

## Director for adult health facility honored

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In recognition of Women's History Month, Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada, has named Davis resident Dawn Myers-Purkey as this year's Woman of the Year from the 8th Assembly District.

As the program director of Woodland Healthcare's Yolo Adult Day Health Center, Myers-Purkey provides vital services to older adults at risk of nursing home placement and assists their families to allow her clients to age in place, according to the 8th District assemblywoman.

"This position reflects her decades of advocacy on behalf of frail and elderly adults," Yamada stated.

"Every family with an elderly adult in Yolo County knows Dawn Myers-Purkey. With kindness and grace, she has stood strong for her clients during difficult budget times," said Yamada. "Given Dawn's history of human services work, it is also fitting that she receives this well-deserved honor during National Social Workers Month. I am proud to not only call her a constituent but a colleague with an angel's heart."

After obtaining a bachelors of science in mathematics, Myers-Purkey began her working in 1983 for the Peace Corps. She spent two years teaching math at a small high school in the village of Markala in Mali, West Africa. It was there that she met with a fellow Peace Corps volunteer, David Purkey, whom she married in 1986.

Following her service in Africa, Myers-Purkey returned to her hometown in Pennsylvania and accepted a position at the local Area Agency on Aging. Here, she became a case manager making regular visits to isolated, low income seniors in need of support and resources. It was through this position that her commitment to the senior population was solidified.

In 1987, Myers-Purkey and her husband moved to Oakland where she began coursework toward a master's degree in social work with an emphasis in gerontology and public policy at UC Berkeley's School of Social Welfare.

After first returning to Africa for three years, Myers-Purkey and her husband moved back to Davis in 1992 and in 1994 she joined the staff of the Area 4 Agency on Aging as a Program Manager providing oversight to over 15 social service programs serving older adults in a seven-county area. In this position she became acquainted with Yolo Adult Day Health Center eventually becoming a member of their Community Advisory Board.

In 1996, she became program director of Woodland Healthcare's Yolo Adult Day Health Center, where she still works. In this capacity, Myers-Purkey leads her team while overseeing all operations of the Adult Day Health and Alzheimer Day Care Resource Center programs placing high emphasis on quality care, client health and sense of well-being.

In addition, Myers-Purkey serves on the board of the California Association of Adult Day Services having just completed her term as statewide Board President. She is an appointee to the California Department of Health and Human Services Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders Committee, a 2005 graduate of the Sierra Health Foundation Health Leadership Program and a longtime member of the Yolo County Adult and Aging Commission.

The couple have two daughters. The eldest, Hannah, is a sophomore at Cornell University studying global health. The youngest, Sage, is a senior at Davis Senior High and this fall will begin studying at UC Berkeley where she will row on the women's crew team.

A reception to honor Myers-Purkey will take place at the Putah Creek Café in Winters in the near future.