

# SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Evdokia Anagnostou**, MD, Co-Lead Autism Research Centre, Bloorview Research Institute

Evdokia Anagnostou is a child neurologist and senior clinician scientist at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital; associate professor in the department of pediatrics at the University of Toronto; Assistant Director of Holland Bloorview's Research Institute; co-lead Autism Research Centre (ARC). She holds a Canada Research Chair in translational therapeutics in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the Dr. Stuart D. Sims Chair in Autism at Holland Bloorview at University of Toronto. Dr. Anagnostou's research focuses on translating genomic and systems biology findings into novel treatments for ASD.

**Julia Armstrong**, Project Coordinator, Frayme

Julia Armstrong is a Project Coordinator with Frayme, an international knowledge mobilization network designed to help improve youth mental health and substance use care by sharing knowledge about what works. Julia started her career exercising her passion for helping others by providing mentorship and care to young parent families in Ottawa – real world learning that helped her understand the importance of true engagement. For the last five years, Julia has worked in partnership with youth and families with lived experience to help youth mental health agencies implement authentic youth and family engagement.

**Karen Bopp**, PhD, RSLP Director of Provincial Outreach, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in Autism, University of British Columbia.

Dr. Karen Bopp is currently the Director of Provincial Outreach for the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Collaboration in Autism (CIRCA) at the University of British Columbia. Karen has worked with children and youth with autism and related developmental disabilities and their families for 25 years. She has held many roles including Director of the Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention program in Delta; Instructor in Special Education at UBC; and most recently, was with the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development as Director of Autism Policy and Director of Autism Information Services BC. She is also an adjunct professor in the Department of Educational Counselling, Psychology and Special Education at UBC and a Registered Speech-Language Pathologist.

**Cynthia Carroll**, Chair CASDA, Executive Director, Autism Nova Scotia

Cynthia Carroll is the national chair of the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance, and Executive Director of Autism Nova Scotia. A tireless leader and visionary, she has created legacies of growth and success in the not-for-profit sector.

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In 2008, Carroll founded the Autism Council of Nova Scotia, uniting autism groups across the province. In 2010, she participated on a working group that made 53 recommendations to government addressing gaps in service, resulting in the first ASD Action Plan in Canada. Following this, Carroll participated in the development of a national needs assessment and the Canadian Autism Partnership, which addresses autism issues across the lifespan at the national level. Carroll was a member of the Autism Management Advisory team and co-author of the Autism Management Advisory Team on Assessing the Lifespan Needs of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Nova Scotia (2010), and collaborated with Dr. Jonathan Weiss at the University of York to co-author a National Need Assessment.

In addition, Carroll was appointed by the federal Minister of Health in 2015 to serve as vice-chair of the National Working Group exploring the feasibility of a Canadian Autism Partnership. Currently, she—along with the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorders Alliance—is working to develop the first ever Canadian National Autism Strategy.

Carroll's focus on employment through the work of Autism Nova Scotia includes autism training for employers, a full suite of employment support and programming for adults on the autism spectrum, a social enterprise, and a jobseeker's database that currently supports 350 adults on the spectrum who are Ready, Willing and Able to work. Passionate and dedicated, Carroll's leadership has created profound and positive change for the thousands of families living with autism across Canada.

## **Pam Damoff**, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health

Pam Damoff, a politician, community activist and business professional with over 25 years' corporate experience on Bay Street, was elected to represent the riding of Oakville-North Burlington in the House of Commons in the 2015 federal election. Prior to the election, Pam served as an Oakville Town Councillor from 2010-2015. During her time on council, she served on the Oakville Public Library Board, the budget committee and the Oakville Tourism Partnership. She was recognized as a leading advocate for active transportation and better cycling infrastructure in Oakville.

Pam was named Vice Chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in December 2015. She is also a member of several Parliamentary Committees, Associations and inter-parliamentary groups, including the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

Pam is a proud recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Paul Harris Fellow Award from Rotary International, The Linda Jones Women's Activist Award from the ODLC for her community service, She also received the Top 40 Fabulous Women Over 40 Excellence Award for Community Leadership.

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Pam is passionate about many causes including employment for persons living with disabilities, women's empowerment, mental health, environmental protection, and cycling safety & development.

