

# Resident-Led Environmental Education Classes Teach Importance of Caring for the Earth

*Dr. Tom English reminds Wesley Palms residents they can all make an impact*

No matter who you are or what you do, you can have an impact on the environment. That's what Wesley Palms resident Dr. Tom English reminds everyone in his environmental education classes. He began his own journey of making positive changes for the environment more than 50 years ago—on the very first Earth Day—and brings those lessons to residents today.



While he was enjoying a successful career years ago as a top executive, his plans changed after being invited to one of the first Earth Day celebrations in Cocoa Beach in Florida. He couldn't find the celebration, so he decided to enjoy a sunny day on the warm sands. After daydreaming about a day where his future grandchildren asked what he did to help them live healthy and happy lives, he made the snap decision to change careers.

Now as a leader of environmental education classes, Tom brings his extensive knowledge and background to residents who want to learn more. His career includes time working for the Environmental Protection Agency and helping architect the California Clean Air Act to improve California's air quality. At the heart of it all, was an interest in leaving behind an environment that others could enjoy with good health.

The classes he teaches at Wesley Palms foster this mission and explain to residents what they can do to create a positive impact. "It's designed to teach people how to think about environmental stuff in a way that they can talk about it to their neighbors, friends and family," Tom said. "We want to demystify it."

In the first series, more than 50 fellow residents joined each talk at Wesley Palms to learn the history of environmental problems and discuss how each of them could have a part in creating a better future. When the pandemic hit, residents requested more classes. They wanted to remain active in their community while continuing their environmental journey.

Tom wanted to expand the class and its reach, so he made it available to a wider audience via Zoom. This change paid off—170 people signed up to attend the courses, including people in different states and even different countries. The course is a favorite for Wesley Palms residents who enjoy the enrichment of educational courses and social interaction.

While the series is over, Tom is expanding his environmental projects to reach even more people by assisting a friend in his own environmental education courses. Wesley Palms' active residents who have already taken the courses and new attendees alike will all learn something new.

An active community is one of the reasons that Tom and his wife chose Wesley Palms. "It seemed like a vivacious place to be," he added. From the gorgeous acreage and the homes full of natural light to the vibrant community, calling Wesley Palms "home" has been an easy choice.

*Read more about Wesley Palms resident-driven conservation efforts in our blog entitled: Wesley Palms Creates Monarch Haven for Butterflies.*