



Denny Welch, with her dad, Park Dowd, are the first father-daughter Villager of the Month honorees. She's well known for helping seniors and the disabled in the community.

Dynamo Denny

Community Civic
Association President
Denny Welch is May
Villager honoree.

BY CHERYL WALKER
THE LAGUNA WOODS GLOBE

Denny Welch's impressive record of service to Laguna Woods Village and seniors in general is so extensive, one can't help but wonder why it took the community's Historical Society so long to present her with its Community Service Award. She will be the organization's honoree in May.

The ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. May 2 in Clubhouse 6.

Maybe it was just too difficult to catch "Dynamo Denny," since she's always on the move, on the phone, on the computer or golf carting from meeting to meeting

trying to do her best to give seniors the best transportation, fraud protection, disability rights, services and so much more that a full list of her credits would take more space than The Globe has room to publish the list.

Highlights include service as Community Civic Association president; Third Mutual Director; American Association of Retired Persons special projects coordinator; Laguna Woods advisory committee member; special community program coordinator; Golden Rain Foundation committee, subcommittee and ad hoc group member; Kiwanis member; Orange County Transportation Authority special needs board member; and Office on Aging Senior Citizens Advisory Council of Orange County member.

She is also the County of Orange 2004 Volunteer; Laguna Canyon Foundation

Board director; South County Senior Services Transportation Board member; Aquadette; and the author of more than two dozen informative booklets (with subjects as diverse as hoarding control, funerals and veterans benefits) that she makes available to residents at no cost.

What makes Welch so driven? She says her goal is "to bring as much knowledge to the seniors of Leisure World and Orange County as possible about their options and I try to bring out all of the various organizations and agencies, local, state and federal."

Fellow Kiwanian and CCA officer Jim Shaffer points out that whenever Welch takes on a project she gives it her all. "You can instantly feel her energy, determination and dedication, yet at the same time she is compassionate and caring... our Dynamo Denny is in a league by herself."

Welch's frequent collaborator, resident Woody Butler, says Welch has three strong character traits that "stand out."

"Denny is always 'rich in spirit', ... a person that seeks her happiness in another's good and a person dedicated to helping seniors and the disabled in this community. I'm always proud to be a friend."

Welch, a second-generation Leisure Worlder and the first father/daughter Villager of the Month honoree, is a native of the Windy City, Chicago, and earned her bachelor's degree in public administration from Roosevelt University. She worked as a computer documentation specialist before following her father, Park Dowd, as a resident of the Village.

Her first brush with senior issues occurred when she found her dad a victim of financial fraud. Extricating him and his finances led to a change of law with regard to financial

abuse of seniors.

Welch soon found other issues, such as transportation, where seniors needed help and volunteered to work with governmental and private agencies to increase awareness of needs and match needs to services.

Welch said that all her life she was content letting others take the limelight while she worked diligently in the background because she had a speech impediment.

But she found with senior issues, she had to speak up or no one else would. As for her stuttering she found that it posed no problem at all. "And for that I really thank the residents of Laguna Woods Village for giving me the opportunity and place to grow.

Welch said that although she enjoyed being a director of Third Mutual, the Community Civic Association has proven to be her "perfect niche."

"I always wanted to help people and this (CCA) was the umbrella where I could do it."