

AN SDMA SIGNING ON THE WAY TO RESTORATION

When Louis turned 18 his parents went to Surrogates Court to get guardianship, because that's what they were told they had to do; no one offered them any alternatives. The Surrogate, however, observed a young man with the potential to learn and grow. Although granting the guardianship, he required the family to return to Court after Louis's 21st birthday, to see whether that guardianship was still necessary.

Last summer, on the return date, that same Surrogate saw an impressive young man who he thought might well be able to make his own decisions with just a little support. He then referred Louis and his parents to SDMNY. This Wednesday, after enthusiastically completing the SDMNY facilitation process, Louis signed his SDMA and expects to return to Court soon, represented by DRNY, to have his guardianship terminated and all his rights restored with the full support of his wonderful mom Jackie and dad John. Speaking about this journey, Louis said,

"Before we got into all of this [SDMNY], before the judge gave us to you, we didn't know this thing existed. I thought it was just going to be guardianship and that's it. Thankfully enough... there's a place where I can be myself which (hopefully) will be NY law... this is a great way to exercise my autonomy as a person.... I'm anticipating the day of the process to get my rights back."



Louis and his parents

We have no doubt that Louis will exercise that autonomy, not only to make his own dreams come true—he's an aspiring actor, who has been involved in community theater (his long term career goal), who hopes, short term to be employed as a teacher's aide with DOE after receiving his certification last year—but also to be a passionate advocate for social justice issues including Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ rights and greater equity for working people. We've been privileged to see that advocacy in action; last month he joined SDMNY Director Kris Glen and Associate Director Joan Cornachio for a featured presentation to hundreds of attendees at this year's CUNY Neurodiversity Conference on the theme of "Multiple Identities". You can see a recorded portion of his presentation [here](#). We couldn't be prouder. So,

CONGRATULATIONS TO LOUIS, HIS SUPPORTERS AND FACILITATOR JOAN, THANKS TO THE SURROGATE, AND GOOD LUCK ON THE RESTORATION OF ALL OF LOUIS'S RIGHTS