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# LAKE VIEWS



**Buse Family:**  
*In Love With Lake Life*

Cover photo by Lindsey King

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Derek and Erika Buse moved their family to Lake Samish in 2017.

# BUSE FAMILY

## *In Love With Lake Life*

**By Hilary Parker**

Derek and Erika Buse are relative newcomers to Lake Samish. They moved to the lake in January 2017.

As real estate agents with Coldwell Banker Bain, the couple has the pulse of communities around the county, but they chose Lake Samish.

“We fell in love with the location and life on the lake,” Erika says.

Erika and Derek fell in love with each other when they were both students at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego. They actually met on an Alaska Airlines flight headed back to Washington one Thanksgiving.

Erika grew up in Bellingham and attended Lynden Christian High School. Derek grew up in Stanwood. And they just happened to meet on the plane.

“It was definitely a small world thing,” Erika says.

They married in 2007, and stayed in California while Derek pursued a career in the fashion industry.



*The Buse family takes as many opportunities as possible to enjoy life on the lake.*

Derek started a clothing line right out of college that garnered a lot of attention in the world of contemporary menswear. (His company was nominated by GQ for Best Menswear Designer of the Year.) After 10 years in the fashion industry for Derek and living near Los Angeles, the Buses were ready for a change of pace – and wanted to be closer to family to raise their children – so they headed back home in 2016.

While Derek had been involved in fashion, Erika was in the high-powered world of investment as director of investor relations for a hedge fund.

Coming to Bellingham, the couple decided to combine their business savvy to venture into real estate. It was a winning combination – they were ranked No. 1 at Coldwell Banker by closed transactions and sales volume in 2017.

Of course, it isn't all work and no play for this family of four. Erika, Derek and daughters, Layla, 4, and Lily, 2, love spending time together. Over the winter the whole family hit the slopes at Mount Baker, and in the summer they are at home on the lake. The girls love floating on a big foam "lily pad" towed behind the family's boat or taking a little ride with dad on the paddle board.

"In the summer the lake becomes vibrant, everyone is out on their docks or in their boats," Erika says. "We met more neighbors in one summer month than we did during the first five months of moving in! You really get a sense of community during the summer."

One of their fond memories from last summer was listening to Band Camp hosted at nearby Camp Lutherwood.

"Our girls got a kick out of listening to them play music as it echoed across the lake."

This summer, Derek is planning on starting a Lake-Samish based paddling club. He is hoping to get a consistent group out on the lake once a week through the spring and summer. He is an avid paddler and placed 10th in the canoe leg of Ski to Sea 2017.

Currently Derek is also the vice president of the Lake Samish Community Association.

Erika is a board member at Whatcom Hospice and a member of Bellingham Central Lions Club. She oversees the Lions Club hearing program, which donates hearing aids to those in need.

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The family attends "My Church" in Bellingham.

With busy lives focused on work and the community, the Buses enjoy the occasional trip to the San Juans to recharge.

"We do our best to sneak up into the San Juan Islands for a weekend here and there. We love spending time on the water and that island chain is some of our favorite boating."

In the summer months they also enjoy a quick day trip to Taylor Shellfish Farm.

"We love oysters plus the girls can run wild while we shuck and slurp – and sip!" Erika says.

Lake Padden is another favorite family outing, as is a night out at Fat Pie Pizza in Fairhaven, where the family can enjoy dining on the rooftop.

Then it's back home to enjoy their life on Lake Samish.

Erika says a quote from writer and illustrator Susan Branch sums up their lake life the best: "I could never in a hundred summers get tired of this."



*Lily, 2, and Layla 4, love having fun together inside and outside their Lake Samish home.*



*Lily takes a spin on the paddle board with dad.*