From the Editors

This issue of the Canadian Journal of Children's Rights is filled with accounts of children's lived experiences of their environments. The initial idea for this issue emerged from discussions on the topic of children's rights and climate change but we soon realized that a broader approach to the concept of environment would more fully capture the contexts in which children live from a rights perspective. We are pleased to present an exciting range of articles from around the world that attend to the subject of children's rights and environments using different disciplinary lenses and methodological approaches.

Bree Akesson and Kearney Coupland offer an account of their work with Syrian refugee families who fled their homeland to resettle in three regions in Lebanon. They write about the ways children experience their environment by highlighting the effects of restricted mobility as their families remake their lives in a new place and deal with feelings of insecurity and unease. Akesson and Coupland argue that while restrictive policies make everyday living a challenge for these families, restriction of movement has a particularly negative impact on the realisation of their children's human rights.

From Syrian children living in Lebanon to Ch'ol children living in Chiapas, Mexico, Yolanda Cordova-Caraveo, Kathia Nuñez Patiño and Angélica Rico Montoya explore children's relationships with their natural environments. They introduce the reader to Indigenous children in two villages of Chiapas to discuss the markedly different ways these children experience their environments. Using children's drawings depicting their involvement in productive activities, their relationships with animals, and oral traditions, the authors' ethnographic work offers the reader a sense of the complexity of the social environments in children's lives linked with trajectories of violence, economics, politics, and culture. Using a rights-based lens, they illuminate the importance of children's right to live in peace and security despite their changing environments.

From movements in physical environments to early childhood environments, Kathryn Underwood, Elaine Frankel, Karen Spalding and Kathleen Brophy invite the reader to consider early years services and education for children with disabilities. They explore the notion of optimal healthy development and whether children's right to early intervention is being honoured given international mandates, legislation and policies as well as the obligations laid out in Article 20 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989). The authors note that some of the processes within the system of services act as barriers to inclusion; they highlight the ways the early childhood education and care sector can contribute to enacting the right to inclusive early childhood education and care for children with disabilities.

Ziba Vaghri, Katherine Covell and Holly Clow's work focuses on early childhood environments as well. They argue that active listening and active learning in early childhood is linked with brain development and children's capacity to participate meaningfully in their lives. Vaghri, Covell and Clow propose that preparing children neurologically for meaningful participation through active listening and active learning in early childhood promotes self-determination and effective decision-making about self and others.

School environments are the focus of the next three articles. Benedetta Faedi Duramy considers children's food environments, healthy living and the role that schools can play in upholding children's rights. Faedi Duramy frames her argument within the context of U.S. public policy and obesity prevention initiatives citing the Healthy, Hunger Kids Free Act adopted in 2010 as an example of providing healthier school nutrition standards. She offers a rights-based argument for promoting healthy food environments in early childhood and demonstrates the ways schools can become agents of change when governments fail to fulfill their obligations to children.

The school environment is the setting for Caitlin Wood and Aurelia Di Santo's contribution to the Issue. Wood recounts the circumstances in which a school shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan in 2016 took the life of her brother Adam Wood who was a teacher in the school. Frustrated by negative media depictions of the community that focused primarily on poverty, violence and addictions in narrow and stereotypical ways, Wood and Di Santo set out to create a space to include the perspectives of young people from this northern village regarding their community, their environment, and their lives. The young people's accounts bring to light how the concepts of community and environment are complex and situated in intricate contexts of histories of violence and exclusion that when left unexplored, perpetuate negative images and racist stereotypes. The youth offer their thoughts on relationships, health and well-being, as well as the importance of local knowledge, to convey to the reader that far from broken by the tragedy, their community has strengths and capacity to create social change.

From school environments to digital environments, Julian Burton challenges the reader to understand young people's digital social spaces and privacy rights. Burton argues that information in digital social spaces flows in ways that challenge conventional practices and normative views of privacy. He offers insights into doing research with young people to understand how online youth communities construct and maintain privacy and sees this as a vital component of research design and ethics. Burton argues for the need to hear young people and act on their understandings of privacy at play in these dynamic digital spaces.

Open Section: Participatory Environments and Children's Rights

The open section of the issue features participatory environments and the challenges and successes of enabling children's rights in policy and programming contexts. Victoria Derr, Maria Sitzoglou, Tuline Gülgönen and Yolanda Corona consider the integration of child and youth participation in urban resilience planning in Boulder, Colorado; Mexico City, Mexico; and Thessaloniki, Greece. Citing Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the authors suggest that in the context of planning for urban resilience, children's participation is possible albeit with varying levels of success. They offer readers an account of some of the struggles encountered in realising children's participation rights in the three local projects and what can be learned from these experiences when using a rights-based approach to urban resilience planning. The authors conclude that successful children's participation in planning environments requires a municipal framework for participation and knowledge of children's rights among municipal leaders and other decision-makers involved in these processes.

