

Leadership Journeys

Lee Raper, Assistant Headmaster
Archway North Phoenix



Lee Raper's path to Great Hearts was anything but typical—it began with a conversation sparked by her father's work as a vendor for Great Hearts North Phoenix. At the time, she was exploring new teaching opportunities, and her father's impression of the school intrigued her: *"Everyone looks professional and really happy all the time!"* Inspired to apply, Mrs. Raper joined Great Hearts as a 4th-grade teacher, immediately connecting with the mission to nurture the whole child. After three years as a lead teacher, she transitioned into leadership, serving as a Dean for another three years before stepping into her current role as Assistant Headmaster.



In her first year in this new role, Mrs. Raper credits the mentorship of former Headmaster Geri Kirby, saying, "She made such a significant impact on me as a leader. She was able to teach me that conflict could be healthy and even necessary for individual and team growth. Through our leadership team work with Alison Westerlind and Ascent Consulting Group, I learned more about myself as a person and how to apply the qualities that make me unique to my leadership style." Though she never really considered school leadership, Mrs. Raper has enjoyed the opportunity to learn new skills and broaden her connections with the entire staff. "It brings me joy to highlight the good work that we are doing on our campus, and there are boundless opportunities to do that because of the strength of our community. I find so much joy sharing my knowledge and passion around education -- providing campus tours to hopeful parents and interviewing teaching candidates, because we have a mission and culture that is really special."

The most challenging aspect of this new role? Mrs. Raper shared, "It's just the nature of the position -- to see what each day brings, rather than have a set of consistent tasks set out for me. It has challenged me to be more flexible and patient with myself!"

Her goal for the year is to increase her own self-awareness, so that she may leverage that knowledge to better serve the community. “I have learned so much in my time at Great Hearts, but I know that I still have so much more work to do. I took the first step under Headmaster Parker’s leadership, and now I am learning to flourish and stay consistent in my growth without her daily guidance.”