

The Press Democrat

NEWS

Low-tech edition ([About](#))

[Home](#) > [News](#) > [Local](#)

[Email story](#) | [Print-friendly version](#) | [Subscribe to paper](#)
NEWSMAKER

Making homeownership a reality for all

Director Dev Goetschius helps Housing Land Trust create affordable homes

Monday, July 4, 2005

By MICHAEL COIT
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Taking over a fledgling nonprofit was a challenge Dev Goetschius welcomed despite the daunting mission - building homes that always remain affordable to low- and middle-income buyers.

Two years later, a 10-home subdivision is nearing completion in a Roseland neighborhood with homes selling for \$150,000 to \$360,000, compared with their \$450,000 market value. The Housing Land Trust of Sonoma County, with Goetschius at the helm, takes the land value out of the price with 99-year lot leases.

Buoyed by the project's success, Goetschius is working with Petaluma housing officials to build 51 townhomes and duplexes in two developments using the land-trust model.

"She is just the most centered person I have known," said Bonnie Gaebler, Petaluma's housing administrator. "She is very mission-driven. She wants to help people who are not capable of owning their own home in this market."

Without experience in housing other than as a homeowner, Goetschius quickly learned how to manage a development and has become the face of the North Bay's first group to use the land-trust example.

"She's got the magic touch," said Rick Jacobus, a consultant who has assisted housing land trusts across the nation, including Sonoma County's. "They're moving very fast. They're getting a lot done. Dev has been very effective in lining up projects and getting partners."



JOHN BURGESS / PD

Dev Goetschius is executive director of the Housing Land Trust of Sonoma County, which developed 10 below-market-priced houses in Santa Rosa's Roseland district.

[Zoom Photo](#) | [Buy Photo ?](#)

DEV GOETSCHIUS

Age: 41

Title: Executive director, Housing Land Trust of Sonoma County

A world traveler as a young girl before her parents, natives of India, settled in New Jersey, Goetschius put down roots with her husband in Petaluma 13 years ago. They now have two school-age daughters.

Family: Husband, Brett; two daughters, ages 11 and 6

"I'm in the business of putting families in homes in a way that will work forever," Goetschius said. "Housing is such a basic need, and being a woman who has two children, and we have a home, I know the importance of that."

Quote: "I'm in the business of putting families in homes in a way that will work forever."

Goetschius, 41, wanted to work for a startup nonprofit when she learned the land trust was looking for its first executive director. She had built an after-school program in San Francisco into a neighborhood anchor for youth activities and later was operations director for the Petaluma Boys and Girls Club.

"I really wanted to be part of something new," she said.

The land trust had a board of directors and 1.5 acres purchased with \$650,000 in donations. But the organization needed a paid director who could find builders, generate community support and get affordable for-sale housing built.

The trust "needed someone who could get up in front of an audience and explain the model," said Mike Hatfield, the board's vice president. "Part of it was the evangelical aspect."

Chief tasks for Goetschius on Roseland and future projects include setting up the ground lease, developing partnerships with home builders and community sponsors, and finding eligible buyers.

Habitat for Humanity of Sonoma County is completing six homes, with buyers joining volunteers in the self-help portion of the Roseland project.

"Without the land trust we wouldn't be able to afford a build such as this. We couldn't keep the mortgage low enough for the families," said Diane Estrin, executive director for the county's Habitat group.

The Housing Co., a Windsor for-profit developer, completed the other four homes in Roseland.

Goetschius has a track record of developing and expanding community programs over nearly two decades.

A double-major graduate from Drew University in Madison, N.J., Goetschius taught special education in the Garden State for three years before moving with husband Brett to San Francisco in 1988. She taught in the Head Start preschool program and then took over a new after-school program at San Francisco's Grattan Elementary School, followed by a two-year stint with the Boys and Girls Club.

Born in Nigeria, where her father had an import-export electronics business, Goetschius also lived in the Canary Islands and Bombay before her family moved to New York City when she was 10 and West Orange, N.J., two years later.

She appreciates why people move here and the resulting pressure that puts on housing prices.

"We're doing OK for a little organization," she said. "We have people living in houses, and houses that they own."



[Get home delivery of The Press Democrat -- the North Bay's news source.](#)

[Rates start at \\$1.63 per week for daily delivery!](#)

Navigation

- [PRESS DEMOCRAT](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [WINE COUNTRY GUIDE](#)
- [COMMUNITY](#)
- [HEALTH](#)

Site Search

[Archive\(1994-yesterday\)](#)
[Site or Archive Search?](#)

- [HOME](#)
- [NEWS](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Columnists](#)
 - [Obituaries](#)
 - [Community](#)
 - [Weddings](#)
 - [Photo Gallery](#)
 - [E-mail news alerts](#)
 - [Talk Back panel](#)
 - [California](#)
 - [Nation & World](#)
 - [Special Reports](#)
 - [RSS feeds](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [OPINION](#)

- [HOME DELIVERY](#)

- [MARKETPLACE](#)
 - [Classifieds](#)
 - [Homes](#)
 - [Autos](#)
 - [Jobs](#)
 - [Newspaper Ads](#)
 - [Place and Ad](#)

- [Advertise](#)
- [Contact us](#)
- [About us](#)
- [Work for us](#)
- [Site map](#)



[**ROHNERT PARK PRIME SHOPPING CNTR RE...**](#)

[**FABULOUS CUSTOM HOME With Panoramic...**](#)

[**Creekside Beauty! WELCOME HOME!!! V...**](#)

[**MOVE IN BONUS!! HH Reduced deposits...**](#)

[**JUST REDUCED \\$10,000 PRESTIGIOUS WL...**](#)

[**View All Top Homes**](#)

[**View All Top Jobs**](#)

[**View All Top Autos**](#)



Cal RV turns weekends into vacations!



Click here for
this week's service specials



Copyright © 2005 The Press Democrat | [Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#)