## **Pam Damoff, Membre du Parlement, Secrétaire Parlementaire du Ministre de la Santé**

Pam Damoff, une politicienne, activiste communautaire et professionnelle des affaires qui compte plus de 25 ans d'expérience sur Bay Street, a été élue pour représenter la circonscription d'Oakville-Nord-Burlington à la Chambre des communes lors de l'élection fédérale de 2015. Avant l'élection, Pam a été conseillère municipale d'Oakville de 2010 à 2015. Durant son mandat au conseil, elle a siégé au conseil de la Bibliothèque Publique d'Oakville, au comité du budget et au Oakville Tourism Partnership. Elle a été reconnue comme étant l'une des principales défenseuses du transport actif et d'une meilleure infrastructure cyclable à Oakville.

Pam a été nommée Vice-Présidente du Comité permanent de la condition féminine en décembre 2015. Elle est également membre de plusieurs comités parlementaires, associations et groupes interparlementaires, dont le Comité permanent de la sécurité publique et nationale.

Pam est fière d'avoir reçu la médaille du jubilé de diamant de la Reine Elizabeth II et le prix Paul Harris Fellow du Rotary International, ainsi que le prix Linda Jones pour les femmes activistes décerné par le conseil syndical du district d'Oakville pour son engagement communautaire. Elle a également reçu le prix d'excellence dans le Top 40 Fabulous Women Over 40 pour le leadership communautaire.

Pam se passionne pour de nombreuses causes, notamment l'embauche des personnes handicapées, l'autonomisation des femmes, la santé mentale, la protection de l'environnement et la sécurité et le développement du cyclisme.

## **Michelle Demery, Director of Accessibility Implementation, Government of Canada**

With over 20 years in the public service for the Government of Canada, Michelle Demery is the Director of the Accessibility Implementation Division of the newly formed Accessibility Secretariat at Employment and Social Development Canada. The Secretariat is currently supporting the Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Public Services and Procurement and Accessibility.

## **Michelle Demery, directrice de la Mise en œuvre de l'accessibilité, gouvernement du Canada**

Comptant plus de 20 ans d'expérience dans la fonction publique fédérale, Michelle Demery assume les fonctions de la directrice de la nouvelle Division de la mise en œuvre d'accessibilité du nouveau Secrétariat de l'accessibilité à Emploi et Développement social Canada. À l'heure actuelle, le Secrétariat

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appuie l'honorable Carla Qualtrough, ministre des Services publics et de l'Approvisionnement et de l'Accessibilité.

**Deputy Grand Chief Derek Fox**, Lawyer, Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief responsible for education, economic development, broadband, environment and sports and recreation

**Stephen Gentles**, PhD

Stephen Gentles is a postdoctoral CIHR Health System Impact Fellow based at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, and at Autism Ontario in Toronto. His research is focused on understanding and promoting the perspectives of caregivers of children with autism. Specifically, Stephen's work involves studying and improving support for caregivers' readiness for involvement in care or intervention across the different points of their journey, and developing informational resources to support them in navigating intervention.

**Patricia George-Zwicker**, Autism Nova Scotia, Editor Autistics Aloud

Patricia George-Zwicker (they/them/she) is a neurodivergent autistic disability rights activist from the South Shore of Nova Scotia. As Editor-in-Chief of the grassroots Magazine Autistics Aloud and Co-Lead of The CONNECT Research project, Patricia has always been an activist in one way or another. After being diagnosed with Epilepsy in 2012 and through that process learning they are also Autistic everything changed for the better and she became deeply involved in autism and disability activism with every level of Government and has given talks at various conferences, big and not as big since. Also an artist, poet, photographer and gardener, Patricia loves the ocean and nature and has 9 Chinchillas and 2 dogs and lives in the woods. "The Depth Down Shows Us The Height Up"

**Adam Glendon**

Adam Glendon was diagnosed with autism in 2009. Lives in Calgary, Alberta and works full-time as a yard freight conductor for CN Rail. He is an active volunteer in the autism community. His volunteer activities have included running an adult Autism support group, giving presentations to Calgary Police Service and Calgary Airport Authority, as well as, working with WestJet and Calgary Police to update policy and improve training. He is a member of University of Calgary's School of Public Policy working group on the employment of people with developmental disabilities. He is currently helping to coordinate the Self Advocacy Panel for Autism Alberta's Alliance 2019 Conference and working to set up an Adult Autism Diagnosis Clinic in Calgary.

