

SDMNY Advisory Council Reconvenes

It's been 8 months since the amazing group of people who make up our Advisory Council (AC) have met; the last time, at the end of March, was a sort of "goodbye" as our DDPC grant came to an end and the future was uncertain. But on Wednesday, with funding secured at least through next April, we finally met again. We were able to share all the great things we've managed to accomplish in the interim, along with plans for new and/or expanded initiatives. Among the reports that were greeted with enthusiasm and excitement:

SDMAs: After all the delays in facilitation and recruiting caused by Covid, we are on target for at least 100 signed SDMAs by the end of our "bridge year";

VIDEOS: We have created a number of impactful new videos (*SDM for People on the Autism Spectrum*; *The Case for Legal Recognition of SDMAs: Parents Concerned about Third Party Refusal*; *SDM and the Courts*, all available on our website) with plans for a Guardian ad Litem training video for Surrogates' Courts and extensive capacity building materials for supporters, drawing on the work already done by leading Australian academics;

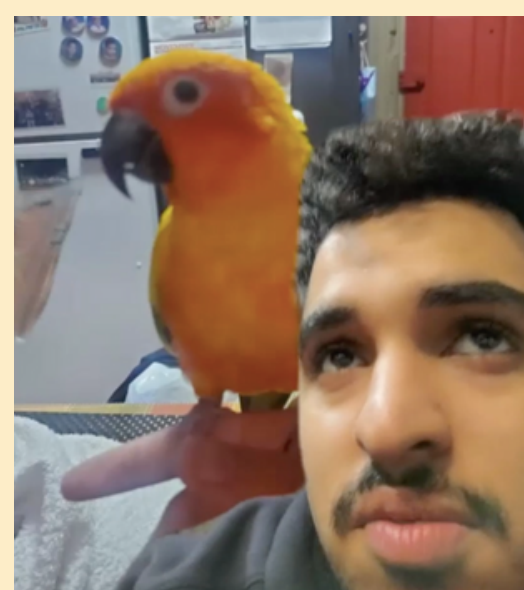
TRANSITION PILOT PROJECT: We have begun a pilot project with our partners at the Cooke School to explore teaching decision-making and the use of support through a module we expect to refine and offer to public and private schools to be used as part of their transition curriculum;

LEGISLATION: The OPWDD SDMA bill that incorporates almost all of our "*Principles for SDMA Legislation*" was introduced in the last legislative session and passed the State Senate. It will be re-introduced in the 2022 session and expectations are high for its passage;

COURT SYSTEM: The court system has increasingly acknowledged and encouraged SDM as an alternative to guardianship, including efforts to train Guardians ad Litem (often appointed in Art. 17-A guardianship proceedings) in SDM, educational programs on SDM for Surrogates, referrals to SDMNY, and unanimous endorsement of the OPWDD SDMA bill by the Surrogates' Association;

ADVOCATE EMPOWERMENT: Working with the Westchester Institute of Human Development, and AC member Naomi Brickel, we have begun a pilot project to "coach" and empower Decision-Makers (including the Decision-Maker members of the AC) to make short videos and give educational presentations about SDM;

AND SO MUCH MORE...



One of the most exciting and gratifying things about SDMNY's accomplishments and plans is how important AC members have been in coming up with great ideas and giving, or helping us find the resources to implement them. The AC has been so much more than "advisory." They have been true partners in our work and our accomplishments. One AC member, Decision-Maker Dylan, told us how glad he was to have been able to help, and how excited he was about all we've achieved (and his mom joined in!). Click [here](#) to see what he had to say.

