Way back last May was my first time visiting our little school in the round. Right away I noticed the community feel. The architecture, with its central “Nest” meeting place—a hub of excitement and learning, attracted me right away. I was privileged to meet several children on my first walk-through of this school when visiting as a principal candidate.

Upon returning last June as the new principal, that initial impression remained strong! Even though the building was vacant, the echoes of the “village welcome” remained. Over the years I have been in many school buildings, and our home here is unique.

Every other empty-building visit has been just that—leaving me feeling somewhat unattached and institutional. Normally, only when students are present can a visitor discern what kind of vibrant culture a school might have. However, our little Hillsboro house carries that community feel, even when students aren’t in the building! And now so much more with all our little scholars around!

Now, with all the parents, staff, scholars, visitors, younger and older siblings, and town residents in play, our little hub has become a place that hums with a tune of closeness and relationship. Our vendors, LCPS visitors, grown men and women who attended here years ago, and virtually everyone who stops by can’t help but comment on how welcoming and homey we are! And that can only be attributed to the welcoming attitude of our people—our staff, our parents, and our community.

It is this little village that came together, only a few years back, with the intent to save the school that had been part of the town center, reaching back to the early years of settlement in this area.

Longtime resident families teamed with relative newcomers. The leaders of this movement included town council members and parents, educators and local businesses, relatives and elders…They all came together around the idea of having a school that held the values that unified the hamlet. They also all came together, committed to providing children with rarely-seen, cutting-edge educational strategies—a world-class education that includes STEAM and hands-on, relevant, real-world contextual learning through the designing and building of student-selected projects, warmly known as the E3 time at HCA.

Our rare blend of a small-community marriage with big-world pedagogy is just taking off! Hang on for the ride, and thanks for letting me hop on board!