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**Betty Gunner**, Community Relations Coordinator, Special Needs Strategy/Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) Instructor, Omushkego Education - Mushkegowuk Council

**Gina Glidden**, SCC, MSW, PhD

Gina Glidden is a registered social worker, and received her Master's and PhD degrees from the School of Social Work at McGill University. Her CIHR Health System Impact Fellowship is based in the Assessment and Parent Coaching services of the Miriam Foundation's Centre for Innovation in Autism and Intellectual Disabilities, located in Montreal, QC, and linked to the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary, AB. Gina's combined work is focused on program evaluation, procedural documentation and implementation, and in partnerships for support systems navigation.

**Bruno Hache**

Thirty-something full time IT technician and autism advocate, Asperger mentor specializing with young adults living in Kitchener, ON. Fluent in both official languages.

**Judy Hanson**, President, Autism Home Base Durham

**Debbie Irish**, CASDA Director

Striving to ensure full acceptance and equitable opportunities for all, Debbie Irish has over 25 years of experience supporting individuals with autism and/or developmental disabilities in a wide variety of roles from front line support to training and awareness building to operational and leadership activities, including CEO and CFO roles.

Debbie has a broad understanding of systems and services for children and adults in the developmental sector. She brings a solution-focused approach to her work and believes strongly in collaboration, creativity and teamwork.

**The Honourable Mike Lake**, PC, MP

Mike is the Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Wetaskiwin, and was first elected in 2006. After his re-election in October, 2008, Mike was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, a position to which he was re-appointed after the May 2011 election.

On September 13, 2012 Mike was sworn into the Queen's Privy Council, after being asked by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to serve on a Cabinet Committee tasked with efforts to balance the federal budget. On October 19, 2015, he was re-elected to a fourth term, receiving the 5th highest vote total

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out of 1,800 candidates, from all parties, across the country. He currently serves as the Conservative Party Deputy Shadow Minister for International Development.

Prior to entering federal politics, Mike worked for 10 years with the Edmonton Oilers Hockey Club where he served as National Accounts Manager, Director of Ticket Sales and Group Sales Manager. Mike holds a Bachelor of Commerce (with distinction) from the University of Alberta.

Mike has two children, a son Jaden, 22, and daughter Jенаe, 18. The Lakes have been active supporters of autism organizations, families and individuals across the country, and around the world, while sharing their story of life with Jaden, who has autism.

## **L'honorable MIKE LAKE, C.P., député**

Mike est le député d'Edmonton-Wetaskiwin, et a été élu une première fois en 2006. Après sa réélection en octobre 2008, Mike a été nommé secrétaire parlementaire du ministre de l'Industrie, poste qu'il a repris après les élections de mai 2011.

Le 13 septembre 2012, Mike a été assermenté au Conseil privé de la Reine après que le premier ministre Stephen Harper lui a demandé de siéger à un comité du cabinet chargé d'équilibrer le budget fédéral. Le 19 octobre 2015, il a été réélu pour un quatrième mandat, recevant le 5e total de voix le plus élevé de 1 800 candidats, tous partis confondus, partout au pays. Il est actuellement sous-ministre du Cabinet fantôme conservateur responsable du Développement international.

Avant d'entrer en politique fédérale, Mike a travaillé pendant dix ans pour le Club de hockey des Oilers d'Edmonton, où il était gestionnaire des Comptes nationaux, directeur des Ventes de billets et gestionnaire des Ventes de groupe. Mike est titulaire d'un baccalauréat en commerce (avec distinction) de l'Université de l'Alberta.

Mike a deux enfants, un fils Jaden, 22 ans, et une fille Jенаe, 18 ans. La famille Lake soutient activement les organisations sur l'autisme, ainsi que les familles et les personnes touchées, partout dans le pays mais également dans le monde. C'est ainsi l'occasion de partager l'histoire de leur vie avec Jaden, lui aussi atteint d'autisme.

## **Jonathan Lai, PhD**

Dr Jonathan Lai, PhD, is a CIHR-MITACS Health System Impact Fellow hosted at the Centre for Innovation in Autism and Intellectual Disabilities and affiliated with McGill University in Montreal. He is charged with setting up a program evaluation for a primary care medical-dental clinic for youth and adults with developmental disabilities. His current research aims to understand the interface between research, health service delivery and policy.

