

Shaping the Heart of a Scholar

Some may not realize that the John Adams Academy - Lincoln campus was not always in the beautiful building that exists today. It began in a field next to a small Catholic church on Oak Tree Lane in Lincoln with nothing but a few portables filled with eager young scholars. In those early days, the Lincoln campus was just a K-6 school, with only one class per grade. But as each year passed, it grew. Another grade was added, welcoming new scholars, and expanding the academy's family. I have been a part of that family since its first day in Lincoln. My time here at John Adams Academy has taught me that true leadership isn't about authority, or recognition but it's about serving others with humility and purpose.

With every passing year, change has been a constant at John Adams Academy. The school has seen more than its fair share of unexpected adventures along the way. Having classes in portables was only supposed to be a one-year, "temporary" solution until our building was built but stretched into three years. In the third year, we needed more space, so new portables had to be built. The only problem was that the additional portables weren't ready in time for the beginning of the school year, so for the first couple of months, we didn't have classrooms for middle school. Instead, we went on field trips, had school at the McBean Pavilion, and we adapted to every challenge thrown our way. Looking back, those months taught us something far greater than what any book could teach: flexibility, resilience, and the power of community. We as scholars learned that life doesn't always go as planned, and sometimes, you must make do with what you have, persevere, and find a way forward.

We weren't only learning to make sure every standard was being met, but we were also

learning how to grow together as a community, how to find solutions when things didn't go as expected, and how to embrace challenges with determination. It was never just about the classrooms or the campus, it was about getting to know teachers and other scholars who became like family. We built friendships through shared experiences, whether it was trying to stay warm while the power was shut off or trying to figure out how to eat lunch outside while hundreds of yellow jackets swarmed around us. Those experiences bonded us in a way that made us feel less like just kids at school and more like a family.

As John Adams Academy - Lincoln grew, so did I. As a transfer from a public school, at first I didn't fully understand what it meant to be a scholar and servant of others. The experiences, the challenges, and the people around me shaped my ability to lead and serve well. This school has given us more than an education, it has given us a foundation for leadership, character, and a deep understanding of what it means to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Through all these years of change and growth at John Adams Academy, one thing remains: this school's commitment to shape servant leaders. In retrospect, I can see how each leadership opportunity I have been given has prepared me to serve and lead with both humility and purpose.

One of the most defining aspects of my journey as a servant leader has been my involvement in Scholar Government. Scholar Government has shown me that I have gifts that I probably wouldn't have recognized in myself as a leader. Scholar Government isn't just about organizing events and making decisions, it is also about collaboration, problem-solving, and stepping up to take responsibility when necessary.

When I first joined Scholar Government, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. When it

came to my first committee experience, I joined in the middle of the planning process for a dance, and found that the planning was a bit chaotic . The event was quickly approaching, but there was no proposal drawn up. I observed that someone needed to take charge. When I realized no one was going to step up, I did and wrote the proposal myself. As the dance grew closer , both the Committee Chair and Co-Chair, who had known for months that they would both be out of town on the date of the dance, told us, just one week before, that they wouldn't be attending. So the rest of us were left there completely unprepared, with no clue how to proceed. . However, I wasn't about to sit back and let the event fall apart. I stepped up, figured things out, and made it happen and because of that, the next semester I was officially promoted to Dance Committee Chair.

What I didn't realize at the time was how much that moment would shape my confidence as a leader. In that experience, I learned not just about event planning, but about the nature of leadership itself. Leadership isn't about waiting for someone else to step up; it's about recognizing a need and being willing and ready to meet it, even when you feel unprepared. There have been plenty of moments when I questioned whether I was capable of leading others or planning different activities, but I've learned that leadership isn't always about being ready. It's about being willing to problem-solve, adapt, and trust that a solution can always be found.

That was my first major leadership position. I quickly learned that leadership is never just about the job at hand, It is about the people you serve. Planning these events required teamwork, creativity, and the ability to navigate unexpected obstacles. There were times when plans fell through, people would say they could do a task and then didn't. But through it all, I learned how to adapt and how to find solutions that would create the best experience for my fellow scholars. More importantly, I saw how events like these brought our scholar community

together and how they built a culture of greatness.

This year, it has been a privilege to be the Events Coordinator, my responsibilities have now grown even more. Some of my favorite moments are watching scholars come together laughing and making memories at the events we planned. A takeaway from this is that Leadership isn't just about logistics or checklists; it's about fostering a sense of unity and ensuring that everyone feels like they are part of something meaningful.

One of the greatest lessons I have learned at John Adams Academy is that true leadership is not about power, status, or recognition, it is about service. The idea of servant leadership is a thread that has been woven into every experience I've had here, from Scholar Government to mentoring younger scholars. Servant leadership is not about standing in front and commanding others; it is about standing beside them, supporting them, and working to make their success possible. Leadership is rooted in humility, empathy, and the desire to lift others rather than elevate oneself.

At John Adams Academy, the goal is to restore America's heritage by developing servant leaders. Leadership is not about doing things for personal gain, but about asking, how can I use my talents and strengths to serve the people around me. Servant leadership requires sacrifice. It means stepping up even when it's inconvenient, taking responsibility when things go wrong, and working behind the scenes when necessary to ensure that others have what they need to thrive. It is about leading by example, not just with authority.

Beyond Scholar Government, one of the most rewarding experiences of my time at John Adams Academy has been mentoring younger scholars. As a TA for a fourth-grade class, I had the opportunity to step into a different kind of leadership role. One that required patience, encouragement, and the ability to guide younger scholars through their own learning

experiences. Working with younger scholars reminded me that leadership isn't just about managing events or making decisions; it's about lifting others up, investing in their growth, and leading by example.

There is something incredibly fulfilling about seeing a younger scholar grasp a new concept, gain confidence, or feel inspired to take on a challenge. I realized that the same values that have been instilled in me at John Adams Academy are the very values I hope to pass on to my children when I have my own family someday. Whether it was helping scholars with a tough assignment, encouraging them to persevere, or simply being a listening ear to their little stories, I learned that small moments of mentorship can have a long lasting impact.

Each of these experiences has taught me an invaluable lesson about servant leadership. John Adams Academy has given me so much more than an education, it has given me a foundation for life. It has taught me resilience, the power of community, and the importance of leading with humility. As we prepare to step into the next chapter of our lives, I hope we carry these lessons with us, remembering that no matter where we go, we can lead by serving those around us and if my time at John Adams Academy has taught me anything, it's that the greatest impact we can make is through serving others because at the end of the day, true leadership isn't measured by titles, it's by the impact we leave on those around us.