

Lyons Valley Village: Where community thrives

By Judy Finman

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Lyons Valley Village, in the historic town of Lyons, just north of Boulder, is a unique place to live. Residents take pride in their environmentally sustainable lifestyle. They love the outdoors, spend time with neighbors, enjoy the town’s musical life, and lend a hand in the community garden.

Lyons Valley Village is one of Wonderland Hill Development Company’s built-green, solar co-housing communities. Constructed of high-quality renewable and recycled materials throughout, all the homes are highly energy-efficient, healthier, more economical and more sustainable than typical new houses.

The community includes 18 attached and single-family Craftsman-style homes clustered around a 2,200-square-foot Community House, in a 2.8-acre park-side setting. Only four residences are still available for purchase and/or lease.

The community is set alongside established gravel pathways, trailheads, open space and the St. Vrain River. The serene location provides recreational opportunities and is an easy commute to Boulder, Denver, Longmont or Estes Park.

Each home is intentionally sited for ample views of the Community House, common green, and the red sandstone hills to the west. Xeriscape landscaping and pedestrian-friendly design enhance the natural beauty of the site and offer a viable alternative to unsustainable sprawl.

Life in the Community

Justin and Abby Spencer moved to Lyons Valley Village in March, after stints in Boston and Boulder. “We’re the only under-35 couple at Lyons Valley Village,” says Justin Spencer. “We chose it first because we like Lyons – it’s one of the cooler small towns we’ve seen. And the idea of co-housing was appealing to us – having some kind of community life on a daily basis. We were in a co-op at Princeton University.”

The Spencers have found a lot of interesting people in the community. “This is co-housing lite,” Justin Spencer says. “It’s not a super-intense community – we have plenty of privacy. We live our own lives, have drinks with other people or grill once a week or so. A fair amount happens in the Community House; Abby goes to yoga there. There are concerts, too; a lot of people here play music and know people outside who play, too.”

A “pretty serious” fisherman, he especially appreciates Lyons. “We hike and fish. Also, we walk to Oskar Blue’s for music, or a beer or burger. We’re only a half-hour away from backcountry hiking and cross-country skiing. And Rocky Mountain National Park is nearby – we hike and fish there, too. And the various canyons are nice, as well. It’s a beautiful setting, with the hills surrounding you, and we enjoy going for walks in the evening.”

The Spencers like that their community is built green. “I’m a building energy-efficiency consultant, and Lyons Valley Village passes muster!” Justin Spencer says. “We have an extremely energy-efficient house. We have solar hot water. The total for our electric and gas bills has averaged \$30 a month.

And it’s freeing to live in a brand-new house. We spend our weekends recreating instead of renovating,” he quips.

The Spencers contributed to the community garden. “A lovely surprise was the artful way Abby and Justin built our bean support structures,” says resident and avid gardener Carol Devenir. “It’s very creative, not your standard teepees. We used tree branches that were destined for the chip pile, and chips from the town’s chip pile to cover the pathways.”

Everyone delights in the garden’s bounty. “It’s most fun to share the produce in community meals. We had one meal recently at which one family took charge of making grill-cooked pizza, and the pizza toppings included tomatoes, zucchini and basil from the garden. In the spring, we picked bowls of various salad greens, and everyone brought toppings,” Devenir says.

Devenir, MinTze Wu and Ryland Gardner have been the main organizers for the garden. “MinTze came up with the name for our garden, Harambee, which is Swahili for ‘working together,’” Devenir says. “Vegetable gardening exemplifies our main goal of sustainable living. Also, gardening together is a great way to build community – doing something fun, optimistic, productive and gratifying.”

Contact Information for Lyons Valley Village

Call or e-mail Georgette Vigil at 303.449.3232, ext. 203, or georgette@whdc.com.

Directions to Lyons Valley Village

Street address: 197 2nd Ave., Lyons, CO 80540

North on Hwy 36 to Hwy 66/Ute Creek Hwy. West (left) onto Hwy 66/Ute Creek Hwy. Go 1/2 mile and turn South (left) over the Stone Bridge (directly behind the sandstone Welcome to Lyons sign). Follow to stop sign, go West (right) onto 2nd Avenue. Follow for 1/4 mile and Lyons Valley Village is on the West side of the road (left) next to Bohn City Park.

Available Homes at Lyons Valley Village

This is the last opportunity to become a Lyons Valley Village homeowner or renter:

\$415,000 ... tour this fabulous home and notice the covered porch with a great view of the foothills. Discover the light and bright open floor plan that includes a/c, hardwood flooring, carpet, gas range, separate dining room and remember to ask about the secret room. Two-car detached garage.

\$309,000 ... this darling duplex has all that you need: hardwood floors, stainless steel appliances, carpet, a soaking tub, a/c, skylight in the bedroom and a one-car garage.

\$240,000 ... this home has an exuberant amount of light and includes a/c, hardwood flooring, carpet, bathroom tile upgrades, stainless steel appliances, and an upgraded back splash in the kitchen. One-car garage.

\$245,000 ... this must-see home has a bird’s-eye view of the community and includes a/c, stainless steel appliances, hardwood flooring, upgraded carpet, bathroom tile flooring and upgraded tile on the kitchen backsplash. One-car garage.

MinTze Wu and Carol Devenir in the garden:

