

What I Love About Governors Club

AS TOLD TO ANDREA GRIFFITH | Photo by Briana Brough



Thirty-somethings Trey and RamonaLisa Robertson, who moved from California in 2008, have many reasons for a happy home life — a golf course, pool and a friendly neighborhood being chief among them. ➤

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Trey Robertson: We moved in Dec. 5, 2008. Before that we were in a little town just south of San Jose. We're Silicon Valley transplants.

RamonaLisa Robertson: I have a job in human resources [at IBM in RTP] doing talent management. My clients are all over the country and the world. So being able to do the same job here was a good incentive. I do a lot of work from home because I typically have meetings that start early. I go in once or twice a week.

TR: I work three to four times a week in the office [as a software engineer at IBM]. We're 20 to 25 minutes from work. My parents retired in Pinehurst. So we would come to visit and kind of got to know the area. We thought it was pretty nice. So we followed them. But now they've followed us. They're moving into Governors Club in a few weeks.

RR: We actually anticipated moving out here a lot earlier than we did. We started our search before [our 2-year-old daughter] Emily was even born. We had a Realtor who showed us places in Cary, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Durham County. He said that this area was more of a retirement place. We came out here and loved the terrain, the atmosphere. We honed in on the area at that point. Fast forward about a year plus after that, when it looked like our house was actually going to sell. We took a more aggressive look at specific houses. This was the last house of 20 or 30 that we looked at.

TR: We came in three hours before our

plane was going to leave and saw this house. Coming from California, with all the earthquake codes, one of the things you rarely see are big windows with these kind of views. And it was bit more contemporary than some of the other houses we saw.

RR: We were looking for something that had a good number of rooms for family visiting. It seemed like our house. It was the first house where we could really see ourselves living.

TR: We knew this was the one. My parents had researched houses for us, being so close to the area. Both of them said if this were their pick, they would choose here.

COMING TO PLAY

RR: Living in a golf community was one of our desires when we moved out here. This kind of club and this type of house, in California, would not have been obtainable unless we won the lottery or something. Especially the amenities that this club offers – we would not have been in a position to live in that type of environment. The golf, the clubhouse and all the activities included in the membership – they're a huge draw for us. If you are retired and you're more interested in day activities – the coordinated golf or luncheons – they have that. But for us, with a 2-year-old, there are a huge number of family activities going on. Emily loves the pool, the playground. Sometimes we go to family dinner night at the clubhouse. One of these days, we'll get her out there practicing golf. We've pur-

chased her a little set of clubs.

TR: For the new members, they have dinners. So you meet people that way. Within a couple of months, I was playing a regular game of golf with a group of guys on the weekend. You just go out and participate, and everyone is so friendly.

RR: The club and the members do a great job of reaching out to new members. When we moved, our neighbors came by with banana bread and wine. From the bat, we knew it was a place that welcomes new people. Last night, I was at a ladies' night dinner. In addition to ad hoc playgroups and organized things, they also have kid care. Two days a week, drop-in babysitting is available. So if you need to run and do errands, your child has a play area and is interacting with other kids. It's been very convenient to find things to do, for all of us.

TR: A lot of times we go out shopping on the weekends in Chapel Hill or Durham, stop for lunch, make an afternoon of it.

RR: We're 15 minutes to Southpoint, so we eat there occasionally. We go to Southern Village at least once a week for Tumble Gym. I make my rounds to Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Target. It was a really good location for us when you consider work and the shopping we want to do. And the schools here were highly rated.

CLIMATE ADJUSTMENT

TR: In California, we never had sustained levels of cold like we had here this past winter. That was pretty tough.

RR: The flip side is that you really get the seasons here. In California, it's more like spring/summer all year round. Emily loved playing in the snow. But if we could have California weather here, we wouldn't say no. The humidity is definitely higher. It's a series of tradeoffs, and that one doesn't bite us too much.

TR: One thing that's been a pleasant change: In California, every afternoon you get 15-to-20-mile-per-hour winds. Here, you get that maybe once a month.

RR: We would feel like we were in a wind tunnel when we played golf in California.

TR: I'm not a huge fan of the roads in Governors Club. The roads were designed to keep speed down, but the concrete is a little worse for wear now.

RR: The roads are too narrow. If people are having a big party, cars are parked in the street. You have to be careful. As for the gate, we are happy not to have door-to-door salespeople. When we have a visitor coming, we can do everything online.

MOMENTS OF CLARITY

RR: We don't have any plans to move. We're happy. It was very thoughtful decision-making, moving here. We'll analyze something 16 different ways before making a decision. Missing our family and friends was the hardest part of moving. But to have family here and to now have a group of friends has made it easier. Noth-

ing has changed our minds. We're definitely not looking back saying, "What were we thinking?"

TR: Sometimes you'll just look around at something and go, "Yeah, that's why we moved here." Her family came to visit over the Fourth of July. They do a private

fireworks show over the lake. There's food and drinks and music. This was not two or three fireworks. We were sitting there like, "Holy hell." It was amazing.

RR: That put the accent point on things. Those things just make it the perfect place for us.

TR: It makes it much easier to say we made

"Nothing has changed our minds. We're definitely not looking back saying, 'What were we thinking?'"

the right decision. ... For me, one of the draws here is just the community. Just having boundaries up and belonging to the club, there's a sense of community that you know all your neighbors inside of the fences even if you don't. **CHM**

Just the Facts: Governors Club

Basic information: Developed in 1988, the gated community encompasses 1,600 acres and features 850 high-end, custom-built single-family homes and about 15 townhomes in 14 different neighborhoods. Architecturally, the homes are diverse. Lot sizes range from less than a quarter of an acre to three-and-a-half acres. When its development is completed, the community will have a total of about 1,200 homes. Governors Club was selected Community Association of the Year for North Carolina in 2008 and 2009.

Location: Governors Club has a Chapel Hill address but is in Chatham County, off of Mount Carmel Church Road.

Homeowner fees: \$1,836 per year for a lot with a house. \$1,377 per year for an empty lot.

Price: Single-family homes cost between \$400,000 and \$4 million. Lots range in price from \$40,000 to \$575,000.

Schools: North Chatham School and Northwood High School.

Property tax rate: Homeowners pay 66.42 cents per \$100 of assessed value in Chatham County taxes. For a \$500,000 house, \$3,321 is paid annually.

Amenities: Aside from two-and-a-half miles of walking trails, amenities at any level require club membership. The cost starts at \$2,500 annually and may include access to indoor and outdoor pools, dining services, the 27-hole Jack Nicklaus golf course, wellness and recreation center and tennis courts. The exception to this is the Stonebrook neighborhood, which has its own amenities that are included in homeowner fees. Note: Property ownership in the Governors Club community is not a requirement of club membership. **CHM**