

GREAT NEWS! A DAY LIKE NO OTHER

This past Tuesday was the 32nd anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), widely considered the civil rights act for people with disabilities. There is no doubt that this is a milestone worth celebrating, but while the ADA has resulted in game-changing advances for many people with disabilities, it has had less direct benefits for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. But....

This last Tuesday was also the celebration of ground-breaking legislation that ensures the self-determination, autonomy and dignity of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Governor Kathy Hochul signed New York's Supported Decision-Making Agreement Act at a ceremony in New York City attended by many disability advocates, elected officials and a proud and enthusiastic group of SDMNY Decision-Makers and their families and supporters. Here are just a few of them:



Decision-Maker Trina, SDMNY Director Kris Glen, Decision-Maker Andrew and Mom Larissa, SDMNY Associate Director Joan Cornachio, and Trina's Supporter Nell



Decision-Maker Emma and parents Judy and Philip



Decision-Maker Thomas's parents Beth and Tom (Thomas was out of town at a retreat but with us in spirit)

Drawing on *Principles* developed by SDMNY, the Supported Decision-Making Agreement Act is truly a civil rights bill for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, embracing supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship and preventing discrimination against decisions made by people with Intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are enormously grateful to OPWDD for drafting, introducing and championing the bill, to Senator John Mannion and Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon for sponsoring it in their respective chambers, and to Governor Kathy Hochul for signing it into law, noting that the new law puts New York into the forefront of promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities.



Governor Kathy Hochul, bottom left, Assembly Member Simon and Kris Glen at the signing



In her remarks, Assembly Member Simon—who has been a long-time member of SDMNY's Advisory Council—gave a shout out to all the SDMNY Decision-Makers who proved that supported decision-making really works, and without whom this critical legislation could never have happened. After the ceremony many of them celebrated with Senator Mannion (second from left) and the Governor's First Disability Officer, Kim Hill (in wheelchair, center). We are so grateful to them, their families and supporters!

It was a truly amazing day, a dream come true for all of us in the SDMNY community, and an enormous step toward realizing the human right of everyone to make their own decisions, regardless of disability.

HOORAY!—AND THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS AMAZING DAY POSSIBLE