

SDMNY FACILITATION TAKES A (SMALL) VILLAGE

When we write about SDMA signings in Good News, we almost always focus on the Decision-Maker, and for good reason. For SDMNY, facilitation is **the Decision-Maker's process**, not ours, not the facilitator's, not the Decision-Maker's family. But of course, as our Decision-Makers are always quick to say, they couldn't have learned all they learned, or become more self-determined, or confident without the "village" that makes up the facilitation process. So, we hope that Decision-Maker Jason won't mind if we take this occasion to say a little about the "village" that helped get him to his SDMA signing last week.

We suspect he won't, as we hear what an intelligent, kind, thoughtful and generous young man he is. Jason is 19, lives at home in Jamaica, Queens with his mom Kayra, loves gaming, going to arcades, and eating ramen! He acknowledged the importance of others to the process when he described SDM as important "because everyone needs help making decisions." And, with his SDMA, he will surely have that help!



Grandmother Joanne, Jason, and mom Kayra

One supporter is his grandmother Joanne, who says "I was really honored when Jason picked me to go through this process with him. I didn't know anything about it, so I had to do some research...." But after learning more, and participating in the process, Joanne agreed that "Supported Decision-Making is important because... [e]veryone deserves the right to make decisions regardless of who they are."

Jason's other supporter, mom Kayra, echoed the concern we have heard from so many parents of transition age youth when she reflected that "When children turn 18, it's really scary, it's a really scary thought that I had to decide whether to take my child's rights away..." Fortunately, Kayra saw a presentation from INCLUDE NY (another part of the village!) and discovered that "Now there's alternatives." She says "I'm very glad I reached out [to SDMNY] I learned a lot about Jason and what he really wants ... he's opened up more and [this process] really showed me that he's thinking about his future."



And then, of course, there's the facilitator with his own story, of which we only have space to tell a little. He's 29, finishing his BSW at the Hunter School of Social Work, thinking about applying to graduate school, and still celebrating his marriage in June to "the love of [his] life." Chris says "I found SDMNY really by accident but was extremely intrigued with the concept: independence through support, a very novel sentiment in this field and, to be honest many others." We suspect that fate had something to do with finding us, and ultimately being part of Jason's "village." When our then Site Coordinator Joan Cornachio met Chris and invited him to join SDMNY as a facilitator, she reports how excited he was, and that he told her that he was immediately going to call his mom, who is a special ed teacher! Maybe not such an accident after all...

**CONGRATULATIONS TO DECISION-MAKER JASON AND
EVERYONE IN HIS SDM VILLAGE!**