



## Home sales, prices in NorCal rise slightly

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By Karina Rusk

SAN JOSE, CA (KGO) -- There is some encouraging news about the housing market. Home sales are up and so are prices. According to DataQuick, the median home price for Bay Area homes last month was \$304,000. It is a jump of five percent from March.

Foreclosed properties and bargain prices are still dominating the market, but sales are up and the month-to-month median prices are up, which is the first time it has happened in almost two years.

Josh and Millie Stone are ready to own their first home. For qualified buyers, money is cheap and so are housing prices. "We moved here about four years ago from Colorado and we never thought we'd be able to buy a house here, and it's finally getting to the point where we can buy," said Millie Stone.

It appears new buyers are finally giving the housing market some traction. More than 7,000 homes and condos closed escrow in the Bay Area last month. That's up nearly 13 percent from March and also up more than 13 percent from sales a year ago.

**In San Jose, pending condo sales are actually up 125 percent from a year ago. Luxury high-rise condos in downtown are starting to move.**

**"We've got a few dozen folks living here now, moving in, so that's really spiked recently," said The 88 Project Manager Scott Giddens.**

The median selling price for homes and condos in the Bay Area last month was up from the month before, but at just over \$300,000 it is still down more than 40 percent from a year ago. That's because foreclosures are dragging down the median price and high-end sellers who have the luxury of waiting, simply aren't putting their homes on the market.

"In the real world what we are seeing is that if you are under \$500,000 with running water, you are probably going to have multiple offers within the first two weeks," said Windmere broker Cherie Colon. The Stones know when it comes time to make an offer, they may have competition but are confident in this market. They'll be getting a lot of home for their money. "Now we can actually get something we are happy with," said Josh Stone.

In addition to new home buyers, brokers said that investors are back in this market, not the buy and flip investors from a couple of years ago, but the long-term investors who say the numbers are penciling out for them. They can buy a property, rent it to cover the mortgage and hold on to it for its long-term increased value.