



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2023-2024 REVIEW





2024 PILLARS CLASS

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James Kendall, AIA - Clark & Enersen

Dan Osburn, AIA - HOK

Chelsea Powell, AIA - Travois

Annie Ringhofer, Assoc. AIA - KEM STUDIO

Audrey Swain - Populous

Megan Strayer, Assoc. AIA - Clark & Enersen

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ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



Visiting The Merc Co-Op in KCK



The story of Yolli Tortilleria



Volunteering at Kanbe's Market

NOVEMBER: FOOD AND BEVERAGE

In November, Pillars explored the impact and influence of Food and Beverage in Kansas City. The session started at the Kansas City Kansas Chamber of Commerce. Rebekah Bryer, Senior Manager of Partnership & Engagement with 'Visit Kansas City Kansas' shared the story of the KCK Taco Trail initiative, an interactive app that showcases 60+ locally owned taco shops in the KCK region. The Taco Trail has sparked national attention and put Kansas City Kansas on the map as a food destination, benefitting both the local business owners and the Kansas City community as a whole.

Next up, the group took a quick walk over to The Merc Co-Op to meet with their Marketing Director, Laura Marsh. This community-owned grocery store in KCK is located in a previously identified food desert and has had significant impacts on the community by providing healthy, locally-sourced groceries in addition to education and resources about food.

From Kansas City, Kansas to the Westside, the Pillars got a glimpse into the history of Yoli Tortilleria, a locally-owned tortilla bakery and recipient of a 2023 James Beard Foundation Award. Marissa Gencarelli, Co-Owner of Yoli Tortilleria, gave everyone a tortilla sample to munch on while sharing the Yolli journey - from working with a marketing agency to curate a meaningful story with the Yolli brand from its inception, to prioritizing the highest quality ingredients in

their goods, along with ethical wages and opportunities for their employees.

After Yoli, the group headed to Kanbe's Market. Casey Claps, Director of External Affairs, explained how Kanbe's Market is eliminating food insecurity by providing fresh, affordable produce in over 50 corner stores throughout the city. The group was then able to assist the organization by sorting boxes of produce before they were shipped out for distribution.

The group finished up the day with some beverages at Casual Animal Brewery and Border Brewery. From talking with respective brewery owners Lara Gray and Eric Martens, the group learned about the history and growth of breweries in the Crossroads district and how these breweries have had an impact on development in the urban core of the city.



Enjoying beverages with Lara Gray, Co-Owner of Casual Animal Brewery