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How This Special Issue Was Developed: A Note From the Guest Editors

The inspiration for this special issue was Katie McKay's master's thesis in the Department of Applied Disability Studies at Brock University. Her work focused on the initial stages of Niagara's approach to enacting tri-sector integrated transitional aged youth planning that was developed in response to a 2013 Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Education and Ministry Children and Youth Services memo on this topic. These provincial and regional initiatives prompted us to suggest that it deserved the attention that a special issue could provide.

In addition to Katie McKay, we encouraged several other authors to submit articles on their work areas related to transitional aged youth. Anne Readhead, Lisa Whittingham, Courtney Bishop and Jennifer Hope have been involved in research projects on postsecondary skills training and supported entrepreneurship with a particular focus on the innovative model used at Common Ground Co-operative in Toronto. The first three of these authors and Katie McKay also were asked to become involved in the development of the introductory article to this special issue. Jo Anne Nugent was similarly encouraged to submit her work on a postsecondary culinary training model that is a partnership between Humber College and Christian Horizons. Sue Hutton was encouraged to contribute an article on the ARCH Disability Law Centre's Respecting Rights project that provides education about decision-making rights to persons who have developmental disabilities and those who support them. The co-authors of that paper, Kevin John Head, Sarah Lyttle, Jordyn, Noah Kenneally and Maja Rehou, include three self-advocates who attended Respecting Rights workshops and met to discuss issues they had experienced with decision-making in the foster care system and in adult developmental services. Their paper reflects these issues.

Lead authors Kelly Coons-Harding and Jenna Pepper and their respective teams responded to the call for papers for this special issue. Kelly Coons-Harding and her colleagues, Anna Azulai and Audrey McFarlane, all are affiliated with the Canada FASD Research Network that was contracted by the Government of Alberta to explore best practices in the transition of youth who have FASD to adult service supports. The paper by Jenna Pepper and her colleagues, Shelley Watson and Kelly Coons-Harding, is based on Jenna Pepper's master's thesis at Laurentian University that focused on the experiences of families who adopt children with FASD.

We are delighted that this special issue includes work by both new and established researchers who explore issues ranging from the personal experiences of youth leaving the foster care system and parents of children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, to the educational, structural and systemic changes being made to scaffold the transition that young people with developmental disabilities face as they leave high school. Their research illuminates concerns and suggests ways forward in an increasingly complex service environment.