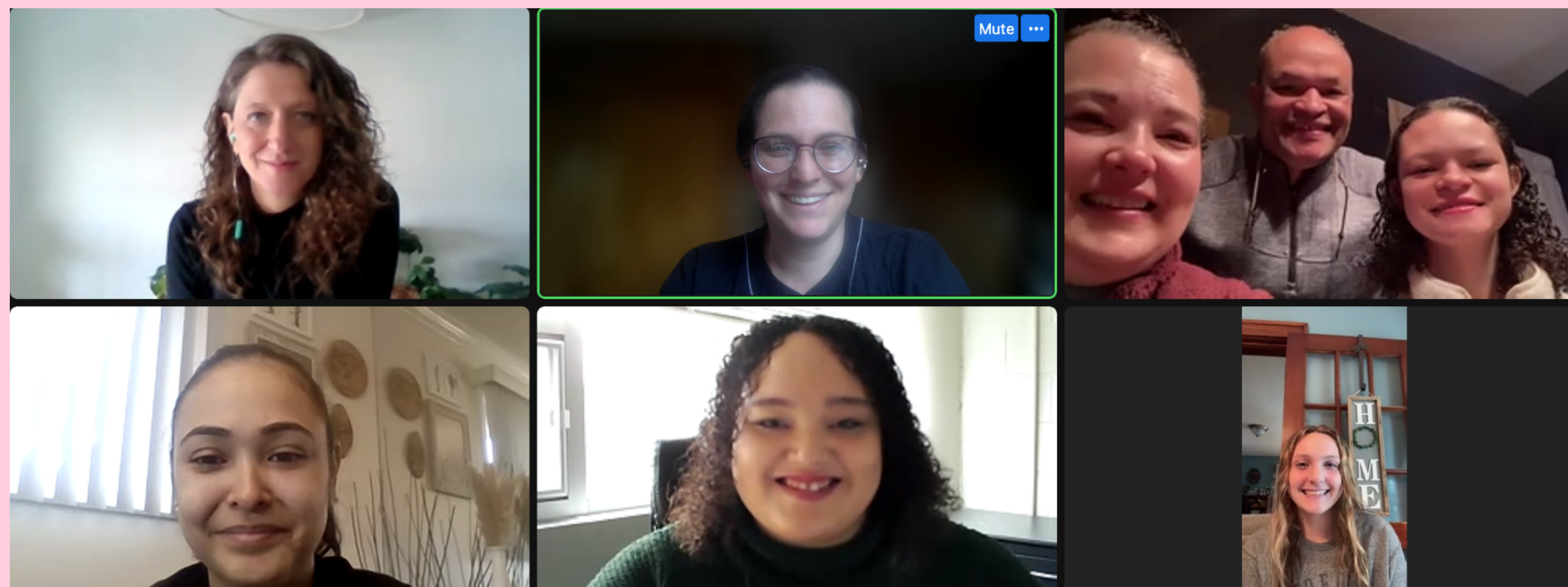


DECISION-MAKERS COME FROM EVERYWHERE

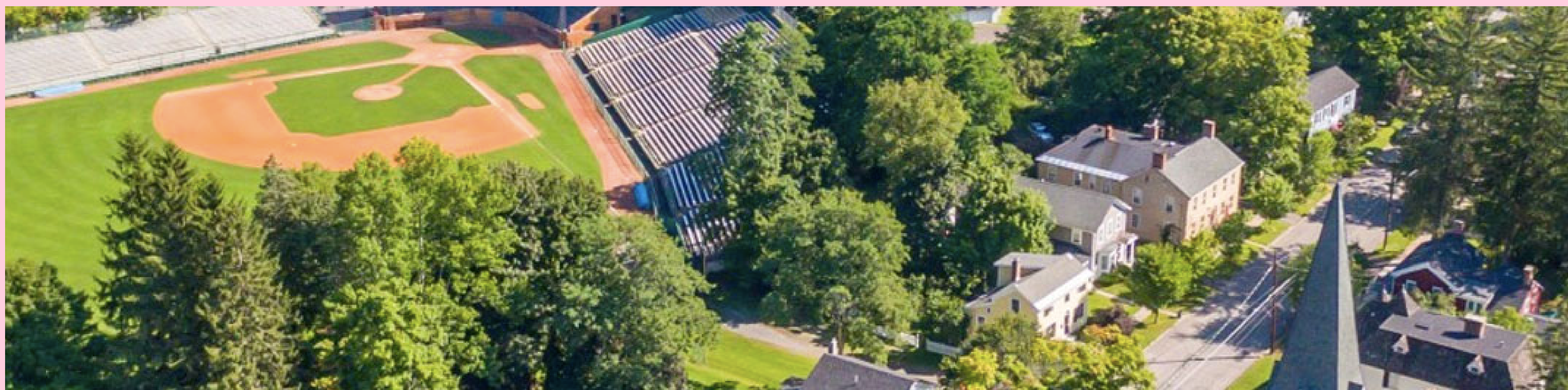
SDMNY is located in the Hunter School of Social Work in Manhattan, and when we first began, in 2016, with facilitations all in person, we were pretty much confined to the five boroughs of NYC (though Staten Island was tough!) We also had outreach in Westchester through our partner The Arc of Westchester, and in 2018 we established additional locations in Long Island, the Capital Region and Rochester, still within the “in-person” model. Word spread, and we attracted Decision-Makers from all those areas, but then came Covid!

It's hard to think of anything good that came out of that terrible time, but for SDMNY, it meant we had to learn how to do effective, successful facilitations remotely; once we did, the whole state of New York became our potential campus. So although most people think of our Decision-Makers as coming from cities and suburbs, they actually represent all the many and diverse areas of the state as an SDMA signing celebrated last Friday demonstrated.



SDMNY's Karen, Mentor Aylah, DM Sela with her supporters (parents) Stephanie and William, Facilitator Natasha, Supporter (sister) Odessa, Supporter (cousin) Grace

Sela is “18, almost 19”, describes herself as “caring and loving” and especially loves dogs and cats. She works at CVS and the Otesaga Hotel. If you’ve never heard of the Otesaga Hotel (which we checked out on Google, and which looks fabulous, see <https://otesaga.com>), that’s probably because it’s in Otsego County which is part of the [Mohawk Valley Region](#) and is the northernmost county of the [Appalachian Region](#). Sela lives with her family in Edmeston, a town founded on dairy farming and maple sugar production, with just over 2000 residents. The family found SDM through a group of parents of children with Williams Syndrome around the country, did a Google search that led them to our website, emailed us and then started the process in January, 2023.



Edmeston

Sela says she found the facilitation process “nerve-wrecking at first, but I am glad it's done now” and plans to use her SDMA to ask her supporters for help when she needs it. She affirms that “Supported Decision making is important because everyone should have a right to make decisions for themselves.” Mom Stephanie confirmed our sense that the new SDMA law is an important reason that families choose SDMA facilitation, noting that “This is how our family has always worked, now we just have a legal document.”

What’s especially exciting about Sela and her supporters’ experience is how anxious they are to share it with others in their small town and its surroundings. Stephanie says “We are very excited for Sela. I actually think we are one of the firsts in the central NY area! We need to get the word out Upstate.” We couldn’t agree more and look forward to working with this wonderful family to do just that!

CONGRATULATIONS SELA, YOUR SUPPORTERS AND FACILITATOR NATASHA!