

Alamedan to head local nonprofit

■ Dean of students at UC Berkeley accepts head position at Girls Inc.

By **Hanna Tamrat**
STAFF WRITER

ALAMEDA — A career switch from a job at a prestigious university will bring Karen Kenney, a lifelong Alameda resident, closer to home and family.

The Dean of Students at University of California, Berkeley, will head Girls Inc. of the Island City, located in her hometown, beginning Oct. 3.

"My goal for some time, especially since I became a parent, was to be more physically and



KENNEY

she lives with her husband of 10 years and their child, whom they adopted from China in 1997.

She said her parents, her siblings and her siblings' children also live in Alameda.

Her 9-year-old daughter at-

emotionally present for my immediate and extended family."

Kenney, 51, says.

Born in Oakland, Kenney was raised in Alameda, where

tends Edison Elementary School, one of seven elementary schools in Alameda where Girls Inc. provides before-school and after-school child care.

Kenney has been involved with the nonprofit not only as a parent but also as a financial contributor during annual fundraisers and as an occasional program supporter for some of the past 10 years, she said.

"What the organization is doing is incredible, and I look forward to being part of it," Kenney said.

Girls Inc. is a nationwide organization, where girls are chal-

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lenged to explore historically male-oriented careers, including mathematics, science, computers and investment, and are taught leadership skills.

Kenney is enthusiastic about the organization's growth, not only in terms of affiliates and the number of girls enrolled, but also in the number of programs meeting the needs of young women, she said.

The Alameda chapter serves about 300 girls ages 6 to 16 a year at the Meyers Center. As many as 300 girls and boys in kindergarten through fifth grade are in extended care in Island elementary schools, said Melissa Marsh, board president.

"Karen is very seasoned in dealing with youth issues and has also been passionate about women's issues throughout her career," Marsh said.

Kenney headed the Office of Student Life, formerly known as the Student Activities and Services Department, for 15 years and worked at the university for 27 years.

As the liaison between students, staff and faculty, a large part of her tenure involved resolving conflicts and advising students on how to articulate their activism, she said.

In addition, through local volunteer organizations, including the Berkeley YWCA, Kenney was active in educating young

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Melissa Marsh

GIRLS, INC. ALAMEDA
CHAPTER BOARD PRESIDENT

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women about violence on dates and alcohol and drug use.

Her education research area focuses on women's history and sociology, she said.

Growing up in Alameda, Kenney went to Wood Middle School and Encinal High School. She later earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at San Diego State University in physical education, sociology and history.

For the executive director position at the local affiliate of Girls Inc., she was selected from more than 50 applicants from Alameda and the greater Bay Area, Marsh said.

The recruitment process started in May, when the former director retired and the position was filled by Interim Executive Director Pam Williams.

Kenney is excited to start October 3 at her new office.

"I will get to ride my bike to work," she said, which will take only 10 minutes.