

## **For Immediate Release**

### ***Deanna Rhodes Norwich's 2023 Saint Patrick's Grand Marshal***

**Norwich, CT** - "I have spread my dreams under your feet; Tread softly because you tread on my dreams." This is a quote from Irish poet WB Yates, but applies to how this year's Grand Marshal Deanna Rhodes feels about the City for which she works. Deanna has always dedicated her passions to the City of Norwich, making it a better place to live, work, and do business which is exemplified by her volunteerism and efforts outside of her job for the City.

Deanna has worked for the City of Norwich for over six (6) years as the City's Director of Planning and Neighborhood Services for the City of Norwich. Deanna serves on the Executive Boards of both the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers and Friends of the State Archaeologist. She is a member of the Program Committee for the Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association and served on the 2022 Leadership Committee for the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time, Deanna enjoys portraying the NorWITCH at community events and is a founding member of the Crow and Cauldron Witch Dancers of Eastern Connecticut. This year she also chaired the inaugural NorWITCH Halloween Strut that took place in Downtown Norwich.

Deanna feels a strong tie to the Irish community being 13% Irish herself her Godmother Mary Ellen (Kerrigan) Lizotte, a first generation American from Ireland, introduced her to Irish culture at a very young age which has had a lasting effect on her life. She taught Deanna and her sister, Deirdra, to Irish step dance with their cousins while her husband, Bernie, played accordion. Deanna's favorite Irish songs are the Irish Rovers "The Unicorn Song" and "The Orange and the Green" because of her Auntie Mary's influence. Deanna's sister Deirdra is now a Redemptoristine Nun living in a monastery in Dublin, Ireland. She intends to tour Ireland in 2024 and to witness her sister making her First Profession.

Her mother's grandparents were married in Occum at St. Joseph's Church in 1906 and they resided and worked in the City. Her father's Leone relatives immigrated to the City from San Donato Val Di Comino, Italy and are listed on the monument located on the Green in front of the Norwich Free Academy. Deanna still has numerous distant "Leone" cousins who still live in the City and continues to research her family history for more connections to Norwich.

Deanna and her husband Michael have two children Patrick and Bradleigh. She is a huge New York Jets football fan and plans vacations around attending away games with her husband.

You can come celebrate Deanna at this year's Gala in support of the Norwich Saint Patrick's Parade and Festival on February 10th at the Holiday Inn. We will be honoring both Deanna as well as John Shishmanian, the 2022 Winterfest Grand Marshal. Tickets can be purchased at the Norwich Events website, [GoNorwichCt.com](http://GoNorwichCt.com). We would like to thank the Norwich Holiday Inn for being a major sponsor.

Come watch the Norwich Saint Patrick's Parade and Festival on March 5th in Downtown Norwich. Step off is at 1:00 PM, and festivities will be taking place before and after the parade throughout the Downtown. More information can be found on their website [GoNorwichCT.com](http://GoNorwichCT.com) as well as the event on their Facebook Page [Facebook.com/GoNorwichCT](https://www.facebook.com/GoNorwichCT).

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Norwich Events Organization is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 volunteer committee that organizes community events for the citizens of Norwich and our surrounding community. These events are funded 100% by tax-deductible donations.

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