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**Jerry Lanouette**, Algonquin Elder's Helper

## **Jeanine Lebsack**

Jeanine Lebsack is a freelance writer and Family Engagement stakeholder in research. She and her two sons have ADHD, and her youngest has a form of autism associated with a rare genetic disorder called 16p11.2 proximal micro duplication. Jeanine found out in 2018 that she was the carrier of the duplication, which spurred her to discover research opportunities for herself and her son.

Having pushed past the shame and guilt of being both a parent and carrier of the chromosomal duplication, Jeanine says her single, biggest takeaway so far is being able to live bravely every day. She has found her truth and her peace with her family's journey, and plans to continue sharing it in her quest to help others.

Jeanine is happily married to a loving husband and she blogs about their family's adventures on Wordpress at Jack's Mom's Blog.

## **Adrienne Lipsey**, Co-founder, Springboard

Before co-founding Springboard, Adrienne worked in leadership positions in public policy, supporting decision makers and advocating for change from inside and outside of government. Adrienne was a Chief of Staff to Ministers in the provincial government, providing high level strategic and policy advice, and managing all aspects of communications, policy development and stakeholder relations. She led the development of complex programs, frameworks, and strategies, helping implement impactful policies and substantial capital and program investments. Her work has focused on social services, economic development, labour policy, gender policy. A lawyer, Adrienne has experience in government and on Bay St. She held early career positions at Ontario's Human Rights Legal Support Centre and the United Nations Development Programme. Adrienne received her JD from Osgoode Hall Law School, her MA in Political Studies from Queen's University and her Hon. BA in Political Science from the University of Toronto.

## **Amy Lonsberry**, MPA, Director of Operations, The Sinneave Family Foundation

Amy joined The Sinneave Family Foundation (Sinneave) in 2013 as the Board Secretary. In January 2016, Amy's role expanded to include Director of Operations. As Director of Operations, Amy is responsible for ensuring the day-to-day operations of the organization are integrated, efficient and effective.

The first ten years of Amy's career were spent building a successful retail sales and marketing career. In 2005, she shifted her career path from the for-profit sector to the not-for-profit sector by earning a

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Master's in Public Administration (MPA) from the University of Victoria. After completing her MPA, Amy spent several years as an Associate with the health care consulting practice, Stratavera.

Amy demonstrates a deep connection to her community by volunteering. In 2005, Amy was one of 8000 Albertans awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal which recognized those whose achievements have benefited their fellow citizens, their community and their province. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Autism Spectrum Disorder Alliance and volunteers with Calgary's Red Cross Disaster Management Team.

**Yona Lunsky**, PhD, Director, Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, Senior Scientist, Adult Neurodevelopment and Geriatric Psychiatry Division, and Director, Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (H-CARDD) Program

Dr. Yona Lunsky is Director of the Director of the Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre, Senior Scientist in Adult Neurodevelopmental Services and Director of the Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (H-CARDD) Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She is Professor and Developmental Disabilities Lead in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and Adjunct Scientist at the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES).

**Brooke McKenzie**, BMR (PT), MSc, Jordan's Principle Coordinator, Yukon Child Development Centre

Brooke is currently working as a Jordan's Principle Service Coordinator at the Child Development Centre in Whitehorse, Yukon. She has a background in physiotherapy and social epidemiology. She has worked extensively across the north and internationally, including Haiti and Sierra Leone. Brooke enjoys creative problem solving especially related to service delivery in rural and remote locations. Brooke and her two daughters live on the marge of Lake Laberge where they enjoy hiking, biking, and being outside with their puppy Rosie.

**Tanya McLeod**, President, The Sinneave Family Foundation

Tanya McLeod is currently President of The Sinneave Family Foundation. She holds a Master Degree in Health Administration from the University of British Columbia, and a Graduate Certificate in Health Systems Leadership from Royal Roads University. She is a Certified Healthcare Executive and a decorated 20-year veteran with the Canadian Armed Forces. She brings more than 20 years of health leadership experience to her work and strives to align priorities and implement systems to improve organizational performance and achieve impact. Tanya also sits on the Board of Directors of PolicyWise for Children and Families, a not-for-profit corporation that exists to improve child, family and community well-being

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by leading, creating, enabling and mobilizing research and evaluation for evidence-informed policy and practice.

