

ANOTHER AWARD FOR SDMNY

This Tuesday the Governor's Office and several relevant agencies, including OPWDD, kicked off the first-ever month-long celebration of disability rights as part of a nationwide effort to advance employment and inclusion for people with disabilities. Entitled DREAM (Disability Rights and Employment Awareness Month), the festivities began with a program in the Empire State Plaza in Albany, hosted by the Governor's First Disability Officer, Kim Hill (Good News [7/29/2022]). A highlight of the event (at least for us) was presentation of the first annual "DREAM Award for Advocacy" to none other than SDMNY's Project Director, Kristin Booth Glen, in recognition of lifting up the practice of supported decision-making as a resource for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the passage of New York's ground-breaking SDMA legislation (Good News [7/29/2022]).

Unfortunately, Kris was unable to travel to Albany to accept the award, but her long-time friend, OPWDD Executive Deputy Commissioner Roger Bearden did so on her behalf, reading the remarks she sent (for the full text, see attached) Kris was (and is) clear that the award belongs not to her personally, but to SDMNY, and she acknowledged the many individuals and entities that have made our work possible, including DDPC; the private donors who gave us the "bridge year" to finish our work and achieve all of our goals; OPWDD, who drafted and promoted the SDMA bill, and have now given us the opportunity to pilot a facilitation service delivery system for its implementation; our partners over these past 6 years, including The NY Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation, Parent to Parent of NYS, and SANYS (the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State).



Roger Bearden delivering Kris's remarks; Kim Hill, (back to camera) in foreground

Kris also emphasized how all we do is premised on the human right of everyone to make their own decisions, to have those decisions legally recognized, and to get the supports necessary to exercise that right. As well, she noted that SDMNY's work not only "took a village", but has built on a "world wide movement" for the right of legal capacity of which our community is now an important part. Her remarks closed with deep appreciation

"most importantly, [for] the Decision-Makers, their families and supporters who have demonstrated that SDM really works to enable people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live self-determined, autonomous, inclusive lives with dignity and respect."