

# Love Our Earth Class Series Impact Report

Prepared by Carissa Liu  
December 3 - December 17, 2024

# Introduction

## About the Presenter

Carissa is a Gerontology Intern at Wallis Annenberg GenSpace. Pursuing her BS in Lifespan Health at the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, she is an advocate for the use of senior centers as an integral piece to aging in place. She is motivated by her grandmother's difficulties in finding a multicultural, language-inclusive community center for older adults. Inspired by GenSpace's innovative model, she hopes to create quality standards for senior centers all over the country.

## The Intersection of Climate Change and Aging

As a gerontology student, I always seek to find intersections between the study of aging and a variety of my passions. The field itself is very interdisciplinary, which reinforces how important it is to study our world through the lens of gerontology.

Whether it be more days with extreme heat or an increased number of natural disasters, Los Angeles has navigated many changes in weather patterns. As a gerontologist-in-training, I know older adults are both disproportionately affected by climate change, but that older adults are also leaders in creating solutions to reduce the impact of these changes. I intended for this class to both be an educational space, but also be a time for members to reflect on their own experiences witnessing these changes.

Another motivation behind this project is Wallis Annenberg's support towards this cause. Beyond being the visionary behind our wonderful GenSpace, Wallis has shown time and time again how committed she is to a diverse range of causes. Whether it is environmental stewardship, social justice, or animal welfare, the causes she supports all lead back to one thing – protecting our Earth and the beings that inhabit it. Thus, the Love Our Earth series was born, fitting seamlessly into Wallis' legacy of projects to better the well-being of our planet.

# Love Our Earth Sustainability Series

The Love Our Earth Sustainability Series emphasizes our roles in contributing to a healthy Earth. The course shares how we can take small steps to simultaneously improve our wellness and provide care for our Earth.



Through original presentations, discussions, interactive activities, and materials to take home, members were reminded of how deep our connections with the Earth run.

Although climate change can be a sensitive topic to handle, we designed each class to be presented from a positive point of view, rather than the blame-centered approach that is commonly associated with these discussions.

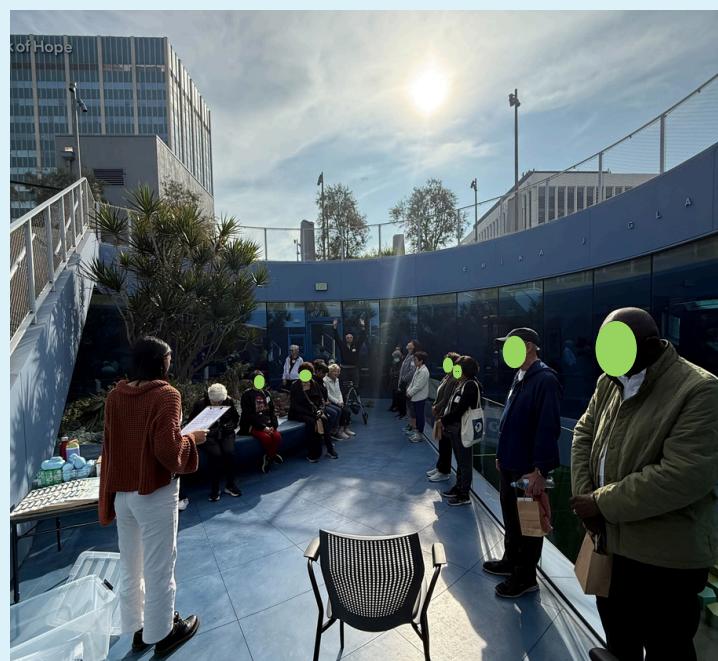
The first installment, “**Protecting Our Planet and Ourselves**,” introduced climate science, provided tips on protecting ourselves from these changes, highlighted the health benefits of nature, and offered ways to connect with the Earth.



Slides covered information, like climate statistic comparisons between today and 50 years ago, how our bodies react to changing climate, and ways that the Annenberg legacy supports our Earth.

Members also provided insights into their own experiences witnessing climate change.

