2019 Whittier Alliance Board of Representative Candidates

Nate Broadbridge

How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?
3 years as a resident, one year as a business

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
I’ve been a resident of Whittier for 3 years and have also started a small business in the neighborhood. Throughout my tenure here I’ve been impressed with the Whittier Neighborhood
commitment to diversity creativity and sustainability, as well as the Whittier Alliance growth and positive impact on those that live here. I’m playing an active role in the Housing Issues Committee, I attend many of the community issues meetings, I’ve helped review the strategic plan and am active with the Business Association.

I feel it’s time for me to take a more formal role and serve on the board of directors.

What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?
I’m organized and through with my work and how I manage problem solving. My skills in finance and business development will help me bring an analytical perspective to the board and its decision-making process.

Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)
Listed in item 1

What else would you like to tell us about yourself?
I’m excited for the momentum the Whittier Alliance has, the focus our neighbors have on making Whittier a neighborhood of abundance. I’m ready to commit my time and energy on continuing this momentum by helping manage the implementation of the strategic plan. Together we can accomplish a lot and continue making Whittier an inviting and accessible home for everyone!

Nate Rastetter
How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?
I have lived in Whittier since September 2004 (with a seven-month break living in the Wedge neighborhood in 2005-2006)

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
I have lived in multiple neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and Whittier truly feels like home to me - a place in which I intend to create a future for myself. I appreciate Whittier for its diversity, walkability, convenience, natural beauty, locally-owned businesses, arts and culture. I intend to preserve and strengthen the best that Whittier has to offer - for everyone who currently resides (and intends to reside) here. I intend to deepen my community roots and make a personal investment in the neighborhood I call home. As I want to contribute to making this world a better place for everyone, everything begins at the community level. Whittier is an amazing and vibrant neighborhood, and I want to help us reach our fullest potential as a community.

What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?
I am a lifelong renter, so I bring with me the perspective of a majority-renter neighborhood. I have experienced the joys and frustrations of someone with housing that is less secure than I would prefer it to be. As I plan to buy a home in Whittier, I bring the perspective of aspiration and the intention to create more permanent roots in this community. I have also worked in Whittier since July 2004 - at the Wedge Co-op - so I bring the experience of working for a locally-owned business with deep roots and community support. I am a longtime supporter of many independently-owned Whittier businesses and this personal investment gives me a deeper engagement with our neighborhood, and I wish to help support these businesses to help them reach their true potential for success. Also, I have friends currently active in Whittier, including those already serving on the Board, so I bring a foundation of community support with me.

Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)
I currently belong to the Whittier Housing Issues Committee, and I’m excited to remain involved and increase my engagement to keep Whittier a dignified, affordable neighborhood for residents of all backgrounds, especially those that are most vulnerable in regards to housing. Previously, I was active in a similar committee, Whittier Housing Justice, which was essentially a precursor to the WHICH in our goals and functions - to protect the housing situations of Whittier’s most financially and culturally vulnerable residents. We were successful (twice!) in pressuring predatory landlords to halt their exploitative practices. I also serve on the Board of Directors of Our Revolution Twin Cities, a local chapter of a nation wide organization that focuses on
supporting and endorsing local progressive political candidates, as well as engaging in other issues relevant to maintaining and promoting justice and equity in our local community.

**What else would you like to tell us about yourself?**
I am a positive, conscientious, community-oriented person who believes in diversity, justice, and equity for all people regardless of skin color, gender identity, country of origin, sexual orientation, immigration/citizenship status, and religious affiliation. I am a dedicated supporter of my community, and I strongly believe that all change and progress begins at the community level. I am a respectful, diplomatic person who works well with others, and I endeavor to bring underheard perspectives to the table. I believe Whittier should be a neighborhood in which we all have the opportunities to thrive, and to create a neighborhood that encourages the success and prosperity of each and every one of us. We each depend upon each other to make our community reach its fullest potential.

