

suburban life

Waverly Heights
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for lifelong learning
and growth.

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Valentine's Day has special meaning for most romantically linked couples, but the day holds particular significance for Wendy Greenfield and Richard Hamilton. On February 14, 2024, Wendy moved into Rick's villa in Waverly Heights, a nonprofit Life Plan Community situated on a 63-acre former estate in Gladwyne.

"Rick and I met years ago, and we had a mutual friend who reconnected us," Wendy says. "We ended up walking our dogs together. He introduced me to the Bridlewild Trails near Waverly Heights. That's where we fell in love, while walking our dogs [Jeffrey and Rhett]. It was totally unexpected at this stage of my life."

Rick has been living at Waverly Heights for eight years. When he and his wife, Lucinda ("Pinkie"), moved to the community from their home in Bryn Mawr, they did so in part so their two adult daughters could have peace of mind. With one daughter in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and another one in Madrid, Spain, Rick and Pinkie wanted the assurance of knowing they would be well taken care of when and if their health ever took a turn. They liked the fact that the community would enable them to transition seamlessly into different aspects of medical care—personal care, memory support, and skilled nursing, if needed—while prioritizing dignity and quality of life.

"Waverly is a lovely place," Rick adds. "The grounds are beautiful; you're living in nature here. The residents are invariably interesting, and the staff are chosen for their sociability. That sets the mood for the rest of us."

Pinkie passed away unexpectedly at the end of 2017. Wendy was previously married, too. She and her husband, Albert, were married for more than 40 years; they were living in a home in Villanova at the time of his death in 2021.

Rick and Wendy met several years

Wendy Greenfield and
Richard Hamilton with
Wendy's dog Rhett



Jody Fitts with her dog Nikki

ago, during a trip to Crete organized by Bryn Mawr College, where he worked as a professor of ancient Greek and she worked as executive director of the Alumnae Association. Since retiring from his job, Rick—a self-described “doer” and “professional volunteer”—now donates his time to organizations devoted to helping those in need, such as Meals on Wheels, Philly House, and the University City Hospitality Coalition. Wendy, who still works full time as executive director of Main Line School Night, is in the process of transitioning to part time.

Together, they look forward to finding out what the future holds. Wendy intends to use her newfound “unstructured time” to visit family—her nearby grandchildren, as well as her aging parents in New York—help other people through Alcoholics Anonymous, and travel. She and Rick are currently learning French in anticipation of an upcoming trip to France.

Of course, they still enjoy tramping the many trails surrounding the Waverly Heights campus, usually with Wendy’s dog Rhett leading the way; Rick’s dog Jeffrey has passed away. Another favorite pastime: socializing with their fellow residents.

“The other residents are smart, talented people,” Rick says. “Lifelong learning is an important component. The people who come here have had a purpose in life and they want to continue. Most of them have lived exciting lives and are very in-

volved. They have convictions and accomplishments, and they all really care about making the world a better place.”

One of them is Jody Fitts, a retired educator and eager traveler who lives “just across the street.” Jody describes herself as playful and adventurous—qualities that have guided her in her treks to such far-flung countries as Egypt, Jordan, and Nepal. She plans to visit Iceland in the near future, with Ireland and Costa Rica next on her list.

“I like going on trips with lots of culture and art,” she says. “I don’t want to be sitting in a bus, looking out the window. . . . I really want to be a lifelong learner, and travel is one way to make that happen. I’m not one of those people who wants to play bridge, golf, and tennis, and that’s it. There’s a lot I want to do.”

At 74, Jody hasn’t slowed down since relocating from her longtime home in Rosemont to Waverly Heights. Quite the opposite, in fact.

“I’m a joiner,” she says. “I got into aquacise classes three days a week. I take

art classes. I’m in a book group. I’m on the committee for the monthly magazine. This year I also joined another committee, Residents Visiting Residents, where independent people go to visit people in health care who have said they wanted visitors. I go to as many lectures as I could ever want.”

Jody spent many years teaching, in traditional and nontraditional settings, so it should come as no surprise that she embraces every opportunity to learn and grow. She also spends ample time exploring the beautiful grounds with her 26-pound dog, Nikki, which she characterizes as “energetic, very entertaining, and a great companion.” Nikki has also helped Jody make fast friends with the 15 other dog owners at Waverly Heights, including Rick Hamilton and Wendy Greenfield.

“Life gets bigger [in retirement] if you want it to,” she adds. “I don’t do all the things I’m doing because I think I’m running out of time; I feel like I’m expanding my mind and my outlook. I have a busy life outside of Waverly, too. I’m actually getting to a point where my life feels a bit too full right now.”

When Jody moved to Waverly Heights in July 2022 with her husband, Alan, she says they felt welcomed from the start. Alan was 15 years her senior and starting to slow down, and he wanted to come to Waverly Heights because of its reputation for high-quality health care. He passed away in April 2023.

Jody’s life has changed a lot in the time since, though she says she feels “right at home” at Waverly Heights: safe, enriched, and surrounded by natural beauty and good people.

“As an organization, Waverly really has its act together,” she adds. “I have excellent care, support, and friendships here at Waverly, and the employees are amazing. There are a lot of brilliant people living here—I’m probably in the minority having only one degree—but there’s also a sense of humility among the residents. I’m feeling really optimistic about my life.” ■



Waverly Heights’ 63-acre campus abounds with natural beauty.



→ **Waverly Heights**
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