



GARDEN OF NEURO
INSTITUTE

A Safe & Brave Space for Women

Dear Garden of Neuro Institute Friends and Family

It's that time of year when you will be inundated with holiday cards, parties, dinners, shopping, and requests for generous giving from all your favorite charities.

I'd like to take a moment to wish you all the most joyful and stress-free end-of-year events possible. Because this can be a stressful time. Remember to go for walks, meditate, take time for yourself. Be good to yourself. We are good for others when we care for ourselves well.

This is what the Garden excels at. We remind each other, in community, that we can do and be our best when we support each other and ourselves.

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WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE ALL WOMEN ARE SEEN AND HEARD

Our Community practices deliberative conversations, sociocratic decision making, and collective projects for the benefit of all engaged members. We share wisdom through book clubs, Kitchen Table Talks, free and paid courses, and collaborative work.

OUR SIMPLE RULES:

- Respect all the spaces.**
- Be curious. Ask questions.**
- Support women's agency.**
- Be open to life's infinite possibilities.**





It is also a time for reflection. In these last weeks of the year, we look back to see how far we've come in order to plan for what's ahead.

The year 2024 was full of changes. We hosted art workshops, meditation gatherings, and Kitchen Table Talks featuring deliberative conversations on challenging topics. We hosted group puzzling sessions, decluttering sessions, and sessions to support those coping with chronic illness.

We know that the path to leadership for women, in any field, is to first reclaim voice and recover agency.

We taught writing skills, poetry skills, and speaking skills, designed to reclaim voice. We ran eight publications with me serving as Editor in Chief on Medium.com. We ran a college internship program for aspiring writers, which gave them an editorial mentor, a life coach, and practical experience in building a portfolio of work online.

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We hosted book club meetings, poetry club meetings, and open mic events. We published books through our publishing company, and collaborated on these projects together.

We created an Etsy store in anticipation of selling items there to raise funds for ourselves and to engage and teach valuable business skills to women newly emergent in the workforce.

We ran a raffle, wrote for grants (we did not receive any), and asked for donations to support all the technology needed to run this space and keep it free for all. We maintained a #safeandbravespace for women. A space so nurturing and interesting, mothers feel comfortable inviting their teen daughters.



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We added to our portfolio of technology in preparation for supporting programs for new members in 2025.

It's been a wonderful year. And now that 2025 is just days away, we'd like to tell you what we've improved upon and what we're planning going forward.



Updates in the Garden

In 2024, we streamlined everything in the Garden. Members told us there were just too many options. It was too busy, too confusing. We changed and simplified navigation to include the most popular spaces.

We also removed the 'accomplishment' badges. Some members felt it fostered competition, and many said they didn't want that. So out they went.



We removed the hurdles that folks felt were restricting their ability to host. As soon as we did that, new hosts volunteered to create spaces for gathering. These spaces are free, and unlike other spaces that charge for you to gather and host, the Garden continues to be free for members to join and participate. Members can also use their own zoom accounts or the Garden's, as available. So we are now actively calling for volunteers to host new circles, courses and online programs to serve our members.

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With the official filing of our NGO with the US government, we formed a Board of Directors. The board is a valuable resource of guiding opinions to help us make decisions.

We accomplished our Silver level for transparency with Candid's Guidestar for nonprofits. **You can find us here.**

With member recommendations, we are the number one rated nonprofit for women at Great Nonprofits. **You can see that here.**

All of this would not be possible without your constant assistance, leadership, and support. We are grateful for each member of the Garden.



2025 Annual Appeal

This year, our Annual Appeal will focus on funding the technology needed to maintain and grow the Garden. These technologies provide our volunteers with tools to create, monitor and measure our growth inside and outside of the Garden.

Women who participate in our publishing, marketing, social media, and other growth spaces learn valuable life skills working on real projects for use in other areas of life. Finding a job, a better job, a good salary, or a raise. Skills that can change a life.

Where does the money go? Technology, mostly. If you were to create a space on your own such as this one we treasure, it would cost you thousands over the course of its life. One of the gifts of the Garden is this idea that as a collective, we share the burden—we share the costs. That way, the real costs are spread out.

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Unlike other NGO organizations who distribute 6 and 7 figure executive salaries, we are an all volunteer organization. Not one of us in leadership is taking a salary or receiving contributions. We don't have the luxuries of paying people yet.

You might say that's crazy. But it is a statement of how much we believe in this space.



Updates

In 2025 we will bring back Kitchen Table Talks beginning on January 21th, 2025 with Who Wins in an Election Year. This will be a Gender+ event, or 'outward facing' as we say in the Garden, to include non-members of all genders. [You can pre-register here.](#)

[Pre-Register Here for Upcoming 2025 Garden Events](#)

We will also revive the [One Mind Book Club](#), beginning with Building A Second Brain by Tiago Forte. Meetings will take place once a month and include a private community chat space. The live events will be outward facing.

The format of the Monthly Poetry Book Club will change to an Author Panel and Book Fair held quarterly. During the weeks in between events, authors will enjoy a one-on-one interview and be featured in Garden publications on Medium and Substack.

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Upcoming Writer's Events

- **Wordsmith's Weekly** - always free and open to the public
- **Write Like Stephen King** - a quarterly event
- **March Writer's Retreat** - a 3 day generative writing workshop in March



Publishing Opportunities

Visit [Garden of Neuro Institute Publishing](#) for information on Garden Authors, Book Releases, Open Mic, Book Clubs and anthology calls for submissions. For 2025, we are planning a literary print magazine and volume 2 of the humor anthology publication, **Wouldn't You Rather Be Laughing**. We will be looking for contributors.

[The Garden Stage on Substack](#) hosts a quarterly story contest. Paid subscribers may submit their work for a chance to win 50% of the subscriber income.

The Garden hosts several publications on Medium. [Read this article to learn more about these unique spaces hosting diverse voices.](#)

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If you believe in the space the same way we do, please consider a generous monthly or annual gift. If every member made a commitment and donated just \$5 or \$10 a month – in many areas, this is the cost of a single cup of coffee – we would achieve our financial goals, and be able to touch even more lives. Won't you help us this year?



This holiday season, make uplifting women a priority. Make building better communities a priority. The need has never been more urgent.

Sincerely,

Susan Brearley, HSDP, EIC
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www.gardenofneuro.org

Never miss a single important email about our community's most important news. [Sign up here for our Garden communications.](#)

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Did You Know?

The **Garden has a monthly 50/50 Raffle** - purchase tickets here.

The Garden also has a **GoFundMe** option.

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Links

[Discover the Garden of Neuro, A Women's Only Space](#)

[Donate to the Garden](#)

[Pre-Register for Garden Events](#)

[Visit Garden Lit Publication on Medium](#)

[Visit the Garden Stage on Substack](#)

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