



5335 WISCONSIN AVENUE NW | SUITE 825 | WASHINGTON DC 20015
(202) 448-1450 | (202) 448-1451 FAX | WWW.DCQUALITYTRUST.ORG

On behalf of Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities, I am proud to introduce you to the Jenny Hatch Justice Project (“JHJP”)!

The JHJP is an integrated, multi-faceted resource and outreach center dedicated to advancing people with disabilities’ right to make their own choices and determine their own path and direction in life.

We take our name from Margaret “Jenny” Hatch. Jenny lives and works independently, is active in politics and counts as her friends local, state and national leaders. However, because she has Down Syndrome, Jenny spent a hard, lonely year living in a group home, against her will, cut off from her friends and access to the life she built in her community, until a monumental Court decision freed her to live and work and do what she wants. We hope that you will join with us: your support will help protect and promote the rights of people like Jenny as well as educate people with disabilities, families, advocates, practitioners and policy makers about the importance of choice and self-direction in all areas, throughout life.

Like too many people with disabilities, Jenny faced a guardianship petition challenging her right to make decisions, choices she had always made for herself like where to live, what to do and who to see. Before we entered her case, the Court put Jenny in a temporary guardianship and placed her in the group home - where they took away her cell phone and laptop and wouldn't let her see her friends. If the Court made the guardianship permanent, Jenny would have lost something deeply ingrained in every person: the fundamental right to direct her own life.

We served as Jenny’s lead counsel in what has become known as the "Justice for Jenny" trial. We showed that Jenny does not "need" a guardian because she has a history of making good decisions when given appropriate support. That support, known as "Supported Decision-Making," utilizes friends, family members and professionals to help Jenny understand the situations and choices she faces, so she can make her own well-informed decisions.

After a year of litigation and six days of trial, Jenny won the right to make her own decisions and now lives and works where she wants, has the friends she chooses and encourages others to do the same. The "Justice for Jenny" case is the first to Order the use of Supported Decision-Making instead of plenary guardianship for a person with a disability and received national and international attention for highlighting "an individual’s right to choose how to live and the government’s progress in providing the help needed to integrate even those with the most profound needs into the community.”¹

¹ http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-07-20/local/40695386_1_group-home-guardianship-jim-talbert. See, also, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-02/local/41002259_1_morris-and-talbert-jim-talbert-jenny-hatch; <http://www.wavy.com/news/local/newport-news/jenny-hatch-in-her-new-life>; <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2013/08/11/every-grown-up-should-get-chance-to-make->

Jenny's strength has inspired many others to seek their own justice. In the months since we entered her case, Quality Trust has:

- Helped over 20 District of Columbia residents avoid guardianship in favor of Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive alternatives;
- Provided individualized advice and guidance to over 50 people on their rights and alternatives to guardianship; and
- Trained over 100 people with disabilities, advocates and attorneys on capacity, Supported Decision-Making and other alternatives to guardianship.

The overwhelming response to Jenny's victory proves what we have long believed: Even after years of research showing that people who have more control over their lives live longer, have better jobs, are more integrated in their communities and are better able to resist abuse, people with disabilities are still judged on their limitations rather than their abilities and continue to be placed in guardianships that demean them and deny their rights.

To finally overcome these longstanding problems, Quality Trust created the JHJP. This first-of-its-kind project will coordinate and produce resources to address the legal, policy, research and practical issues related to decision-making and support for people with disabilities and their families. We will embody and advance five core principles:

1. Everyone has the right to make their own decisions – to choose where to live, where to work, what to do and who to see – to the maximum of their abilities;
2. Everyone has the right to ask for help in understanding the situations and choices they face, so they can make their own decisions;
3. Laws, regulations, policies and day to day practices must promote and protect people's right to make decisions, with or without support;
4. Health care, legal, support and other professionals and practitioners must recognize and respect people's right to make decisions, with or without support;
5. Researchers must develop evidence-based research to assess the impact and applications of Supported Decision-Making.

Our work will reflect and expand these values by:

- Protecting the rights of people facing or in undue guardianships;
- Advocating for changes in laws, policies and procedures to increase the use and acceptance of Supported Decision-Making;

- Providing education and training programs on Supported Decision-Making for people with disabilities, families, professionals and practitioners; and
- Promoting cutting-edge research on Supported Decision-Making.

We will also convene an annual, invitation-only symposium bringing together people with disabilities and legal, policy, research and practice leaders to identify action steps needed to advance the use and impact of Supported Decision-Making. Our first symposium was held on 24 October. We will publish the highlights and results on this website.

Even in the wake of Jenny's triumph, there remain untold numbers of "other Jennys" who could live independently, make their own choices and order their own lives if given the support and advocacy she had. At the Jenny Hatch Justice Project, we honor Jenny's courage and commitment by seeking a society where people are valued for what they can do, rather than punished for what they cannot, where everyone is given an equal opportunity to shape their present and future.

We hope that you will help us help others receive and achieve Justice like Jenny did. Whether through a gift of \$10,000 or \$10, by volunteering for 10 hours or telling 10 people about us, your support will move us ever closer to making that vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tina Campanella', written in a cursive style.

Tina Campanella
Chief Executive Officer