocated to needs assessment, curriculum development, administrative tasks, and travel time

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**Nathan Denver Ritz**

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**Aviva North America (Athene), West Des Moines, IA;**

*Sr. Learning & Development Consultant, HR/Organizational Development, Oct. '07-Oct '11*

- Created, recruited, and implemented a Learning & Development Team for North American Region
- Project manager for medium-large initiatives: administration/imaging systems, processes and products
- Served as technical writer for Admin Units to document procedures, systems, and process flows
- Transitioned Structured Settlement business unit from Boston, MA to Des Moines, IA in 8 weeks, documenting job duties, hiring staff, training new department, and assessing quality controls
- Established and maintained positive working relationships with business partners
- Lead developer and delivery of core training program and documentation for call center employees
- Delivered classroom, virtual and one-on-one training including performance coaching with an average of 98.5% positive feedback surveys and 95% final assessment scores
- Interview applicants, review resumes, and conduct job fairs for all supported business units (Continued)

*Co-Chair, Diversity & Inclusion Council, HR/Corporate Relations; Aug. '09-Present (Dual Role)*

- Designed and implemented a nationally award-winning Diversity & Inclusion program in the U.S.
- Advisor to all Employee Networks on business plans, executing events, recruitment, and management, with executive leadership focus on the LGBT employee network.
- Established and maintained budgets, reviewed/approved proposals for funding and/or sponsorship
- Developed and delivered on the company's first Diversity & Inclusion Week, now a global event
- Served as a liaison to the CEO and Executive Committee

**ING USA - Des Moines, IA; Aug. '02-Oct. '07**

*Learning and Development Consultant, HR, August '02 - October '07*

- Lead specialist for Series 6 training maintaining a 99% pass rate, and Fixed/Indexed Annuity Units consisting of 240 employees, with a primary focus on Contact Center/Customer Service Management
- Manage Call Center employees through a 6-month training program before placing onto permanent teams
- Assisted in the interviewing and hiring of customer service and training team employees
- Developed a national new-hire program facilitated to over 800 new employees nationally in year one
- Worked with management to streamline and improve existing training processes resulting in increased production and quality scores
- Retained existing employees by providing the tools and skills they need to be successful on the job
- Assist in the performance appraisal process while providing performance & quality coaching
- Directed the training/transition of relocating a department of 70 to New Delhi, India, including identification of processes and impacted employees, worked in Delhi for 7 weeks (15-month project)

*Local Chairman of Diversity, National Co-Chair, & LGBT Steering Committee; Feb '03-Oct '07 (Dual Role)*

- Launched Pride Network in Des Moines in March of '03, first network to launch outside of east-coast
- Assisted in launching Asian, African-American, Women's, and Latino employee networks
- Increased overall network membership at the local level to 59% engagement within two years of launch
- Composed proposals for national budget and approved expenses from each office location in the U.S.
- Organized, plan, speak, & represent ING at several national/local diversity-related events
- Worked as a liaison between employees and HR to address and resolve employee issues
- Managed National budget and supervise local/national initiatives and planning

**Principal Financial Group -Des Moines, IA;**

*Imaging Team Lead & Trainer, Jan-Oct '02*

- Prepare, scan, and identify electronic images of mortgage files
- Maintain quality control, production metrics, and trained new team members operating in three shifts
- Documented procedures for continuity, and facilitated weekly team improvement meetings
- Provided performance review/coaching and ongoing training as needed

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## Nathan Denver Ritz

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### EDUCATION

Kaplan University, Urbandale Iowa

- Master of Science in Management & Human Resources, Projected: July 11, 2017 (4.0 GPA)  
Kaplan University, Urbandale, IA
- B.A. in Business Management, 2011, Summa Cum Laude, Class Representative, President's List
- A.A in Leadership/Organizational Studies, 2009 Summa Cum Laude, Class Representative, President's List

Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, Des Moines, IA

- Class of 2012, Social Committee Co-Chair

Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute, Community Connect Program, Des Moines, IA

- Class of 2015 (Attended as an 'under cover' board member to experience the program first-hand)

### Accomplishments

- 2007 - Increased Human Rights Campaign Index Score at ING from 39%-100% within 1-years' time
- 2007 - ING Named Top 50 Workplaces for LGBT Employees
- 2007 - Management Training Consultants Certified
- 2007-2012 Series 6 Registered Representative
- 2007-2012 – Central Iowa Society for Human Resource Managers, Member
- 2011 – Global Corporate Responsibility Award (Aviva USA, for Inclusion Program Development)

### Civic Leadership

- 2002-P - Habitat for Humanity Volunteer
- 2004-2012 – The Aids Benefit Board : VIP Sales, Advertising, & Marketing
- 2005-2015 – United Way Day of Caring Volunteer
- 2006-2012 – American Society of Training & Development, Member
- 2007-2011, 2014-P – Miss America Organization, Certified Adjudicator & Coach
- 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015 – Graduation Walk Volunteer (United Way, DMPS)
- 2010-P – Young Professional's Connection
- 2012-P - Greater Des Moines Youth Leadership Initiative, Director (completely redesigned and revamped program)
- 2012-P - Capital Crossroads Campaign: Social Capital, Diversity & Inclusion Lead
- 2012-P - Employer's Council of Iowa, Region 11, Council Member
- 2012-P - Greater Des Moines Partnership's Inclusion Council, Director
- 2012-P - Greater Des Moines Partnership's Workforce Development/Education Board, Director
- 2012-P – Community Connect: Mentoring For Success – Founding Member & Planning Committee
- 2012-2014 – Diversity in Practice, Focus Committee

- 2012-P – Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute Alumni Committee, Member, (2015-Present Alumni Event Co-Lead)
- 2012-P - American Chamber of Commerce Executives, Diversity Council Member
- 2013-P – Iowa Asian Alliance Board Director (2<sup>nd</sup> Term)
- 2014-P – CelebrAsian Planning Committee Executive Advisor (responsible for moving venue, extending to a 2-day festival, incorporation of beverage sales)
- 2014-P – Central Iowa Workforce Investment Board, Youth Workforce Council
- 2015-P – Iowa College Access Network (ICAN): Presenter & Spokesperson for Weekly Tips
- 2015-P – Imperial Court of IA, Prince for Reign XXIII
- Meets & Mentors high school/college students (currently 13) on a monthly basis

### Achievements & Awards

- 2007 - Role Model of the Year, ING USA National Diversity Symposium
- 2007-2012 Series 6 Registered Representative
- 2010 – Chairman's Volunteer Service Award, AIDS Project of Central Iowa
- 2010 – Society of Human Resource Manager's Scott Mein Scholarship
- 2011 – Aviva USA Recognizing YOU, Recipient
- 2013 – Des Moines Business Record, Cover story – *'Moving from Diversity to Inclusion'*
- 2013 & 2014 – Cedar Valley Chamber Alliance Diversity Symposium – Presenter
- 2013 – Character Counts, Honorable Mention
- 2014 – Militia Man Award, Iowa National Guard / ESGR
- 2015 – Guardian Angel Scholarship, Imperial Court of Iowa
- 2015 – Des Moines East High School Commencement Keynote Speaker