

A Very Irish SDMA Signing

As we often note, every SDMA signing is a celebration, but each one is also unique in its own way, and this Thursday was no exception. Decision-Maker Patrick (Pat) was born in Ardara, County Donegal, in Ireland, 68 years ago, and came to this country as a young child. His sister and brother (twins) were born in the U.S. and remember their parents speaking Gaelic at home so that the kids couldn't understand what they were saying. Pat loves Irish music and goes to live concerts and theater productions every chance he gets. When his signing ceremony was set for Thursday, it seemed like amazing serendipity; June 16th is well known and celebrated in Ireland and beyond as "Bloomsday", the single day, in 1904, when all of James Joyce's masterpiece Ulysses takes place. So, of course, the signing ceremony had a distinctly Irish flavor, including music by the Chieftans playing in the background when the cake was brought in!



Rob, Mentor Joan Cornachio, Brother Bill, Facilitator Tom Ott, Nephew Andrew and Sister Mary, SDMNY Director Kris Glen and, in the starring role, Pat!



We met Pat at SANYS's Regional Conference in 2019 where, as a strong self-advocate, he was immediately excited to sign up, and we were equally excited to have him join our SDMNY family. He is a wonderful man, full of life and Irish wit, who despite his disability, has always lived life to the fullest. Pat has traveled to Ireland (of course!) and Canada, and enjoys summer vacation weeks at the Jersey Shore. He goes to Lincoln Center, Radio City, Broadway, and innumerable community events near the ADAPT residence in the Bronx where he has lived happily for over 20 years. He is loved by the staff, and has, as one of his Supporters, Rob, with whom he has worked for more than 40 years. Both Pat and his loving family consider Rob like another brother to Pat, so the signing, with them all in attendance (although remotely) was a true family gathering.

The Bloomsday connection has another significance beside the date. Ulysses is, both for Joyce and for the ancient Greek Homer, a story about a journey, and so is Pat's life. His family left their home and crossed the ocean to find better care for him, and to enable him to live his best life, and, without question, he has done just that. Pat described signing his SDMA as the beginning of a new chapter, and we hope that it will continue to be filled with love, friendship, activism, theater and, of course, Irish music!