



Tino told the story of El Camino Real and the secret recipe.



The Rosedale Development Association - The Pillars visited one of the multiple community gardens during the walking tour.



OCTOBER SESSION: KCK - PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

KCK is a culturally and ethnically diverse city comprising several neighborhoods with their own rich and vibrant history. Although smaller than its neighbor of the same name across the stateline, KCK is home to multiple landmarks and districts with considerable historical significance. These pieces of history play a key role in the development of the KCK communities that exist today and where they are heading in the future. For our first session of the 2021-2022 class, the Pillars explored the past, present, and future of one of many of these neighborhoods.

Cuisine is an important part of any culture's identity. A considerable Latino community thrives in KCK because of the recruitment of Mexican workers to work on the railroads and in factories. This heritage remains strong in the many restaurants in the area. The Pillars started their day with a taco lunch from El Camino Real in the Armourdale neighborhood of KCK. Tino, the son of the owner, enlightened the group with the family's story of creating this popular taqueria. Tino's father still holds the recipe for the Al Pastor tacos close to his heart as he brought it with him from Mexico – Tino doesn't even know it! Tino is proud of where the restaurant has come from and where they will go in the future. He loves providing delicious and authentic food for his neighbors.

After eating their fill, the group journeyed to nearby Rosedale. Originally its own city, Rosedale is now one of many neighborhoods that form KCK. Erin Stryka, the Executive Director of the Rosedale Development Association, spoke about the community before giving a short walking tour. Though the neighborhood comprises only 4 square miles, there are around 65 languages spoken throughout! Erin explained the challenges that come with such a diverse community that is also divided by one of the highways that surrounds the metro area. Despite the struggles, the community is extremely involved and proud of their neighborhood. The future looks bright as they continue to develop their downtown and provide exciting community events.

A few of the Pillars were able to contribute to the beautification of the Rosedale neighborhood by picking up trash along the streets. Cleaner streets and sidewalks make residents more apt to spend time outside connecting with their neighbors and growing their community.

Along the furthest north boundaries of KCK, the Quindaro neighborhood and archaeological site. The town has history that predates even KCK. The Pillars were able to meet with Luther, a long-time resident of Quindaro, who proudly showed off the collection of historical artifacts and literature at the Vernon School. He walked the Pillars nearby



Luther, with The Vernon School, explained the history of Quindaro



The Mockingbird Cafe team spoke about the cafe and neighborhood.

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to the Quindaro Ruins Overlook to see what remains of the historic town.

The final stop on the neighborhood tour was Strawberry Hill. In the 1800's, Eastern Europeans settled along the riverfront and worked in the meatpacking industry connected with the livestock exchange in the stockyards. Recently, there has been an increased interest in Strawberry Hill. The deep roots of its history is what holds lifelong residents to this neighborhood, but also attracts a youthful generation of seekers for eclectic cultures, art and musical entertainment. Young entrepreneurs and business owners have chosen Strawberry Hill to cast their anchors and build their businesses in the community. The Pillars met with Shawn Crowley, founder of Manor Records, and the more-like-family team from Mockingbird Lounge. Shawn shared his passion-filled journey from musician to recording studio owner to his newest endeavor with Dan Castillo of Mockingbird – a bar and coffee shop centered around a love for making music. The new concept will open in early December with all profits going toward the Manor Musician fund and the Strawberry Hill Community.

The Pillars ended the afternoon down the street with a happy hour at Mockingbird Lounge. Dan's team spoke about the love they have for the neighborhood and serving them unique cocktails and dishes.



Pillars enjoyed tasty tacos at El Camino Real



A few of the Pillars helped clean up the Rosedale Neighborhood.