**Abigail Speller**

How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?
8 Months

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
Since moving to Whittier in June, I have come to love this neighborhood and I take immense pride in the diversity it maintains in its residents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. I want
to serve on the Board of Directors because I want to be more intentional about connecting with other Whittier residents and serving the neighborhood. If elected, I look forward to engaging residents to identify the issues that concern them, facilitate discussions, and create initiatives and programming that continuously improve the neighborhood. Due to the diverse makeup of the Whittier neighborhood, I want to make sure that inclusivity is reflective in the organizations’ outreach, programming, and decision making. Lastly, serving on the Board of Directors would give me an opportunity to learn more about effective community engagement skills, Minneapolis policies, and foster stronger relationships with the community at large.

What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?
My whole life has been spent in socio-economic and racially diverse urban communities similar to Whittier. Even though I have lived in Whittier for under a year, I believe my experiences from the communities I have been a part of help me understand the challenges Whittier might face. I have experienced firsthand how exclusion from decision making hurts individuals and communities. I will be thoughtful and intentional about including those with different ideas, experiences, and needs.

In addition to my lived experiences, my professional skill set as a consultant includes project management, change management, budgeting, and forecasting. I deal with stakeholders from a variety of departments, nations, and industries who often have competing interests and priorities. I take pride in my ability to find creative solutions that are inclusive of all parties’ desires within the scope of a given project. I credit this to being able to actively listen to people’s wants and problems and creating the solution with them.

Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)
Currently, I am a mentor for Technovation Minnesota. They introduce middle and high school girls to coding. Each team creates a mobile app to help solve a problem in their community. As a business mentor, I help the team with business ideation, market research, user experience, and project management. Previously I was a volunteer for Rotary International Youth Exchange program. As an alumnus of the program, I mentored incoming and outgoing high school exchange students and helped coordinate events and orientations throughout the year. I also served as a volunteer activities coordinator at a nursing home for low-income elderly adults. I was responsible for creating afternoon and evening programming for the residents as well as coordinating and managing other volunteers.

What else would you like to tell us about yourself?
I have numerous passions that I feel would be an asset to the board including food and environmental justice, affordable housing, and local economic development. However, there are two specific issues that I am specifically interested in bring to the table as a board member. The first is destigmatizing mental illness and addiction. Whittier is home to many organizations that serve these populations. As a Board Member, I would like to make sure that Whittier residents are aware of the services available to them. Furthermore, I would like to make sure that neighborhood events are inclusive to those who may be living in Whittier to receive treatment.

The second item that I would like to take action on as a board member is voter turnout. Due to the fact that the majority of renters it would be worthwhile to engage renters to make sure they are registered at their current address.

Jesse L Oyervides

How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?
I have lived, and have been involved in the neighborhood for about 20 years.
Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
I would like to be serving on the Board of Directors, because growth in our community starts with gaining knowledge on what works, and what doesn't. This kind of information comes from watching which projects make use of time, and space in our neighborhood. As a longtime resident I've seen that myself. And would like to make use of the residents ideas, and everyone’s best interest through serving not only the Board of Directors, but the community as a whole.

What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?
Through years of having self awareness on the subject called “community” I’ve seen what works, and what doesn't get us moving much. Through communication we can all have discernment to all agree on our issues when they come up. Not only this I’d like to apply my skills to see more events in the community.

Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)
I have organized community parties. Worked in many boards here for many years in the past. One thing that I’d love to see more in the Boards I’ve served with is seeing much agreement on any type of planning. This is done simply by remembering we are here as a whole for a moving voice for the neighborhood.

What else would you like to tell us about yourself?
That’s all. I look forward to hear from you.
Christine Popowski

How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?
20 years

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
Because I love Whittier. I love living in a neighborhood that is vibrant and where you can walk to practically everything you need. I also would like to work to make it an even better and more welcoming place to live.

What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?
As a volunteer for MN350 and water legacy I have done letter writing to get our leaders at the state capitol and in Washington DC to get on environmental issues, I have also done tabling to educate people about our organization. I have also volunteered at the state fair to educate people about how the Twin Metal Mines would ruin the Boundary Waters and the tourist industry up north. As a volunteer for the League of Women Voters I have helped many people registered to vote and answered questions they may have.

Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)
I am a volunteer with MN350 an environmental organization in the area. I also volunteer with Water legacy which is fighting the Polymet Mines and friends of the Boundary Waters which is fighting the Twin Metals Mines. I also volunteer for the League of Women Voters.

