



# PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

**2025-2026 REVIEW**





## 2025 PILLARS CLASS

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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.



*Group photo in the Penthouse Suite at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium*



*Presentations from KC2026 and the GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium Renovation design team*

## FEBRUARY: A COMMUNITY ROOTED IN SPORTS

The February Pillars session was an exciting look into sports in Kansas City and the value of investing in sports opportunities at all scales. The day began discussing the highly anticipated FIFA World Cup 2026 and its impact on Kansas City. Lori Kirchoff, Director of Project Management for KC2026, gave a presentation detailing what to anticipate in the coming months and the planning that continues to be essential for preparing to become one of 16 North American host cities for the largest sporting event on the planet.

With six World Cup matches being played in Kansas City, the Pillars were then able to hear from members of the GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium Renovation design team, Randy Braun (Walter P. Moore & Associates) and Brooke Craig (Populous), who explained the architectural and engineering efforts needed to transform the Kansas City Chiefs' home into a soccer venue. Since a soccer pitch is larger than an American football field, especially in width, modifications to the field and select seating areas were necessary to use Arrowhead Stadium to host the matches.

The afternoon continued with a trip to GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium where the Pillars were able to see the real-world application of the modifications. Pat Mitchell, Project Director of MEP & Construction, led the tour through the facility, including the opportunity to see behind-the-scenes and understand parts of Arrowhead's daily operations—the group even had the opportunity to visit the Penthouse Suite,

walk around on the field, and meet one of the stadium cats!

Our final stop of the day examined the importance of sports on a local scale. At the Kansas City MLB Urban Youth Academy, the Pillars were able to hear from Kalen Haynes, Dash Johnson, and Preston Ellsworth about the academy, the safe space it provides, and how underserved youth are empowered through baseball, softball, education, and social opportunities. The group toured the facility which features an MLB-sized turf infield, four outdoor fields, batting tunnels, concessions, and classrooms, but the most impactful part of the visit to the academy was the passion the staff has for their organization, their mission, and the youth that they serve.



*Pillars tour the Kansas City MLB Urban Youth Academy's facility and take a group picture on the Alex Gordon Family Field*