After working in community development in Boston and serving as director of transportation and land use at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Linda Mandolini joined Eden Housing Inc. and in 2001 became the organization’s executive director. In her current position, she oversees affordable housing production, resident support services and property management and is responsible for Eden’s housing development pipeline, property management portfolio and staff of 130 employees.

**First job:** I had two – camp counselor by day and fast-food restaurant worker by night.

**Most rewarding aspect of current job:** Knowing that Eden has been able to provide a tangible, lasting solution for the affordable housing problem that so many Bay Area communities face. For 40 years, we’ve been providing our residents, whether working families or fixed-income seniors, a place to call home.

**Greatest obstacle you had to overcome to get where you are today:** I was very shy and afraid of public speaking.

**Secret to success:** Hard work and having a talented and committed board of directors and staff.

**Proudest accomplishment:** Making a difference in people’s lives by building and preserving thousands of units of affordable housing. Also, successfully completing the 109-mile El Tour de Tucson bicycle race in November.

**Who inspires you and why:** Beyond the fact that I was born on the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and every year, I get a reminder of the call to public service via a rerun of the “Ask not what your country can do for you” speech, I find great inspiration in my family. My parents were people of very modest means who refused to allow me to entertain the notion that not having enough money to pay for college would in any way be a barrier to success. They scrimped and saved to buy a $14,000 house in a community with a good school system. My own family circumstance made me understand how important it is to have a stable home environment and access to opportunities.

**Three adjectives that best describe you:** Committed, energetic, focused.

**Person you would most like to meet and why:** Oprah Winfrey – I admire her success as a businesswoman. Bill Belichick – I’m a huge Patriots fan, and he has the ability to create consistently high-performing teams.

**Favorite nonwork activities:** Bicycling, golf, travel and cooking.

**Community involvement/volunteer activities:** I serve on the boards of the Housing Trust of Santa Clara County and the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California.