

HEIDI HERBON



I have been part of the AGBMS team as the Teacher of the Deaf since 2013, but my love for teaching began at the age of five as I sat on my father's lap at the kitchen table and helped him grade math papers. From an early age, I arrived early and stayed late to help the teachers and work in the classrooms. In middle school, I spent summers co-teaching a math summer camp. Once I entered high school, I volunteered to be a peer tutor and a classroom assistant.

I began teaching myself sign language in middle school and decided to pursue a career in teaching children who are Deaf or hard of hearing after traveling to Iquitos, Peru where I visited Efata School for the Deaf. During my initial visit, I was asked to come to the front of the room and teach basic arithmetic. I returned to Efata the following year with a suitcase full of classroom supplies, including flashcards. In the span of three days, I learned over 200 signs, which I then used to teach the students in the tiny school. I returned twice more to the school to work at the Annual Summer Camp.

I attended Mac Murray College in Jacksonville, Illinois to pursue my dream of working with students who were deaf and/or hard of hearing. The college offered an intensive program which covered a variety of modalities and philosophies related to deaf and/or hard of hearing education and it was located less than two miles from the Illinois School for the Deaf. During my junior year, I registered as a substitute teacher to gain more experience. In between college classes, I also taught an 8th grade algebra class at a local Parochial school. I graduated Cum Laude from Mac Murray College with a Bachelor of Arts in Education and an endorsement in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education with a Liberal Arts Minor.

I moved to Chicago in 2004 and spent a year teaching at Mark T. Skinner School in a K-4th grade self-contained classroom before moving out to the suburbs. I accepted a teaching position at Center on Deafness and spent eight years working with deaf and hard of hearing students who also had emotional, behavioral, and psychological disorders. I learned a lot about behavior management and spearheaded the PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) movement at the Center on Deafness and developed a school wide behavior management program that was based on PBIS systems used around the country. During this time, I also learned the power of connection, the importance of believing in every child's potential, and striving to help each child grow to be the best they can be. I have always believed in an individualized approach to education and doing what is best for each child and joining the AGBMS family has allowed me to create an environment that is truly student-centered and tailored to meet each child's unique and individual needs.

I am fluent in sign language and continue to seek further education and training opportunities to increase my knowledge and skill set. I attended the University of Phoenix and received my Learning Behavior Specialist approval in 2012. I have attended trainings on the Orton-Gillingham approach to reading, as well as Foundations for Literacy, which is a curriculum specifically developed for Students who are deaf. I am also trained in Visual Phonics and a fluent user and advocate of Cued Speech. I have presented at several conferences and workshops and I'm presently working toward becoming a trained Cued Speech instructor.

I have two beautiful boys who accompany me to school daily. I am proud to be able to provide a Montessori education for both of them, and always feel confident and comfortable knowing that they are loved and cared for by incredible colleagues.