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July 2020

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## Brenkle Court: A Year in Review

A look back over the last year. We began working at the job site in Mid-July, 2019



There were exhausting days digging trenches in record-breaking heat



Our eight homeowners learned how to frame their homes



Framing the second floor



Our most immediate goal: Finish the roofing before the fall rainy season so we can continue working through the winter. Despite COVID, we're still on schedule!

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## Erica Roetman Sklar, Operations Manager, Takes New Position with NVCH

Our longtime Operations Manager, Erica Roetman Sklar, has accepted a position as President/CEO of Napa Valley Community Housing (NVCH). Erica has played a major role in developing OTSH's projects, providing expertise on land analysis and acquisition, project conceptual development and funding as well as project construction management.



"While we are sorry to see her go, we are pleased that Erica will be at NVCH--an organization that shares our goal of providing housing opportunities to local communities in Napa County," said OTSH President Mary Stephenson.

**NVCH to Manage OTSH's Pope Street Project**



OTSH currently has a five-unit affordable housing project at 963 Pope Street being considered by the City of St. Helena Planning Department with the anticipation of receiving entitlement in late summer 2020. [Read more](#)

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## OTSH Launches New Website



OTSH is delighted to announce the rollout of our new [website](#), ourtownsthenela.org. Improved navigation makes it easier to access our [blog](#), updated project photos and [News](#) page. Most important? The [Donate](#) button is accessible from every page!

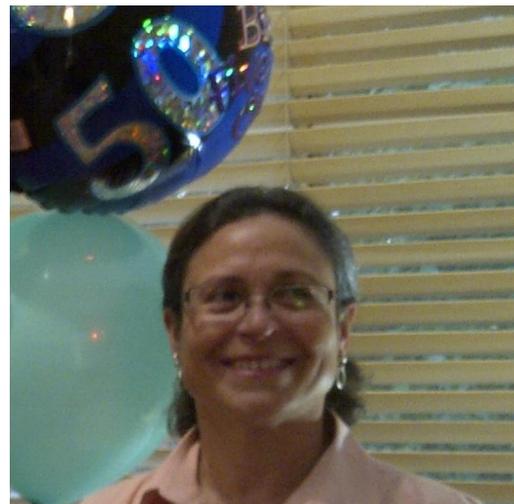
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## Meet the Board: Marisol Vargas

Marisol Vargas, who joined the OTSH Board in 2018, immigrated to the US from Cuba. Hers is a unique story of grit and determination.

She was on the national swim team, but couldn't attend the international swim meets because they were afraid she would defect. She finally got

a visa to Mexico City and arrived with only a small bag and no



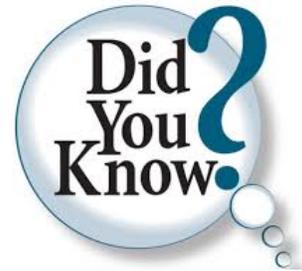
money. This was the beginning of a remarkable journey that included swimming across the Rio Grande to reach the shores of her new home.

Marisol's extensive experience in property management is a great asset to OTSH--expanding from two to ten rental units in the next year. [Read more](#)

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## Affordable Housing: Rethinking Space

There are few large lots available in St. Helena. We need to be identifying in-fill project opportunities. So what is an in-fill space?



**Think: Unused land in urban areas.** It could be developing an empty lot between two buildings, but could also involve the demolition of older or underused properties.

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## Support OTSH and Affordable Housing!

There's always a good time to donate to affordable housing. Help make 2020 our most productive year yet by [making a tax-deductible contribution](#) today.

[Donate Now](#)

We welcome volunteers!  
Our [website](#) lists [community involvement opportunities](#).

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Sara Chrisman Bjerkan  
Jeff Feeney  
Steve Goldfarb  
John Sales\*  
Mary Stephenson\*  
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