

Leadership Journeys



Therese Roberts, Assistant Headmaster Irving Lower School

Therese Roberts spent eight years teaching in various classrooms and schools across the country, but in her words, “When I came across the Great Hearts Pillars and the Great Hearts Six Loves in the spring of 2021- I was immediately hooked! To work at a school that places emphasis not only on a child's intellect but also their moral development and the formation of their soul was priceless to me.” A founding Faculty member on Great Hearts Arlington’s campus as Third Grade Lead Teacher and Team Lead, she then transitioned to instructional coach and joined the Leadership Team as a Lower School Dean.



When reflecting on those that have most impacted her leadership, Ms. Roberts shared, “It was an incredible blessing to serve under the leadership of Andrew Duininck and Dena Franco at Great Hearts Arlington. As Headmasters on a Title I campus, they are truly tasked with a unique vocation in their approach to teacher formation and classical education. I was extremely grateful to learn about their innovative approaches to academic and behavioral interventions, as well as the different ways you can proactively engage a diverse parent and student community.”

She credits Duininck and Franco with inspiring her to read a variety of professional development texts, which then became fodder for discussion across the leadership team and laid the groundwork for new initiatives and actions on the campus. She expressed, “I’m also constantly telling my family and friends that I am so impressed with the abundance of resources Great Hearts offers their Faculty for Professional Development! I’ve been able to take multiple APEX Courses for free, attend the National Symposium for Classical Education, and participate in the Tier II Leadership Series. It’s all been such an enriching and fruitful experience in which to partake!”

In the leadership role, Ms. Roberts enjoys the ability to greet new families as they visit the campus for first time. “One of the most fulfilling moments for me working on a Great Hearts’ campus is to watch the faces of our parents whenever they step into the building. It’s like a weight has been lifted off their shoulders as they hear that a place exists where their children can learn in an educational setting that is focused on an authentic pursuit of truth and beauty, free from a noisy and pervasive modern-day culture.”

Given she now has the experience of serving two growing campuses, she acknowledges the challenges in navigating exciting campus growth while staying true to Great Hearts’ mission. “Whether it’s adding another section of students, training new faculty, patiently dealing with on-going construction or transitioning to a new building--it’s important to focus on blending your team’s growth mindset with the intrinsic core values of a Great Hearts classical education.”

Her goal for the year? “I want to continue to ensure our Great Hearts schools make the gift of classical education available to all students, regardless of the demographic that campus may serve. I’m passionate about looking at ways to engage students that may come from difficult or diverse backgrounds in the beauty of the Western Tradition. While making the art of the Socratic discussion accessible to everyone can be challenging, it can also be life changing.”