

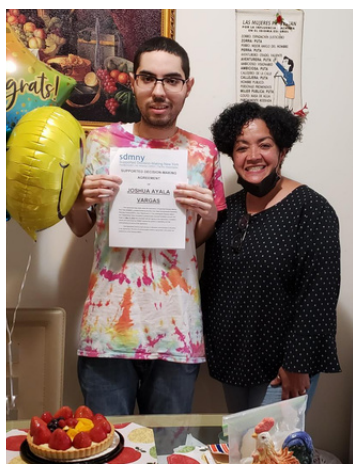
A Signing Ceremony Muy Especial

All SDMA signings are amazing, celebratory events, but each one is also special in its own way. Last week Decision-Maker Jhoshua and his facilitator Herminia made it our first all-CUNY completed SDMA.

Jhoshua is a wonderful young man who came to the U.S. from Colombia with his grandmother (“Abuela”) Maria when he was only two years old. They live in Queens, where he went to school, and he and Maria learned about SDMNY at a Spanish language information session we gave for inclusive education students and their families at **Queens College**.

Herminia’s family is originally from the Dominican Republic, and after many years of devoted work in the mental health field, she enrolled in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program at **LaGuardia Community College**, where she was part of a pilot project we ran to train OTA students as SDMNY facilitators. By serendipity—and also because she is fluent in Spanish—she was assigned to Jhoshua. They hadn’t gotten very far before she graduated, and we were ready to assign a new facilitator. But no; with a new job, no more academic credit and no pay, she continued on, even through the difficulties of the pandemic, in what she describes as “a labor of love.”

And, of course, SDMNY’s “home” is at **Hunter College** where we have been welcomed for the past five years. Hunter’s motto is “Mihi Cura Futuri” which means “the care of the future is mine” and aligns so perfectly with the way in which SDM enables people with I/DD to decide their own futures and live their own best lives.



Jhoshua enjoyed the SDM process that allowed him to think about things that are important in his life and his future (see Abuela Maria’s comments about this [here](#)). He was able to make a decision to stay in New York rather than relocating to Florida. He is looking forward to continuing his education so that he can become a paraprofessional in a school for children with special needs. Herminia says that participating in a project that affords people with I/DD more autonomy was “something I wanted to lend my passion to.” So, the signing was a great day for Jhoshua, his supporters (ranging from

family members to his therapist!) and Herminia. And, if we can express a little pride as well, it was also a *dia muy especial* for CUNY!