

## A “WONDERFUL” SDMA SIGNING AND A FIRST FOR ANOTHER OF OUR NEW MENTORS

Decision-Makers and their supporters always have great things to say about their SDMNY facilitation process, but this week, Decision-Maker Aiden’s mom and dad, who are among his six supporters, both independently described the process as “wonderful”. Mom Robin described it as “emotional”, saying that it’s “wonderful for Aiden to own his own life,” while dad Charles said “It was amazing and wonderful to see Aiden go to all his [SDMNY] meetings alone. There was growth. It was definite.”



*Left to right top row: Facilitator Aylah, Mentor Joan, Parent and supporter Robin with DM Aiden  
Middle row: Supporter Andy, Family friend Ruth, Supporter Jessica  
Bottom row: Parent and supporter Charles, Supporter Sarah*

Aiden himself is, according to facilitator Aylah, a pretty wonderful young man. He’s a senior at Community High School in Teaneck, N.J., who loves to ride his bike in the neighborhood, take the train to Grand Central with his dad, and can’t wait for his upcoming senior trip to Cedar Park, an amusement park (even though he doesn’t love roller coasters)! At his signing celebration, Aiden praised SDMNY facilitation from which, he says, he “learned how to make good decisions.”



The signing was the first completed facilitation for another of our new Mentors-in-Training, Aylah, who combines her quarter time position with SDMNY with work as a Mental Health Counselor (the field in which she got her Master’s degree) in a group private practice where she has been fortunate “to start and facilitate a weekly therapy group for emerging adults on the Autism Spectrum, which has become one of [her] weekly highlights.” Although she confesses to never having heard of SDM before applying for a part-time mentor position at SDMNY, Aylah was attracted to the job

“because of my experience of growing up with a younger sister on the spectrum, and my subsequent years of working with folks with ASD. Working and collaborating with individuals with I/DD has broadened my perspective and understanding of the beauty of human diversity, and I am so grateful to be a part of the continuing journey of SDMNY’s inspirational mission.”

And did we mention that not only is Aylah also the mom of a “wonderful and boisterous seven-year-old daughter,” but expecting to give birth to another daughter “any day now.” Altogether, pretty wonderful!

**CONGRATULATIONS AIDEN, HIS SUPPORTERS, AND FACILITATOR AYLAH!**