



A FLURRY OF SDMA SIGNINGS IN GRADUATION SEASON

Decision-Makers and their families have often described their SDMA signings as like graduation—and for good reason. Graduations are the celebration of hard work over time, growth, skills learned and the anticipation of a future where those skills will lead to a happy and productive life. That’s also true of how the SDMNY facilitation process culminates in an SDMA signing ceremony, so it’s no surprise that April and May have seen a number of those ceremonies, three of which we celebrate here.

Maurice, Yarrow and Jack are very different people, who came to us in different ways (an information session for self-advocates at ADAPT in Upper Manhattan; learning about SDMNY through their own research on the internet; and simultaneous info sessions for families and potential Decision-Makers at the Jewish Community Center on the Upper West Side) but who are all strong and capable adults, determined to make their own decisions with support of trusted persons in their lives.



Maurice, aka Mo Barz, is 33 and a talented rapper (see Good News [9/18/2020]), appropriately described as “really cool” by one of his supporters. He is close to his mom who, at first, was very apprehensive about the process (click [here](#) to hear her concerns). After working with Maurice, his other supporters and his facilitator Stephanie however, she became an enthusiastic participant. Maurice himself says that SDM is important because it lets “people know that even because you have a disability, you can still do anything you put your mind to.”

Yarrow is 32, lives in Endicott in upstate Broome County, is a writer and a passionate advocate in the LGBTQ community. They have long planned to move out of their family’s home to live on their own, and now that is finally happening. Their mom sees their participation in SDMNY facilitation and their SDMA as important to that big change, “She’ll be doing fine on her own with the help from her supporters now that she’s moving out.”



Jack [24] lives independently, while working part time at the NYC Department of Health as a data entry clerk (not surprising, given his interest in computer programming). His dad and supporter noted proudly how Jack used the facilitation process to identify the issues on which he might need support, and the people who could best support him in making those decisions. As with graduation, he called the SDMA signing “a great accomplishment.” Jack says SDM is Important because “it helps me become even more independent. I’m planning to use my SDMA whenever I make big decisions.”

CONGRATULATIONS MAURICE, YARROW, JACK, THEIR FAMILIES AND SUPPORTERS, AND FACILITATORS STEPHANIE, JENNIFER AND SIMGE!