**What else would you like to tell us about yourself?**  
I attend most Community Issues Meetings and try to give input. I would like to get the sustainability committee going again. One thing I would like to do is start a plastic bag can in the neighborhood. I have also been to many neighborhood clean-ups and am tired of seeing plastic bags laying on the ground. It makes the neighborhood very uninviting. I invite any input anyone may have.

**Brigid Higgins**

How long have you been a member of the Whittier Alliance?  
6 Months

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?  
I believe civic engagement is one of the most important tools we have for shaping the world we live in. Serving on the Board of Directors would be a wonderful opportunity to connect with my neighbors, learn from my community and contribute to the health and vitality of the Whittier neighborhood. I have a passion for pursuing solutions, and I strive to engage in actionable work that leaves a positive impact on my environment and the people around me.
Since moving to the Twin Cities, I have lived in several south Minneapolis neighborhoods. As a renter, I have faced challenges finding reliable housing that fits my needs, and I am passionate about making local progress on this issue.

**What experiences, talents, or perspectives do you possess that you feel would be an asset to the Whittier Alliance?**

Many of my experiences began as I was pursuing my undergraduate degree at the University of Minnesota. With a double major in urban studies and art, and a minor in social justice, my education has led me to constantly consider our growing and changing Twin Cities, and how design, policy, and the built environment impact people’s lives.

In my current position at Seward Redesign, I have gained critical experience and a deeper understanding of housing, infrastructure, and policy issues, which I believe would be relevant to the Whittier Alliance’s goals and the community at large. Redesign is a nonprofit, place-based Community Development Corporation, that has worked in the Seward neighborhood for nearly 50 years. The organization specializes in placemaking through affordable housing, infrastructure advocacy, business development and commercial real estate. I was brought onto the Redesign team to design arts-based community engagement for their Reconnecting Neighborhoods initiative, and since then I have assisted with design, coordination, and fundraising in all categories of their work. My time at the organization has taught me the immense value of community engagement and participation in the built environment, and I look forward to new opportunities to share these values in my own community.

In addition to my career experience, I am a multidisciplinary artist and graphic designer. In 2017, I was a student in HECUA's Art for Social Change program, where I studied the intersection of arte, identity, and advocacy. This program gave me the opportunity to work with amazing mentors at Pillsbury House + Theater to develop my voice as an artist and analyze my role in my community. I have experience in a range of mediums and have worked on projects of varying scales, including public art and participatory installations.

**Describe any experiences you’ve had in serving the neighborhood and/or larger community. (Volunteer positions, committees, organizations, etc.)**

During the summer of 2018, I had the opportunity to work for The Minneapolis Institute of Art as a primary instructor for their newly developed program: Mobile Mia. In this position, I worked as an educator to develop and coordinate regular arts activities at Whittier Park, Whittier Farmers Market, Peavy Park, and Central Gym, in addition to other festivals and events in south Minneapolis. The purpose of the program was to build community relationships, while exploring a new way of sharing museum resources with the neighborhood, outside Mia’s walls. I have a wonderful experience working in partnership with Whittier Alliance and Minneapolis Parks and
Recreation Board to bring Mia’s art supplies, techniques, and history to public spaces where they were widely accessible.

Outside of Mia, I have experience working with youth just west of Whittier, at Jefferson Community School. During the 2017-18 school year, I worked in their art class as a volunteer classroom assistant, supporting students in their artmaking and organizing displays and supplies. I have also been a Big Sister to a student at Jefferson through the Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities program, since 2016. Being a “Big” is an experience I hold near to my heart, and I am fortunate to have the opportunity to grow as a mentor.

What else would you like to tell us about yourself?
In my free time, you can catch me practicing spanish, riding my bike, or drawing in my sketchbook. My favorite part of the day is my morning coffee, which some of my coworkers think I make too strong, but everyone is entitled to their own opinions. I have a soft spot for Joe Biden memes and dogs of all breeds. Books I’ve read in the past year that I would recommend are: Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur, Fun Home by Alison Bechdel, and The Visual Display of Quantitative Information by Edward Tufte.