## **David Moloney**

David Moloney has been working for CIBC in various retail roles since May 2007. Thanks to his ongoing commitment to the inclusion and diverse beliefs of the bank David has also volunteered with the CIBC WorkAbility Employee Network, a support group of CIBC employees with disabilities and their supporters who advocate for the removal of all barriers in the workplace. During his time with WorkAbility David has been involved in the following:

Meeting and/or introducing many leaders in the disability community including retired Paralympians, Politicians, and Legal Advocates.

Participating in a variety of external events such as numerous Job Fairs, Development Services Ontario events, and through his role as a member of the Board of Directors for Autism Ontario, represented CIBC at multiple disability-centric events.

Been featured by CIBC through both internal and external media stories (including CTV News, City News, and The Toronto Star, to name a few).

Through all of his work David remains a passionate supporter of the Disability Community. Since first becoming involved with the Aspergers Society of Ontario in 2001 David has never ceased to believe in the vital nature of what people with disabilities can do (up to and including working in senior ministries in Government).

## **Senator Jim Munson**

Senator Jim Munson is best known to Canadians as a trusted journalist and communications advisor. He reported on current affairs for more than thirty years, most notably as a bureau chief and foreign correspondent for CTV News. His reporting touched upon events around the globe – from Belfast to Beijing – including the First Gulf War, the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the Tiananmen Square Massacre. At home, he covered the FLQ crisis in Quebec and later, in Ottawa, every Canadian government and federal election from 1974 onwards. Senator Munson was twice nominated for a Gemini Award in recognition of excellence in journalism.

In 2001, following his career as a reporter, Senator Munson joined the Prime Minister's Office as a communications advisor and was made Director of Communications the following year. He was called to

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the Senate on December 10, 2003, to represent the province of Ontario and served as Whip of the Senate Liberal Caucus from 2008 to 2016.

Senator Munson sits as deputy chair of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration, as the third member of the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, and as a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. He is a vocal advocate for individuals with an autism spectrum disorder. His leadership in Parliament led to the adoption of An Act respecting World Autism Awareness Day and the landmark Senate report *Pay Now or Pay Later: Autism Families in Crisis*.

## **Sénateur Jim Munson**

Le sénateur Jim Munson est bien connu des Canadiens comme journaliste de confiance et de conseiller en communications. Il a couvert l'actualité pendant plus de trente ans, tout particulièrement à titre de chef bureau et de correspondant à l'étranger pour *CTV News*. Ses reportages l'ont amené partout dans le monde, de Belfast à Pékin, où il a couvert des événements marquants tels que la première guerre du Golfe, l'assassinat d'Indira Gandhi et le massacre de la place Tiananmen. Au Canada, il a couvert la crise du FLQ au Québec et, plus tard à Ottawa, toutes les élections fédérales et tous les gouvernements canadiens à compter de 1974. Le sénateur Munson a été à deux reprises mis en candidature pour un prix Gemini en reconnaissance de son excellence journalistique.

En 2001, le sénateur Munson a mis fin à sa carrière de journaliste et a relevé un nouveau défi comme conseiller en communications, puis Directeur des communications un an plus tard, au Bureau du premier ministre. Le 10 décembre 2003, il a été nommé au Sénat, où il représente la province de l'Ontario. Il a occupé le poste de whip des libéraux au Sénat de 2008 à 2016.

Le sénateur Munson est vice-président du Comité permanent de la régie interne, des budgets et de l'administration, troisième membre du Comité sénatorial permanent des pêches et des océans et membre du Comité sénatorial permanent des affaires sociales, des sciences et de la technologie. Il s'est fait l'ardent défenseur des personnes atteintes d'un trouble du spectre de l'autisme. Son action au Parlement a mené à l'adoption de la *Loi instituant la Journée mondiale de sensibilisation à l'autisme* et à

la publication d'un important rapport du Sénat intitulé *Payer maintenant ou payer plus tard – Les familles d'enfants autistes en crise*.