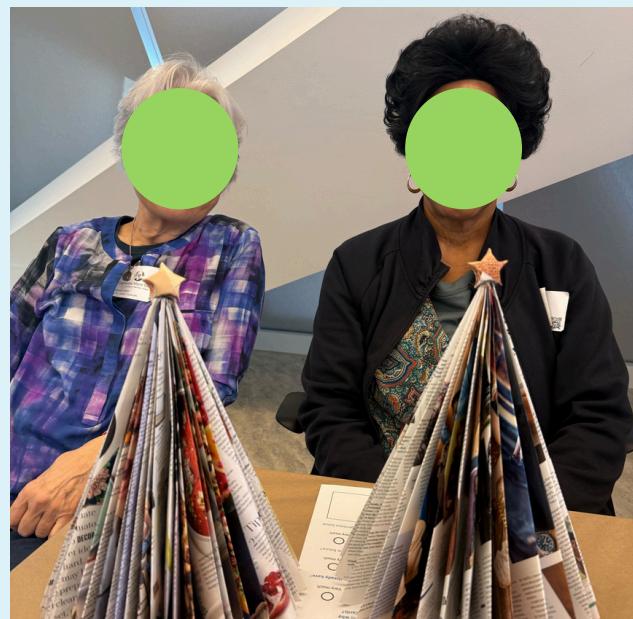
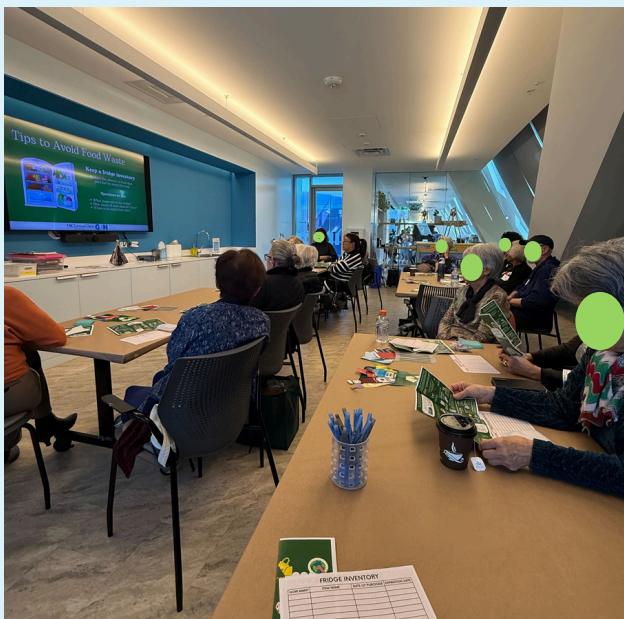
Following the presentation and productive discussions, we headed out to the Sunken Garden to practice a breathing exercise, explore the area, and complete a brief nature journal.



**“Building Eco-Friendly Habits”** explored the ways in which small daily actions – particularly through plastic recycling, water conservation, food waste prevention, and paper recycling – can help protect our planet.



The class included trivia about water consumption, short-form videos about cooking with food scraps, tips for composting, and a review on why recycling is important, despite the misconceptions that items do not actually get recycled. The activity pictured above is “What goes in your blue bin?”, where attendees sort items between the recycling bin and the landfill.



Our final activity was making these holiday trees from unused magazines. The key takeaway from today’s lesson is that there are so many different ways to reuse and repurpose items across all topics discussed today!

Love Our Earth concluded with “**Sustainability as a Lifestyle**,” discussing how members can apply sustainability into various areas of their lives, as well as learnings from people from around the world . Whether it is art, gardening, fashion, or intergenerational collaboration, members left with a sense of what it means to practice a sustainable lifestyle.



We started off with talking about sustainable home care and green cleaning products. All the members loved the Swedish dishcloths – Insik said that she introduced the product to her daughter, and now her whole family uses them!



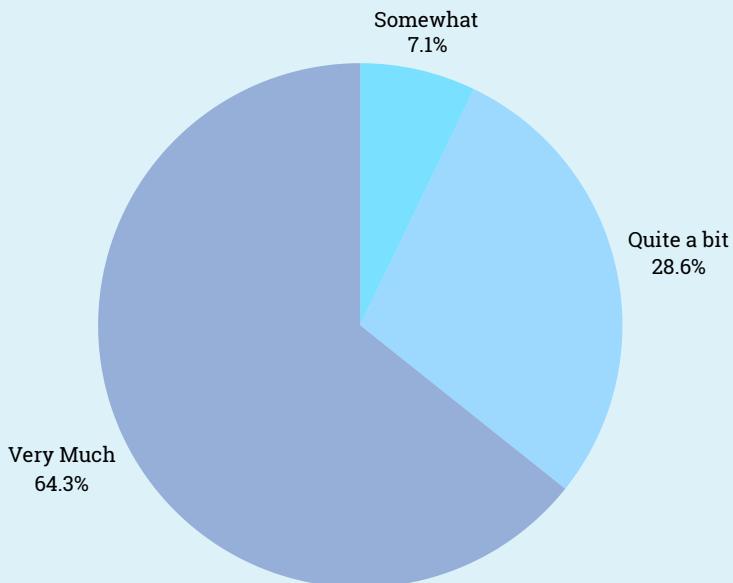
Our final activity was making a basic cleaning kit, for which we provided a Swedish dishcloth and supplies to make a natural cleaning spray.

