

An SDMA “Sister Act”

We often say that there are as many reasons why people do SDM and SDMA as there are Decision-Makers. This week we highlight one of our favorites: sisters!

Emma came to SDMNY through information sessions we did at the Cooke School (you might remember her from our video *SDM and Transition Age Youth*) She is a lovely young woman who is thinking about going to college; we paired her with Manal, a facilitator who is part of a mini-pilot project we are doing with the Hunter School of Education (SOE). Their work together was going so well that Emma’s older sister, Noa, an artist, decided to try SDM as well.



A word about SOE, and our wonderful Faculty Associate, Professor Gina Riley. Through a grant from the New York Community Trust, we were able to offer small stipends to SOE graduate students, who were planning to become special education teachers, to enable them to serve as SDMNY facilitators. We hoped to demonstrate how valuable this work would be for such students in developing professional skills and identity, and why graduate education programs should include SDM in their curricula. We also thought (and Manal, a recent grad of the Master’s Program is already demonstrating) that those SOE students would be wonderful ambassadors for SDM in the educational systems where they would work after graduation. Gina agreed to mentor them, including Manal.

Back to Noa! Encouraged by Emma and her family, she also signed up with SDMNY Site Coordinator Joan Cornachio, who paired Noa with none other than Gina as her facilitator. This really became a family project! Noa has even chosen Emma to be one of her supporters and now that both sisters have completed the 3-phase facilitation process, they are planning a joint SDMA signing celebration in February! Gina and Manal are so proud of Noa and Emma, Gina is so proud of Manal, and we are all so proud of what they have accomplished together.

