

Leadership Journeys

Jonathan Maiorano, Assistant Headmaster
Northern Oaks Lower School



The mission statement “to cultivate the hearts and minds of scholars through the pursuit of the Good, True, and Beautiful” is what initially drew Jonathan Maiorano to Great Hearts. He shared, “I looked through the website for close to three hours. It seemed too good to be true, a school dedicated to the joyful pursuit of the transcendentals I heard solely in the Greek dialogues of Plato and Socrates, and in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in a community of learners? Then, when I interviewed with Jerilyn Olson in an Irish Pub outside of Princeton University on a blistery and snowy Sunday evening, she asked to me teach her how to add fractions, despite her awareness of my major in Political Science, which both humbled and challenged me to communicate clearly and concisely, while eating Fish & Chips!”



In serving across ten different roles with Great Hearts during his time, Mr. Maiorano rightly credits over ten individuals from which he drew inspiration. He reflected that “leaders past and present include proper ‘First Teachers’ such as Andrew Shivone, Trinette Keffer, Samuel Heisman, Jason Doughty, Brandon Hunt, Melanie Brintnall, Rebecca Rindahl, John Kersting, Charles Smith, Vanessa Steger, Charles Brogan, Anne Kathleen Borushko, Kristi Boyd, Gretchen Williams, Marcy Mitchel, and Robert Funes. What a pedigree of leadership that served not just our school but our network as a whole. I am grateful to have entered this stock of fantastic leaders and they provided an invaluable education on leadership through example and conversation.”

His most direct mentor over the years was Headmaster Charles Brogan, whom he characterizes as “one of the most collaborative leaders. Dr. Brogan seeks out healthy conflict on teams to build trust, accountability, and a joint effort toward excellence. He is the epitome of the ‘calm’ eye within a storm, with an incredible ability to listen and be present for others, while still drawing hard boundary lines in a truly loving manner.”

Now settled into his new role, Mr. Maiorano shared that his most fulfilling moments come from curating experiences for teachers to pour into them and fill their cup -- as a kind of recompense for the countless ways they pour into their students. "It is a remarkable and humbling responsibility that one cannot take lightly." Straddling the "two worlds" of the Assistant Headmaster role is challenging, he said, and in speaking with others about this balancing act earlier in the year, they have reflected on that many ways that the Assistant Headmaster must live in both the earthly realm of tests, deadlines, lesson planning, AM/PM duties, meetings, and STAAR testing, while also inhabiting a transcendent world of cultivating virtue and maintaining a vibrant culture of intellectually alive, morally grounded, and aesthetically attentive qualities within oneself and amongst the faculty.

"This is the great challenge," he shares, "and right now, my goal is to continue to learn, craft, and hone the current work I do in the role. I am focused on better adherence to deadlines and recordkeeping. Most important though, is to continue to craft a love for an intellectual life that is morally grounded and attentive to the beauty of the world around us. In addition, there is an added element for growth in this position as my son, Thomas, is now a Griffin, as a Kindergartener, with my other son David just three years away from being a Griffin. I want to play a role in forming my children's teachers."