Changing minds to prevent violence

BY JULIE DEARDORFF | PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBINS

For more than 50 years, Berkshire Hills Doris Akers has helped survivors of sexual and relationship violence, and from the time she was very young, she knew there was one way to get to an end to it.

“I have known since (I was) a little girl that the violence I was seeing family members and friends endure was unreasonable,” Akers says. “It’s been drummed into me because I knew when I was a very small child. If you look at the violence that was being perpetrated, it was unreasonable, and it is so encouraging. Many survivors say that the most meaningful thing they learned to communicate with their partners was that they had not received any training on how to handle these situations, or how to respond to them.

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