



*Lilypad Homes*

## **Organization Overview**

We stand at the threshold of a pivotal time as California embraces innovative and adaptive solutions that address our critical need for housing. Lilypad Homes is positioned at the intersection of three fundamental demographic and economic shifts that are transforming our society: one, the rapidly increasing number of retirees who wish to age in place; two, the shift toward couples and individuals living alone in single-family homes; and three, the high cost of living, particularly in urban coastal communities in California.

In the context of these fundamental shifts, Lilypad has identified that one of the solutions to the state's housing crisis lies within our existing built environment. These trends are evident in our communities and create an opportunity to transition underutilized space in homes into rental units that benefit homeowners, renters, and the community alike.

Lilypad is a small, woman-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Marin County that is focused on facilitating the development of infill housing, known as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in permitting code. We do this by educating, advocating, consulting with municipalities and agencies on development of these units, and offering services to take homeowners through the financing, permitting, design, construction and rental process. Primary funding has come from the Marin Community Foundation, the County of Marin, and the Lilypad principals.

ADUs are completely independent living units that may be constructed as a cottage home on a residential property, converted from a basement or garage, or carved out of existing spare rooms in homes. Lilypad developed and has been establishing a new ordinance in local permitting code for Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs). The ordinance creates a streamlined and inexpensive permitting process for repurposing spare bedrooms into small, flexible, in-law apartments by adding an efficiency kitchen and an exterior door, while maintaining an interior connection to the main living area.

JADUs are relatively inexpensive and simple to build, compared to other types of ADUs, and offer homeowners the opportunity to house loved ones, caregivers, or people who work in the community. Through the creation of ADUs and JADUs, Lilypad helps clients create options in their homes, building in private units that can generate extra income, and adapting homes to clients' changing needs. These units offer renters a more affordable housing option than traditional multi-family developments and make owning a home in California more affordable.

By leading the conversation, writing articles, teaching classes, and speaking at community meetings, 'Lilypad Homes' is becoming synonymous with ADU and JADU development in Marin County and beyond. Given the overwhelming support for JADUs and need for this type of housing, Lilypad has sponsored a bill, AB 2406 (Thurmond) and hopes to see this model implemented in state law by the end of the September. Lilypad will be consulting with local jurisdictions on adopting the code and developing public informational materials to promote development of these units.

JADUs can be created in single-family, owner-occupied homes. There are nearly 46,000 such homes in Marin with three or more bedrooms, representing nearly 80% of the housing stock in the County. Being conservative, if one-half of these homes are occupied by only one or two people, the potential market of homeowners who might benefit from adding a JADU is approximately 23,000.<sup>1</sup> In California as a whole, there are over four million single-family, owner-occupied homes with three or more bedrooms, so the potential market is more than two million homeowners who might benefit.<sup>2</sup> In addition, two million renters would have access to new, more affordable housing units.

There is enormous pressure in Marin and throughout California to keep up with rising costs, reduce carbon emissions, and create housing. Lilypad is addressing these pressing issues with a tangible solution that benefits renters, homeowners, local businesses, and municipalities. Because of our groundwork, Marin is ready to begin development of Junior Accessory Dwelling units regardless of whether state law is passed. Our vision is to create greater equity and opportunity in housing by building homes in more affordable, resilient, economically and socially diverse communities that are well equipped to weather the challenges of the 21st century.

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<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Marin County, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, California, 2014.