



## NOVATO COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT\*

**MISSION & VISION: Growing A Healthy Community, From The Ground Up:** *The mission* of the Novato Community Garden Project is to build and support a network of community gardens that enable people from diverse backgrounds to grow food and foster community in a sustainable manner. *The vision* of the NCGC is a healthy, sustainable community where people from diverse backgrounds come together to reconnect with the land, grow food for themselves and others, and cultivate a truly integrated community. A series of local community gardens provide the foundation for growing a healthy community.

### THE COMMITTEE

**Gail Altschuler, MD** – is the Medical Director of The Altschuler Clinic. She has been practicing medicine for the past 25 years in Marin and Sonoma Counties and is a Specialist in Bariatric Medicine, which is the medical treatment of obesity and related health issues. She is Board Certified by the American Academy of Family Physicians and is a Diplomat of The American Board of Bariatric Physicians.

**David Bedar** – grew up in Brooklyn New York and as a child was involved with the Brooklyn Community Garden This experience stayed with him throughout his life. He recently retired after a career as a high school physical education instructor in the East Coast and in Novato. Being involved with high school age children for many years in Novato, David and his wife often heard similar teen laments – "Boring Novato." A community garden would add an area of interest and possibilities for kids of this age and genre. A garden would create a sense of pride on a personal level which spills over into pride in our community.

**Jane Crownover** – loves to grow anything green and prides herself with a green thumb for 30 years. Jane has an Associate of Science degree in Landscape Design from City College of San Francisco. She currently lives in Novato and works for the Registrar of Voters at The County of Marin where she provides administrative and technical support.

**Tori Graw** – has been married to Gary for 19 years and is a Novato homeowner (16 years). They have two daughters: one at San Marin High School and the other at Sinaloa. Tori is a member of The Quest Church. She is also an organic gardener. In the early 1980's Tori created a college community garden, that included a geodesic solar greenhouse, to provide fresh herbs and vegetables through the local food co-ops. She owns and operates Marin Landscape Management with her husband, utilizing IPM (Integrated Pest Management) techniques. Tori has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science (Stockton State College, N.J.) focusing on toxic waste and water analysis.

**Jennifer Guenther, RN** – is a wife and mother of two, and an intensive care nurse who most-recently worked at Novato Community Hospital. She has been a Novato resident for three years and believes she has found her home here. Jennifer has been a nurse for eight years, notably spending four of those years as an Army Nurse. She now spends her time volunteering for Olive Elementary and Hill Middle School as a PTA member, disaster preparedness coordinator, classroom representative and monthly PTA newsletter editor. The environment, health, and gardening are her passions, and for Jennifer they merge perfectly in the community garden.

**Donna West, RN** - grew up gardening with her Mom and Grandfather and has fond memories of enjoying fresh-picked strawberries, peas, and tomatoes from the family garden. Donna is a Novato resident who has worked as a Public Health Nurse with children, families, and caregivers in Marin for the past 14 years. Increasingly, this work has focused on addressing the childhood obesity epidemic by creating environments which promote healthy behaviors. Supporting the development of early childhood gardens and intergenerational garden experiences has been an important aspect of this effort. Donna's participation in the Novato Community Garden project allows her to blend her lifelong passions for growing food and healthy communities.

**Veronica Valero, Garden Chair** – moved to Novato with her husband in 1996. They have a 7 year old boy and a 22 year old daughter. Veronica is a founding member and Executive Director of the Novato Live Well Network, a volunteer based non-profit focusing on sustainable living, eating and gardening. She is a 2006 graduate of Novato Chamber of Commerce's "Leadership Novato" Program and recipient of the "Leadership Novato" Ed Stark Award. Veronica is a member of Sustainable Novato, sits on the Novato Unified School District (NUSD) Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Committee and the NUSD Wellness Committee. Veronica initiated the Novato Community Garden Project with Karen Losee. When she is not volunteering, Veronica is "The Computer Tutor of Marin"—a one-on-one computer tutor/consultant. Veronica has an M.A. in Biblical Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

**Sandy Wollenberg** – A graduate of Environmental Forum of Marin. As a final project she collaborated with Susan Doyle to create an environmental, bi-lingual book for preschool children on how to grow a garden. She has volunteered for West Coast Green, Bioneers, Sustainable Novato, Novato Live Well Network, Taste of Marin, and Chefs of Marin. She has worked with a grand floral designer arranging floral creations for museums, corporate and private parties. Her passions are gardening, cooking with the bounty from the garden, hiking, and tennis, as well as teaching young children the wonders and nutrition of growing a garden.

*\*The Novato Community Garden Project is a sponsored project of [MarinLink \(www.MarinLink.com\)](http://www.MarinLink.com), a California nonprofit corporation, exempt from federal tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended. Mary O'Mara, ED; Nancy Boyce, Founder & President.*

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