



Xander Winkel tour and discussion of the Culinary Center



Overview of the 12th Street Post with Kaylie Trusler and Austin Mosier

JANUARY 2024 : INNOVATION + SMALL BUSINESS

In January, Pillars focused on the importance and impact small businesses & entrepreneurs have on Kansas City. We started at the Green Hills Branch of the Mid-Continent Public Library. Our first presenter was Chante Keller with KCSOURCELINK. We learned that 58% of all jobs in Kansas City are the result of small businesses and Entrepreneurs. She provided an extensive overview of what resources are available to anyone in our community to start, grow and succeed in business, the impact COVID had on the local business “ecosystem”, and how the KCSOURCELINK network is unique to Kansas City and is being mimicked in other cities across the country. While at the library, we met with Xander Winkel to tour the Culinary Center within the library that provides information, guidance, and rentable commercial kitchen space to startup food businesses. They also provide culinary literacy courses and seminars to the public to help people maintain a healthy lifestyle. We also discussed how these types of additions to public facilities provide a betterment to the community as a whole.

Next, we traveled to MADE MOBB to talk with Vu Radley & Jesse Phouangphet about how this small business grew into a Kansas City staple streetwear brand with national recognition. They spoke about their struggles to get started, the business learning curve, and the impact COVID had on their market. They recognized the influence of social media for their product, stating that about 60% of their orders were

straight-to-consumer purchases. Lastly, they make their retail space accessible for community events, social outreach, and other local events.

For our final stop, we traveled into the West Bottoms and toured the 12th Street Post, a shared retail hub for several small local businesses. We got to tour each of the small businesses, listen to their stories of success, issues with landlords and traditional retail spaces, and how this space gave them the ability to establish roots, and scale accordingly to the market. We talked about some of the businesses reach across the country and how Kansas City is prime for new innovation and commerce.



Vu Radley & Jesse Phouangphet giving the origin story of MADE MOBB