

A SIGNATURE NEW ACHIEVEMENT IN 2021 AND HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR!

Not only did SDMNY manage to stay alive and thrive this year, even after our 5-year DDPC grant ran out (super thanks to the Ford, Taft and Peter Hoguet Foundations, and the FAR Fund!), and the OPWDD SDMA bill, incorporating SDMNY's "Principles for SDMA Legislation" passed the State Senate. We also launched a new initiative that has the potential, over time, to be a real game-changer for people with I/DD.

It's become clear to us over the past 5 ½ years that decision-making is a skill that can and should be taught—to everyone (SDMNY staff have been using our mapping tools personally to great advantage)—but especially to people with I/DD whose experience is so often about having decisions made for or about them. We think that decision-making, including identifying the aspects of making a decision in which a person needs or wants help, is something that should be included in special education, especially in transition planning. After all, federal law requires education for students with I/DD to prepare them for inclusive lives, and to utilize transition planning to move them to adulthood as autonomous and self-determined as possible.

We wanted to see how this might be done in a school setting, and we were able to partner with our dear friends at the Cooke School to pilot a 10-week decision-making curriculum, designed and delivered by SDMNY Site Coordinator Joan Cornachio (who also has a Master's degree in Special Ed) and Professor Gina Riley, our amazing Faculty Associate from the Hunter School of Education.

We'll be telling you much more about this initiative in the New Year, but as we approach 2022 with all the promise it holds in store, we also want to celebrate how, with your help and support, we have continued to think—and work—"out of the box." Once again we have been able to draw on the experiences, ideas, and, yes, dreams, of our SDMNY community: the Decision-Makers, their families and supporters; our volunteer facilitators and mentors; our brilliant and knowledgeable Advisory Council; our brave and generous funders; our partners here in New York; and our colleagues across the US and around the world, who are "pushing the envelope," to find more and better ways to advance the *human right* of everyone to make their own decisions and have them legally recognized, regardless of disability!

SO HERE'S TO WHAT WE'VE LEARNED, DONE AND BEGUN IN 2021, AND TO A PRODUCTIVE, IMPACTFUL (AND HEALTHY) NEW YEAR!