From participatory and rights-based approaches to urban planning in programming for youth sexual and reproductive health, Miranda van Reeuwijk and Arushi Singh explore how young people and adults value participation and what makes it meaningful and effective in program design environments. The authors present findings from their work in a large-scale youth sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) program implemented in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya and Pakistan. The program uses a rights-based approach with the core value that participation is a human right. The authors highlight the importance and impact of meaningfully engaging young people as well as some of the challenges and concerns that arise. Van Reeuwijk and Singh argue for fair youth representation at all decision-making levels as it creates opportunities for young people to have decision-making responsibilities and to share power with adults. As well, the authors note that it helps to build young people's capacities and shape social environments where both young people and adults feel valued, respected, encouraged, and supported. Van Reeuwijk and Singh conclude that a rights-based approach that sees young people as active social agents in programming environments is vital.

The interrelationship of children's right to play and children's participation rights is the focus of Laura Wright's contribution to the issue. She argues for the prominent role of play and its implications for meaningful participation given its recognition in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Wright introduces the reader to a youth-led, youth-driven participatory workshop model called Shaking the Movers to illustrate an effective approach to co-creating transformative participatory environments for children

and young people in research, policy and programs. Wright suggests that play supports relational development with self, others, and nature which is arguably valuable for leadership development, youth/ adult partnerships, and being active in decision-making process.

Patrick Walugembe, Rita Larok, Joshua Thembo, Robert Wamala, Cyprian Misinde, Noel Nakibuuka, and John Paul Nyeko focus their article on the concept of vulnerability in the context of children's lives in rural Uganda. They examine child protection as a mitigating factor in vulnerability outcomes for children and that this protection is a right guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The authors use child protection indicators to argue that while child protection factors improved over the four-year span of the project, barriers were still unacceptably high for the realization of children's rights. They conclude that vulnerability makes it difficult for children's rights to be realised in rural environments and thus a rights-based approach to child protection interventions is needed to address the interrelationship between vulnerability and rights in children's lives.

Panayiotis Angelides, Elena Papanastasiou & Christina Hadjisoteriou extend this view of the difficulties in realising children's rights. They focus on attitudes and awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child by members of Cypriot society and the barrier that this lack of awareness presents for enacting children's rights. In a study of awareness of children's rights with four participating groups - elementary, high school, university students, and adults - the authors demonstrate that while children and young people are aware of rights, this awareness is limited and partial. While members of Cypriot society are aware of provision and protection rights, for example, less awareness is noted in children's participation rights. The authors conclude that this limited awareness and understanding of children's rights impacts on children's everyday environments resulting in possible personal consequences for children when their rights to health care and protection from violence and child abuse are not fully understood in the broader society.

Youth Section

Léonie Bordeleau draws our attention to custody environments and children's rights. She argues that the presumption of joint custody that has become a common in family law, particularly in the cases she cites from Quebec, can have negative effects on the physical and emotional environments in which the children of divorced and separated parent are growing up. Bordeleau notes that these cases should be decided on a case-by-case basis that respects all the child's rights rather than according to a presumption. The English translation of the article's title is telling: "Shared Custody of Children in Family

Law: the Utopia of the Magical Thinking of Tribunals!” The author underscores the point that shared custody does not automatically guarantee protection of the rights of the children involved regarding their physical and emotional environments. Input from children themselves, who are involved in these cases, should be included when decisions are made on their behalf.

Ceren Tekin takes her inspiration about children’s rights and environments from a film featuring the life of children’s rights advocate Cherry Kingsley. In a dialogue between an older and younger child, the poem depicts the ways actively listening to a young child and learning from their perspectives, views and experiences of the world, enhances our ability to value and respect children and see them as part of a shared humanity.

Alice Mackenzie’s drawing focuses our attention on a child’s playground. What is provocative about this drawing is that there are no children playing in this space. It is a space that adults create for children yet mainly without their input into its design. Alice, who is 13, wants the viewer to consider why this space is empty. Do the children not want to play in this environment? Has play so changed in contemporary times that such an environment no longer responds to their needs?

In closing, our thanks go to the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation for continued financial support and to Patricia Moore of Carleton University’s MacOdrum Library for her technical support that makes our work possible. We would also like to thank Hugh Mackenzie for the painting that graces the cover of this issue. It is titled Bamboo Poles and is reproduced here with his permission.

Many thanks to our dedicated reviewers and editorial board who assist us with their expertise and support. Our thanks to all and we hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Virginia Caputo and Landon Pearson