

AN “AQUATIC” SDMA SIGNING AND A “FIRST’ FOR A NEW MENTOR

Last Thursday marked another wonderful SDMA signing by another great Decision-Maker, EJ, and his family. EJ is “almost 21,” in his last year of school, (a transitions program) and lives in Riverdale with his mom and dad. His facilitator Karen says that he “already has so many talents and interests – I won’t even be able to name them all here, but he is a math whiz, plays chess, sews, and is passionate about marine animals. He spends time learning about them and loves to visit the NY Aquarium.” In fact, EJ allotted time at the beginning of the ceremony to share his screen and the Aquarium website, and Karen and his family agree to a new appreciation for marine animals because of EJ’s interest!

Karen describes EJ as being “clear about his preferences and really knowing himself, good at setting limits and communicating about his preferences so that he can fulfill them” and that “this is an important skill that takes some of us years to learn” EJ’s supporters include his mother, Ana, his father Eddie Sr., and his sister, Lauren. They are a family that “is filled with love (and fun!)” and are ready to support EJ in decision-making with respect for him and his right to self-determination. As his mom said, they experienced the facilitation process as “eye opening”, making them think about things they had never considered; in fact, she said, and everyone agreed, that ideally they would all want an SDMA for themselves. She also observed that, while they were all excited to have finally gotten to the SDMA signing, it was “just the beginning.” That’s exactly how we hope it will be for every Decision-Maker and their supporters!



EJ with his parents, Eddie and Ana, his sister Lauren, facilitator Karen, and mentor Joan

The signing was also special for facilitator Karen, one of our new mentors, as it was the first she has facilitated to conclusion (all the new mentors have to successfully complete at least 3 facilitations before they can begin mentoring and she is well on her way). Here’s what she had to say about the experience:

“The signing ceremony really moved me. Getting to see EJ sign off on his SDMA, brought home to me in a new way, how important it is that individuals have a less restrictive alternative to guardianship. Given all EJ’s incredible gifts and interests, his decision-making skills and supports, I am excited to hear about the rich future EJ forges for himself!”

We couldn’t agree more—and, thanks to EJ, we’re all thinking about a visit to the Aquarium!

CONGRATULATIONS TO EJ, HIS SUPPORTERS AND KAREN!