# Measuring Impact

Following each class, we distributed a feedback form with questions specific to the class topic. Options were based on a 1-5 Likert scale.



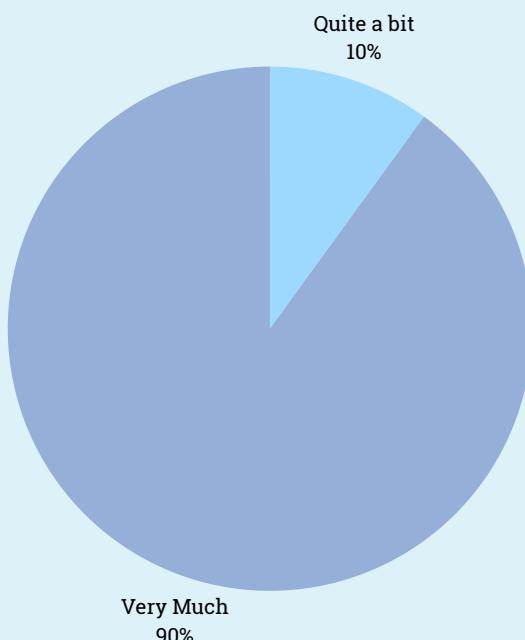
unique attendees across  
the three-class series



On how likely respondents were to use tips  
from "**Protecting Our Planet and Ourselves**"



of respondents reported that  
"**Building Eco-Friendly Habits**"  
helped them better understand  
why practicing eco-friendly  
habits benefits the Earth



On how "**Sustainability as a Lifestyle**" helped  
respondents better understand how  
sustainability fits in with their daily activities

# Exploring Sustainability's Future at GenSpace

## What's Next

Following the conclusion of the series, several members shared their own applications of Love Our Earth lessons in their lives and expressed interest in potential extensions of the series. As the Sunken Garden is one of GenSpace's most remarkable features, it was exciting to utilize the space for a program. Members can greatly benefit from their proximity to the native plants grown in the garden, so expanding programming options in the Sunken Garden can be a great next step.

In planning this program, I connected with Kelly, our lead instructor of the horticultural therapy program. The horticultural therapy program is an offering that distinguishes GenSpace from peer community centers, and there is tremendous potential to expand programming in this area. GenSpace can consider further utilization of the horticultural therapy space outside of GreenSpace. For example, we can utilize the countertop space to host a community plant adoption space, where members could offer a small, beginner-friendly plant in exchange for a plant from one of their fellow members.



Sungae was in attendance for all three sessions, and she said, "This class was something different for GenSpace, and it was very exciting." This photo followed our first session that finished in the Sunken Garden.

# Exploring Sustainability's Future at GenSpace

## What's Next

In terms of sustainability programs, we could also offer pop-ups, such as a repair cafe, where members can help each other repair goods they considered disposing of, or an upcycled fashion show, where members can share homemade clothing items.

It is also clear that members valued the space to discuss their experiences, which is why doing a climate change-themed Conversations class might be of interest to members. With the intent of conversing and understanding each other's experiences, this could extend to the possibility of greater intergenerational programming. With Earth Day approaching, GenSpace could host a pop-up in conjunction with the Brawerman Elementary School students to discuss what they love about the Earth and to participate in a crafts activity.

For GenSpace to continue exploring various sustainability topics, we can consider forging stronger partnerships with organizations in the community. These partnerships could take the form of an off-site field trip; Koreatown is home to the Mariposa-Nabi Community Garden, sponsored by the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, for example. Based on what leadership would like to see in expansion of this program priority, GenSpace can build strong connections with organizations aligned with Wallis Annenberg's values and mission.