

CIAO TO A GREAT FRIEND AND SDMNY SUPPORTER

We were sad to learn that Jennifer Raab, President of Hunter College for the past 22 years, is stepping down from her position as of June, 2023. (click [here](#) for her statement) Over that time she has been an amazing institution builder, a prodigious fund-raiser, champion of research and scholarship, and always, always, dedicated to the extraordinary students of Hunter College. She exemplifies Hunter's motto, "Mihi Cura Futuri"—the care of the future is mine—never more than in her generous and steadfast support for SDMNY.



When DDPC issued a call for proposals for the 5-year supported decision-making grant that was ultimately awarded to SDMNY, then CUNY University Professor Kris Glen approached her friend Jennifer with what was little more than a dream: advancing the human right of all people to make their own decisions, regardless of disability. Jennifer, always a visionary, saw the possibility for transformative social change, and sprang into action. She assigned an Associate Provost to recruit faculty members who could contribute to the effort, (our beloved Gina Riley was one of the first!), offered the services of the Hunter Grants Office for budgeting and technical advice, and promised us a free home at the Silberman School of Social Work building in East Harlem where we remain to this day. When we were chosen for the grant, she rejoiced with us, and made introductions to many people in various parts of Hunter (the Social Work School, the School of Education; the Nursing School, etc.) with whom, over time, we have enjoyed productive collaborations that have moved our work forward. She supported our efforts to secure funding for our "bridge year," and our ability to utilize the resources of the Hunter College Foundation were critical to doing so. She celebrated our current OPWDD grant, and has often encouraged us by the pride she expresses in our accomplishments. We could not have asked for a better friend or a greater supporter, and it is fair to say that, without Jennifer, there would be no SDMNY today.

Of all Jennifer's many achievements at Hunter over the past two decades, one stands out as especially important to our work, the transformation of a decaying brownstone, once the residence of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, into a beautiful, vibrant center for human rights and public policy. Through Jennifer's good graces, we were able to hold our first Advisory Council meeting there in 2017, entering past an incredibly inspiring life-size cut-out of Eleanor holding a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) that she helped draft at Hunter's then-Bronx campus. That connection with Roosevelt House and the UDHR powerfully demonstrated—and continues to reinforce—how SDM is grounded in human rights, and inspires us to carry Eleanor Roosevelt's legacy forward.



Roosevelt House



Eleanor Roosevelt with the UDHR

We captioned this Good News with "Ciao" because it conveys our hope that this is not goodbye, and that SDMNY's connection to this extraordinary woman will continue. We hope, as well, that when we celebrate the successful conclusion of SDMNY's work in 2025, it will be at Roosevelt House, and Jennifer will be there with us!

**TO JENNIFER RAAB, GREAT FRIEND AND SUPPORTER EXTRAORDINAIRE,
THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING!**