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## **Christopher Mushquash**, PhD, CPsych

Christopher Mushquash, PhD, CPsych, is a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Mental Health and Addiction, an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Lakehead University and the Division of Human Sciences at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Associate Vice President Research at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and Chief Scientist of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute. He is also the Director of the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Lakehead University. In addition to his academic appointments, Dr. Mushquash is a registered clinical psychologist providing assessment, intervention, and consultation services for First Nations children, adolescents, and adults at Dilico Anishinabek Family Care. Dr. Mushquash is the recipient of numerous awards for his work, including the Canadian Psychological Association President's New Researcher Award, Lakehead University Outstanding Alumni Award, the Northwestern Ontario Visionary Award, the Ontario Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science Early Researcher Award, and the Clinical Psychological Association Clinical Section Scientist-Practitioner Early Career Award. In 2017, Dr. Mushquash was inducted in the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. He is currently the vice-chair of the Institute Advisory Board for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health. Dr. Mushquash is Ojibway and a member of Pays Plat First Nation.

## **Esther Rhee**, National Program Director, Autism Speaks Canada

As the National Program Director for Autism Speaks Canada, Esther's role focuses on supporting individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families across Canada through the organization's mission to increase resources and services, increase autism research, build awareness and work as a collaborative community. Esther oversees the Family Services program in Canada, which includes the distribution of \$4 million to over 200 organizations to increase programs. Esther also represents Canada on the Autism Speaks global science team which has supported over \$200 million towards autism research internationally. Additionally, Esther sits on a number of provincial and national advisory committees. Esther's work in the ASD community has focused on building community capacity, collaboration, program development and navigation support strategies. Esther also works as a Clinical Therapist focusing on child and adult mental health. Esther received her Master of Social Work degree from Wilfrid Laurier University and also holds a B.A.H in Philosophy from the University of Guelph.

**Wendy Roberts**, MD, FRCPC, Clinical Director, Integrated Services for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (ISAND), Professor Emeritus, Department of Paediatrics, University of Toronto

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## **Ken Robertson**, Four Directions Autism, Chair

Ken Robertson is Secwepemc from Neskonlith Indian Band located in the south-central part of British Columbia. Raised in East Vancouver known as 'Canada's poorest postal code' similar to many First Nations peoples, he had challenges accessing services on reserve. Ken moved to Toronto in his youth and held positions at Tumivut Youth Shelter, and later the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto. Shortly after the diagnosis of Autism of two of his children Ken began advocating for Autism parents when he ran in the 2014 municipal election for Toronto District School Board Trustee placing second. Current Board Member of Autism Ontario and successfully launched a House of Commons E-petition advocating for services for First Nations families off-reserve. His continued goal is advocating for all Autism parents, and addressing the challenge each family faces.

## **Matthew Russell**, PhD

Dr. Matthew Russell (PhD) is a CIHR Health System Impact Postdoctoral Fellow hosted by PolicyWise for Children & Families and affiliated with the University of Calgary in Alberta. Matt's research is focused on using big data to help inform decisions on how to better support children and youth with disabilities and their families. Specifically, he has used cross-ministry administrative data and birth cohort data from Alberta to better understand how the transition into support (early identification and intervention) and the child to adult transition relates to child and family support use and outcomes.

## **Garth Smith**, MD, Medical Director, Developmental Paediatrician, KidsInclusive Centre for Child and Youth Development, Associate Professor, Paediatrics, Queens University

Dr. R. Garth Smith is a full-time Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Queen's University and a Developmental Pediatrician at Kids Inclusive Centre for Child & Youth Development.

He is a graduate of the University of the West Indies and completed his residency training at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He did some additional Developmental Pediatric training at Chapel Hill, North Carolina. After working in Private Practice in Southwest Ontario for 9-years, he moved to Kingston to the Child Development Centre (now KidsInclusive Centre for Child & Youth Development) as a Developmental Pediatrician, and subsequently Medical Director. Since 1996, his work has included the assessment of autism spectrum disorders, acquired brain injury, neuromuscular disorders and children with hearing impairment, among other neurobehavioral disorders.

His research interests include the diagnosis of anxiety disorders in autism spectrum disorders, impact of having a child with Autism and being in the military, Quality of life in children and youth with multiple concussions, and numerous others, & has had over 12 publications.

