

THE BEST AMBASSADORS FOR SDM

We at SDMNY can write and talk at length about what supported decision-making is, where it comes from, what we do in SDM facilitation, and how the right to make one's own decisions, including having the supports necessary, is a *human* right, but there is nothing more compelling than the experience of doing SDM facilitation and practicing SDM told by the people, Decision-Makers, supporters and facilitators, who are actually doing it.

In presentations that SDMNY is asked to do for multiple audiences, we always try to include the voices of our Decision-Makers, although for practical reasons, that almost always happens remotely, and often through videos that the Decision-Makers themselves have made to express their views of SDM and tell their stories.[6/3/2022] For example, at the New York State Judicial Institute "New Judges School" held last month, when SDMNY Director (and former NY County Surrogate) Kris Glen and two SDMNY Advisory Council members, Surrogates David Guy (Broome County) and Peter Kelly (Queens County) presented about SDM, they were able to make it come alive—and very persuasive—through the videos made by Decision-Makers Jessica and Louis. (both videos are on the Resources page of our website and can be accessed at [sdmny.org/resource-type/videos])

We've just recently learned about a panel at The Arc New York annual conference late last year that featured Decision-Maker Devon, his mom and supporter Michele (who is also the Director of Parent to Parent of New York State) and facilitator Patty.



From top to bottom: Devon, Michele, Patty



From Devon's signing ceremony day

We remember when Devon decided to join the SDMNY project in 2019—before Covid!—when he was getting ready to graduate from high school, and we were thrilled to see what a thoughtful and accomplished young adult he has become, living in his own apartment in Albany and working toward his Associate's Degree in Culinary Science at SUNY Schenectady County Community College. We also confess that, whenever we need a big smile, we think of his quite unique SDMA signing celebration, featuring, at his choice, a dunk tank! [9/11/2020]

To say that Devon, Michele and Patty were fabulous is an understatement: Devon recalling all the hard and thoughtful work that went into choosing supporters for decisions in the different areas that were becoming important in his life; Michele talking about the growth she and his dad saw as a result of the process, the relief they feel about how Devon will be supported when they are no longer around, and the beautiful change in relationships they have observed between Devon and the supporters he chose, supporters who were honored to be selected, and who now deal with Devon directly as the competent, autonomous young man he has become.

You can see the video of their part of the panel [here](#), but we also encourage you, if you know someone who may be thinking about guardianship and alternatives, to send them the URL. There are no better ambassadors!

THANKS DEVON, MICHELE, PATTY AND THE ARC NEW YORK!