



Martha Gach named 2016 Grand Marshal

Born and raised in Morgantown, West Virginia, Martha graduated from Washington University in St. Louis and received her doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Michigan. Martha, after living in Michigan for 13 years, moved to Shrewsbury in 1999. Martha and her husband Gerard have been married for 28 years, and have two daughters Eva, age 25, and Margaret, age 19.



Shaped by her degrees in the field of science, Martha is the Conservation Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary & Conservation Center in Worcester where she has worked for 16 years. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Worcester State University.

One of the *Spirit of Shrewsbury Fall Festival* Committee's criteria for Grand Marshal candidates is to show a record of volunteer community service. Martha Gach is a woman who exemplifies the true spirit of what it means to be a volunteer.

Since Grade 2, scouting has been a big part of Martha's life. Martha was a troop leader in Shrewsbury for 14 years, town registrar, town cookie manager, encampment director and on the Council Recognitions Committee. Martha is known by many of her friends as the "leader of the leaders," due to the Service Unit Manager's position she held for 8 years for the Shrewsbury Girl Scouts. After having served in many scouting leadership positions, her organizational skills brought her in an additional direction with volunteering her services on Shrewsbury town committees: Shrewsbury Conservation Commission, Shrewsbury's Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, and helping the Town Trails Committee. She has enjoyed helping people experience Shrewsbury's parks in an unusual way, leading the Trails Committee full moon walks through Prospect and Lake St. Parks. Currently, she is a board member on the Shrewsbury based WE CAN (Worcester County Environmental Community Agriculture Network) which deals with open space, recycling and sustainability. Martha is also active in Rebuilding Together Worcester (with volunteers from Shrewsbury and the First Congregational Church Youth Group). This organization provides free home repair to low-income elderly and disabled homeowners (in Worcester), but pulls together volunteers from the wider community to make that happen.

Awards abound in Martha's volunteer endeavors: outstanding leader, volunteer of excellence, appreciation pin for service throughout Shrewsbury, and the honor pin for service to girls in more than one geographic area.

Congratulations to Martha Gach the 2016 Grand Marshal of the Spirit of Shrewsbury Fall Festival.

Scouting rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best. ~ Juliette Gordon Low