

Leadership Journeys

Shanna Siller, Assistant Headmaster
Northern Oaks Lower School



Like many Great Hearts teachers, Shanna Siller first came to Great Hearts as a parent, searching for a new school for her four children as the family relocated to San Antonio. "I was initially drawn to Great Hearts by the *Classics to Keep*, as well as the school's commitment to leading our scholars to virtue. I was impressed and excited about the list of works my children would read, which included many of my childhood favorites all the way up to core pieces from college literature and philosophy texts," she shared. As a founding family at Northern Oaks, they



experienced the infectious joy of teachers sharing their love of learning, and Mrs. Siller was soon drawn in to join the faculty. Beginning first as a long-term substitute and then Apprentice Teacher, she stepped into a Lead teacher role in the middle of her Apprentice year, which led to seven years as a Kindergarten Lead Teacher, and later a Kindergarten Team Lead and Master Teacher. After serving as Dean of Teachers, she took on the new role of Assistant Headmaster, where she focuses on faculty culture.

Mrs. Siller cites the APEX ProSeminar course as one of the most integral elements of her growth at Great Hearts. "Diving into the works and thinkers that shape the Great Hearts vision of classical education has helped me to understand the basis for our philosophy of the disciplines," she reflected, "and along with this, I've had the privilege at Northern Oaks to work with leaders who are now sharing their wisdom with the broader Great Hearts network. From leaders such as Headmasters Keffer, Doughty, Heisman, and Brogan, I've learned about what it means to shape an intentional community of learners, not only for our scholars, but our families as well."

Mrs. Siller has found much joy in being able to better support the faculty as Assistant Headmaster. In her words, “I now have a greater role in the conversations and decisions that impact our faculty and community, and I hope to continue the intentional leadership my predecessors have modeled. I anticipate the biggest challenge will be the same as when I was a teacher -- finding time and the right balance to accomplish all the wonderful things we have in mind.”

She is setting a critical goal for herself for the year ahead – to be more comfortable with crucial conversations. “Intrinsically I think we all understand the value of facing an issue before it becomes something larger than necessary,” and she acknowledges that “becoming comfortable with bringing that issue to light is something many of us must work toward. I continue to remind myself of the message we use to affirm our students’ courage: ‘We can do hard things!’”