

PALM LIVING

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The Rohdes

MAKE WAY IN LIFE WITH LAUGHTER

By Sarah Blanchard | Photos by Neubek Photographers

"I say the happiest day of Dave's life is the day he married me," Erika says with mischief.

She's the mom of two boys, and in a household where she's the only female, a sort of laid-back sarcasm has become the family's way of life. Using irony is helpful in diffusing tense situations, and humor can make it easier to broach emotional topics. Not to mention the many proven psychological benefits to laughter. So the Rohdes use these things to their advantage in their day-to-day life...and it's basically irrepresible. They are making impish, teasing comments left and right.

So when she begins to recount how she and Dave met at a frat party in college, Erika pulls up short and says: "Dave and I have been together for 19 years." She pauses to let it sink in. "Yikes."

Nearly two decades seems like a long time, especially when looking back on your college days, when the possibilities of life are open before you. But the past 19 years for Dave and Erika Rohde have been filled with achievement, success, new life—and plenty of laughs!

After attending an all-girls Catholic school growing up, Erika went to Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan, completing her B.S. in Criminal Justice in less than two years, and a double minor in English and Pre-Law as well. She went on to earn a J.D. at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. ("Lot's of Catholic schooling," she sums up.)

Dave went to the University of Michigan, where he earned his B.B.A. He went on to receive two Master's degrees from Kettering University—one in Operations Management and the second in Manufacturing Management. He also holds an Executive Education Certificate from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

Although they've been together for 19 years, Erika and Dave Rohde have been married for 12. They met within Erika's first couple weeks at college, and as they grew closer as a couple, they decided to wait to get married until Dave finished graduate school and Erika was done with law school. They were married in November 2007.

For the last 13 years, Erika has been an attorney with Forensic Criminology Associates. More recently, she added another career to her life. "I have fallen in love with real estate in Naples," she says. In 2018 she joined on as a Realtor at Downing-Frye Realty. "I love every minute of it," she shares. "I often joke that I see the worst of the worst for one job, and the best of the best here in Naples for the second. I wouldn't have it any other way!"

Dave has worked in the automotive manufacturing field for the last 19 years. He is currently the Executive Director of





Operations for North America and Global Account Manager for the Leotec Corporation.

Erika and Dave Rohde live with their two boys, Paxton (9) and Wyatt (5), in Delasol. Their family interests? Hockey, hockey, and more hockey. “Both boys are obsessed with hockey, if I didn’t make it clear,” Erika comments. Dave has been playing since he was two years old; he continued through college on a collegiate team, and he now plays on two teams at the Hertz Arena. Both times when they found out they were having a baby boy, Dave immediately went out and bought their first pair of hockey skates. Today, whether it is a pick-up game in the family room, driveway or at the ice rink, the boys always seem to have a stick in their hands. Both Paxton and Wyatt also play at Hertz. And Erika can usually be seen—or really heard—in the stands. (“I am so that hockey mom,” she unabashedly admits.) The Rohdes love rooting for the Detroit Red Wings and their beloved University of Michigan Wolverines.

Dave and Erika started running when they moved to the area. Together they got involved in the Run Disney races and have completed two full marathons. Erika herself has finished over 15 half marathons nationwide. And she and Paxton still do the Star Wars races at Disney every year.



We would like to thank Surroundings for bringing you this month’s cover story.

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Because Dave travels so much for work, family vacations have become an important time to spend time together and unwind. They cherish the trips that they take together as a family. Some of their favorite spots are Disney, Disney Cruises in Alaska and the Caribbean, South America, Hawaii and skiing out West.

The family of four attends St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church. The boys are active members of Cub Scouts, and Erika volunteers at Veterans Memorial Elementary. She also volunteers in their community and sits on the Delasol HOA Board.

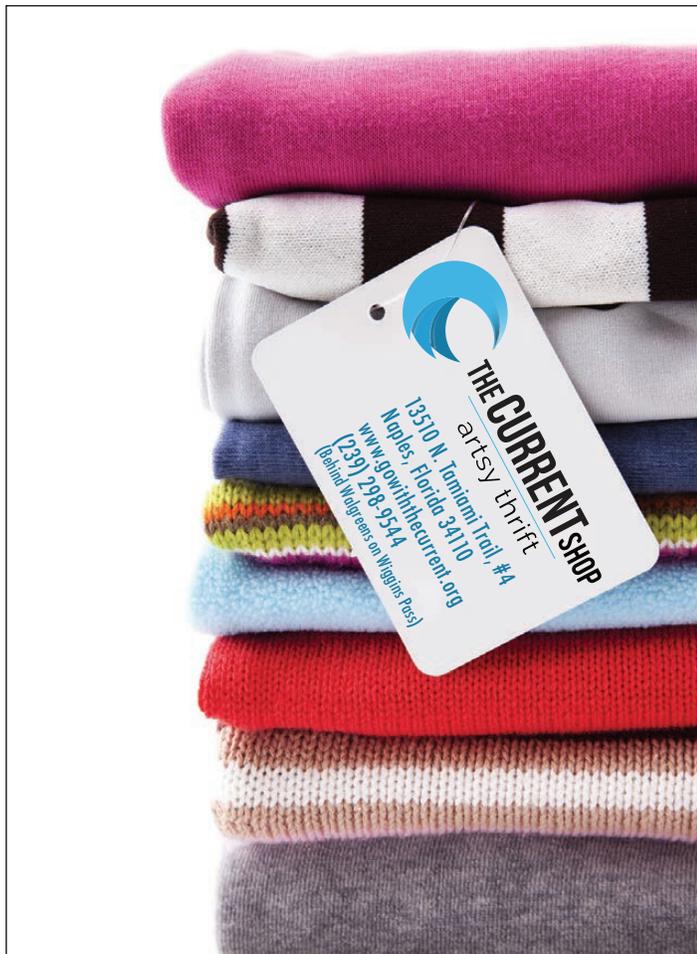
The Rohdes say they never knew what a “community” truly feels like until they came to Delasol. Like many others, they witnessed with awe how their community came together during Irma. “That was how we knew we found somewhere special,” they share. Erika credits her added career path to the inspiration of Delasol. “I became active in real estate, because I have truly fallen in love with this community,” she says. She believes in the community. “When I pull into our gates, I see families playing on the playground, pickle ball games going on, people out walking and talking to neighbors.



When people are driving, they wave as they pass and they call and check on you if they know you were sick,” she explains. The community is now Blue Zones recognized, they have a full social calendar, including exercise classes, tailgate parties, holiday events, and community service opportunities.

“It is rare to have such a tight-knit community to raise children in,” Erika and Dave say. “We are blessed to have found one.”

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