

Leadership Journeys

**Michelle Jensen, Assistant Headmaster
North Phoenix Prep**



When Michelle Jensen's administrative role in a school district was eliminated due to funding cuts, she turned to a friend for guidance. That friend introduced her to an exceptional new school being built near her home—Great Hearts Glendale. After researching Great Hearts, she felt an immediate connection to its mission and applied for the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) Coordinator role. Reflecting on her early days, she shared, "I felt instantly at home at North Phoenix."



Mrs. Jensen's career at Great Hearts has been shaped by a variety of leadership roles at both Archway and Prep, including Exceptional Student Services Coordinator, Regional ESS Coordinator, Dean of Academics, and Dean of Students. These experiences have provided her with valuable insights as she now steps into the role of Assistant Headmaster.

She attributes much of her professional growth to two key mentors: Tom Doeblner and Corinne Jacobson. "Tom really took me under his wing and was key in helping me learn the culture of Great Hearts and how to communicate with our families. Under his guidance, I learned more about special education in one year at Great Hearts than I did in 12 years in my district! Tom has always been encouraging and frank with me, and I have grown in my leadership capacity with his strong guidance and calm demeanor."

Her former Headmaster Corinne Jacobson also left a lasting impact. Mrs. Jensen credits her with teaching her the power of concise communication and the courage to have difficult conversations. "Corinne has been an invaluable mentor and the best administrator I've ever had," she reflected.

In her new role, Mrs. Jensen oversees the ESS department, allowing her to bridge both general and special education. "I find working with our ESS population and mentoring our new Academy Lead very fulfilling, and it's been such a joy to guide our new deans this year as well. Teaching both students and adults is my passion!"

As she transitions leadership responsibilities from her former Dean role, she has set a personal goal for herself: "I am working on setting better boundaries for myself. I struggle with 'leaving school at school' and have to be reminded that the work will still be there tomorrow, and it will be okay to leave it." Ultimately her belief in the Great Hearts mission has only deepened over the past twelve years, especially as she watched her daughter graduate from North Phoenix Prep in 2021. "I know that she would not be the confident young woman she is today if my husband and I had not enrolled her at Great Hearts."