



To whom it may concern,

I would like to recommend Matt Blake for consideration as a 2019 Forty Under 40 Candidate. Matt is a strong candidate because of his commitment to his career and civic duties, which includes his role on the Board of Young Variety – the Children’s Charity.

I am the current President of Young Variety, the young professionals arm of Variety – the Children’s Charity. Matt is one of the 14 Board Members that we have within this volunteer organization for the 2018-2019 term year, although our relationship began much earlier than that.

Matt carries himself professionally in all interactions that I’ve had with him. Throughout the years, I’ve noted that he has a calm confidence about him that resonates in any room. He is also not afraid to step into new roles and lead initiatives where experience may be limited; and do so with success. While I cannot speak to Matt in his role at his job, I know him to be successful by using the qualities I’ve listed above. In relation to Young Variety, these qualities have allowed Matt to become a reliable Board Member.

I met Matt at a new member social in 2015. In talking with Matt, I learned he had a passion for giving back to the community, specifically with a passion for assisting children stemming from his family values growing up as a child. Matt continued to attend events and eventually joined the Board in 2016. It was then that I learned that Matt’s attitude and reasoning for joining the Board was genuine and not to ‘check the box’, so to speak. This was Matt’s way to give back to those in need.

Through Matt’s time on the Board, he has held three different positions: Secretary, At-Large, and VP of Community Relations. While each role has specific responsibilities, Matt goes above and beyond to assist others, or pick up roles, that may not be required of him. To highlight a few of the successes Matt has had since 2015:

- **Active Engagement:** Matt is a consistent attendee and active participant at events and board meetings. Matt has shown he’s reliable and has gained the trust of all other Board Members. Matt is a valued Board Member and is one of the first that leadership turns to when needing an opinion.
- **Taking initiative:** Matt was asked to step out of his role as ‘At-Large’ and VP of Community Relations to come up with an idea that could be Young Variety’s next signature event. The Young Variety Charity Concert turned a profit in its inaugural year and that should be attributed to Matt. Through chairing the event, Matt was able to use personal resources to assist in running the event and make sure things ran smoothly. This event is viewed as one that we feel strongly as becoming a large fundraiser in the near future. Matt will be one of the reasons for this.
- **Adding value:** One of the expectations of each Board Member is to raise at least \$1,000 each year. Each year Matt fundraises more than his expected amount by

Jon Phillips

9165 Greenspire Dr. #112

West Des Moines, IA 50266

Telephone: 563.299.9754; Email – jonathanrphillips1@gmail.com



wearing a 'silly suit' at work at the Iowa Capitol during the legislative session. Matt obtains donations as votes and shows he will do whatever it takes to support children in need. This small gesture goes a long way to provide a direct impact to at-risk, underprivileged, children of special needs, and critically ill children in the State of Iowa.

I believe Matt would be an excellent addition to the 2019 Class of Forty Under 40.

Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Jon Phillips
President, Young Variety

Jon Phillips
9165 Greenspire Dr. #112
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Telephone: 563.299.9754; Email – jonathanrphillips1@gmail.com