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## **The Honourable Wanda Thomas Bernard, PhD, CM, ONS**

Senator Wanda Thomas Bernard who was appointed to the Senate on November 10, 2016 is a highly regarded social worker, educator, researcher, community activist and advocate of social change.

In 2016, she was appointed Special Advisor on Diversity and Inclusiveness at Dalhousie University and is the first African Nova Scotian to hold a tenure track position. In 2017, Senator Bernard was appointed Professor Emeritus in the School of Social Work (SSW) at Dalhousie University; the first woman within the SSW to achieve this appointment, and the first African Canadian to be appointed Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie University. She is a founding member of the Association of Black Social Workers who has also served as an expert witness in human rights cases and has received many honours for her work, including the Order of Nova Scotia and the Order of Canada.

Senator Bernard is the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights (RIDR), and a member of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (SOCI). She is also Vice-Chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association.

### **Sénatrice Wanda Thomas Bernard**

Mme Wanda Thomas Bernard est une personnalité respectée. Elle est travailleuse sociale, éducatrice, chercheuse, activiste communautaire et partisane du changement social. Elle a travaillé en santé mentale à l'échelle provinciale et en pratique communautaire rurale à l'échelle municipale. Depuis 1990, elle est également professeure à l'École de service social de l'Université Dalhousie, où elle occupe aussi le poste de directrice depuis dix ans. En 2016, elle a été nommée conseillère spéciale en matière de diversité et d'inclusion à l'Université Dalhousie, et elle est la première Afro-Néo-Écossaise à obtenir un poste menant à la permanence à l'Université Dalhousie et à être promue professeure titulaire. Mme Thomas Bernard a collaboré avec des organisations provinciales en vue d'intégrer la diversité aux processus politiques de la Nouvelle-Écosse, ainsi que d'enseigner aux communautés les processus législatifs canadiens et encourager la participation citoyenne. Elle est membre fondatrice de l'Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW), dont le but est de répondre aux besoins des citoyens marginalisés, en particulier d'ascendance africaine. En tant qu'ancienne membre et présidente du Conseil consultatif sur la condition féminine de la Nouvelle-Écosse, elle a joué un rôle de premier plan dans l'élaboration des recommandations à l'intention de ministres concernant les cadres de prévention de la violence à caractère sexuel et l'équité en matière de santé. À l'échelle nationale, elle a été membre de la Coalition nationale des conseils consultatifs sur le statut de la femme. Elle a également été témoin experte dans des causes liées aux droits de la personne et a fait des présentations dans le cadre de nombreux forums locaux, nationaux et internationaux. Mme Thomas Bernard a reçu de nombreuses

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distinctions pour son travail et son leadership communautaires, notamment l'Ordre de la Nouvelle-Écosse et l'Ordre du Canada.

**Wendy Trylinski**, Manager Childhood Development and Planning, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Wendy is the Manager for Childhood Development and Planning at Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). She has worked for NAN for the past 14 years and brings her passion for children, families, and living in the North to her work. Wendy feels privileged to work with the many diverse people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and particularly honored to work alongside families. She believes in and encourages innovative, “out of the box” thinking to support and enhance community strengths and successes.

Previous to her work at NAN, Wendy was the Executive Director of Child Family Resource Center in Cranberry Portage Manitoba and for 17 years worked with First Nations in northern Manitoba.

Wendy is a mother to 2 children and 3 grandsons. Enjoying nature, reading, gardening (which is out of control) and having sleep overs with her grandchildren fill her spare time.

**Corey Walker**, Autism British Columbia

**Marg Whelan**, CASDA Director

**Noah Zon**, Co-founder, Springboard

Noah Zon has spent his career working on a wide range of policy issues with governments at all levels in Canada. Before co-founding Springboard, Noah was the Director of Policy and Research at the Maytree Foundation in Toronto where he led the development and implementation of the organization's policy strategy, leading to concrete policy changes to reduce poverty in Canada. At the Mowat Centre, a public policy think tank at the University of Toronto, he led the Centre's largest research stream, developing policy agendas around technology, economic development, fiscal policy and the social safety net. As a public servant, Noah worked in the Cabinet Office for the Ontario government, where he worked on climate change policy and intergovernmental relations. Noah holds an MSc in Global Politics from the London School of Economics and a BA (Joint Hons). in Political Science and International Development from McGill University.