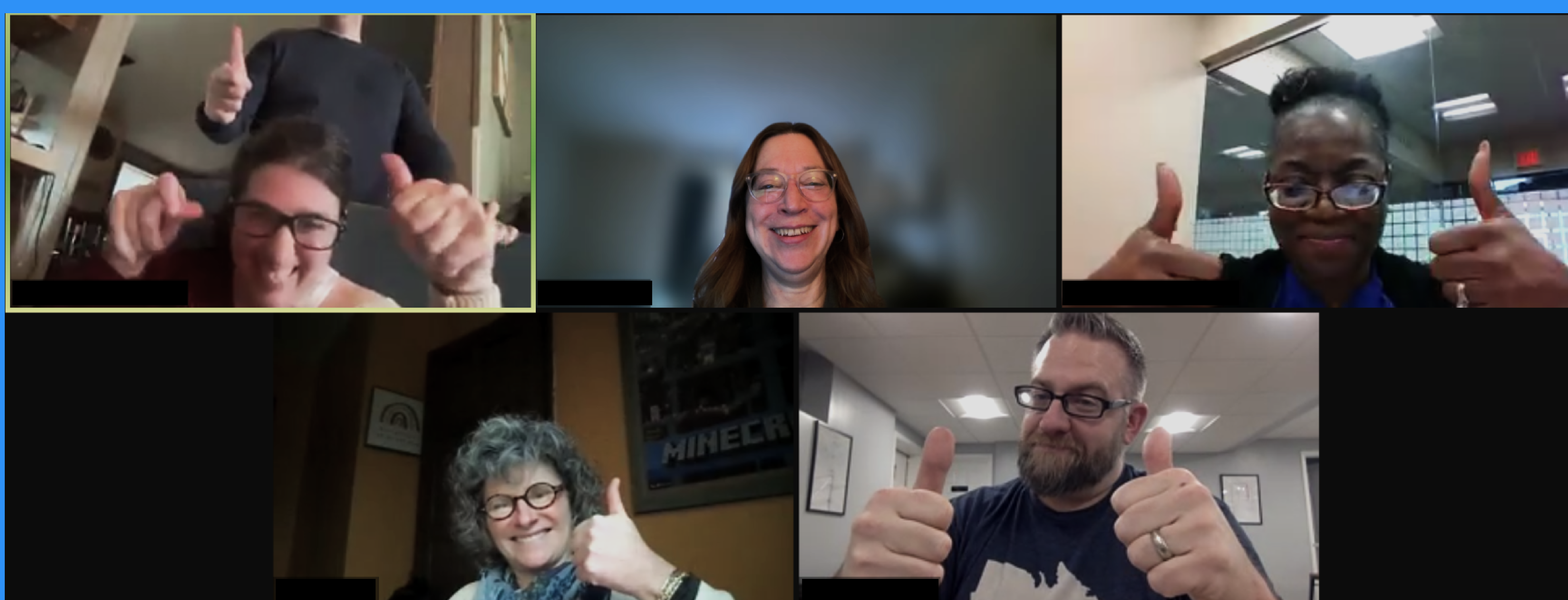


## CELEBRATING A SUPER ACCOMPLISHED SELF-ADVOCATE'S SDMA SIGNING

Decision-Makers come to SDMNY for many reasons. For transition age youth, they and their families may be seeking an alternative to guardianship that enables them to retain all their legal and civil rights. A court may have referred them even after a petition was filed, believing that SDM might be a less restrictive alternative to guardianship. Or, as we reported last week, a person with I/DD subject to guardianship may seek to terminate the guardianship on the grounds that, with SDM, it is no longer necessary (Good News 2/2/24). And now that New York has enacted legislation that will protect persons with I/DD who have facilitated SDMA's from third party discrimination, families are incentivized to seek our services.

But, as we are delighted to report, keeping or getting out of unnecessary guardianship, or avoiding discrimination based on bias, prejudice or fear of liability are not the only reasons to engage in SDM, as a recent SDMA signing powerfully demonstrates.



*Nichole, Facilitator Karen, Mentor Jenn, SDMNY Director Naomi and Supporter Mike*

Nichole is 40 years old. She is not, and has never been under guardianship. She lives in the community and owns her own home. She is a proud member of the LEND Core Self-Advocacy faculty of the Westchester Institute for Human Development, where she serves as Coordinator of Self-Advocacy & Community Engagement. She owns her own art business, Creative Arts' Studios by Nichole. In 2017 she even completed the Marine Corps Historical Half Marathon in Fredericksburg, Virginia– in 4 hours and 11 minutes!–on her hand propelled adaptive bike.

So why did this incredibly accomplished adult make the decision to do SDMNY facilitation and make an SDMA? Here's what Nichole says:

"It helps a self-advocate like myself who can make most decisions on their own but when they need help in certain areas, it gives them reassurance and support to know that they are making the best decisions possible for their own life, and to be independent in those decisions." She recommends SDMNY facilitation "to anyone who is interested in having assistance with making decisions, but not needing legal guardianship and using an excellent facilitator" and says that she will use her SDMA "to have assistance to make the best decisions possible for the areas I have chosen to have support in my life."

We are so happy and proud to have Nichole as a member of our SDMNY community. We also can't say it better than her facilitator Karen, who wrote

"I was impressed with Nichole's commitment to being a self-advocate and living her life on her own terms, as well as her desire to be a role model for other people with disabilities. She is truly a trailblazer and I know she will make valuable contributions to the growth and success of SDM in New York State."

### CONGRATULATIONS TO NICHOLE AND HER SUPPORTERS AND THANKS TO FACILITATOR KAREN!