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"When I saw Wendy, I knew I was attracted. Did I think it would evolve into the life we have now? Totally not."

Ethelda Makoid

Valentine's volunteers



Ethelda Makoid and Wendy Sheppard

At A Woman's Place, they found a special purpose — and each other.

By **LIZ JOHNSON**
CORRESPONDENT

Dear Looking for Love:

Don't discount the person in the room who doesn't look anything like you, doesn't wear what you wear, who sits too close to the door and looks like she wants to bolt.

She could be the one.

That's how it happened for Ambler married couple Wendy Sheppard and Ethelda Makoid, who met at a 40-hour training class for A Woman's Place in Doylestown.

"She planted herself at the door, right at the seat where the door opened so she had the quickest out she could have," recalled Sheppard of her first meeting with Makoid. "She was very clearly uncomfortable and very different from the rest of us at the time."

"I was totally out of my comfort zone," recalled Makoid. "It's an intense class. The reality is, as soon as you take yourself out of your comfort zone, you're opening yourself up to opportunity."

"When I saw Wendy, I knew I was attracted. Did I think it would evolve into the life we have now? Totally not."

Both said there was a spark and definitely interest. And then there was drama and, as Sheppard admits, "I was a wreck in my early 20s. She was skeptical. She does ... have her (act) together, so it did take her a little bit longer" to realize they were meant to be together.

The two became a couple in 2005 and married in 2014. For wedding gifts, they requested donations be made to A Woman's Place, a domestic violence organization that provides shelter for abused women and their children.

"It always has a special place in our hearts," said Sheppard.

Likewise, Annie and David Hall of Doylestown Township met at A Woman's Place fundraiser when he was in college and she was just about to graduate from high school. They married in 2001, also requesting that donations be made to A Woman's Place in lieu of gifts, and now have three children. David serves on the board of A Woman's Place.

Annie's advice for finding a soulmate: "Find someone who is like-minded, who wants to give back. If you have that connection, everything else falls into place."

In 1994, David Hall was president of the Human Rights Club at Bucks County Community College. His organization chose to raise money for A Woman's Place, an event attended by Annie and a friend.

"I met her there and we started dating. We just got along really well and enjoyed spending time together," said David.

It wasn't until he "went backpacking through Asia for the summer that I realized I was in love with her," he said.

Last May, they found themselves at another A Woman's Place fundraiser at Bucks County Community College, where they bid on tickets for the organization's Chocolate Lover's Fantasy fundraiser, which coincidentally was held on their 21st dating anniversary in October 2015.

"It was far more special than those anniversaries usually are," said David. "It gives us things to keep coming back to and make a difference with."

Both say building strong community ties is important to them and their relationship. David, a teacher at North Penn High School, also runs a graduate program at Delaware Valley University in bullying prevention and emotional learning.

"I think there's few better ways to share a bond with someone you care about than volunteering," he said.

Want to know more?

A Woman's Place Chocolate Lover's Fantasy fundraiser will be held on March 19 from 6 to 11 p.m. at The Fuge, 780 Falcon Circle #200 in Warminster. Information: 215-343-9241, ext. 120; www.awomansplace.org.



David and Wendy Hall met in 1994 and wed in 2001. Today, they reside in Doylestown Township.