



School to Life
Transition
Handbook

Five Steps To Successful Planning



PREPARED BY RITA MCLEOD
for the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living

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Design and layout by Michael Misanchuk at Thrive Design

Dedicated to the memory of Bob Auser,
whose expertise and commitment to his students will be missed.

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Kevin

Submitted by Susan Campbell

Kevin was a special needs student at Wolseley High School. His program consisted of regular instruction with teacher assistant support, resource instruction, and speech and language therapy.

Kevin was always a pleasant face in the hallway, ready to tell a joke or share the latest happenings on *Star Trek*. He related well with the teachers, but was shy and nervous when dealing with the other students or adults he didn't know. The family's greatest fear was that he would never leave home and become independent.

A team consisting of Kevin, his family, the resource teacher, the teacher assistant, the principal, and the division special education coordinator began transition planning when Kevin was in grade ten. It was decided that Kevin's program would contain a large component of life skills training, social skills training, work experience, and problem solving skills. His program contained functional academics and skills he would need to become independent.

During the next three years, Kevin worked in various places in the community. These included the Beaver Lumber store, Wolseley and District Memorial Hospital, Wolseley Nursing Home, Home Hardware, Cool Springs Potatoes, as well as home maintenance with teacher assistant's supervision. During his job experience Kevin discovered love of mechanical work. His favourite job placement was the Beaver Lumber store where the owner and staff always kept a place waiting for him in the coffee room.

As Kevin moved through the high school, the focus of his instruction increasingly moved from the classroom into real life situations in the community. In the fall of Kevin's last year in school, the Association for Community Living was added to the team to help with planning for post-secondary placement.

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Kevin made it clear he wanted to attend a post-secondary institute away from home. With funding assistance from the Wolseley Lions' Club, the school arranged trips to Medicine Hat College, Vermilion College, and Palliser Institute in Moose Jaw so that Kevin and his family could examine various options.

Kevin decided he would like to attend the two-year Vocational Life Skills program at Medicine Hat College. He was able to find supervised living accommodation with five other adults close to the campus. In his first year at Medicine Hat College Kevin won an award for excellence.

After the completion of his course Kevin decided to stay in Medicine Hat where he is employed in the maintenance department of the local hospital. Not only has Kevin overcome his shyness, he has become an outgoing young man who is active in a bowling league, card club, and a youth group that goes on camping trips and other outings. He is also busy saving money to go on a trip to Nashville with a group of friends next year.

Foreword

This Handbook was created in response to recommendations made in the “Transition from High School to Adult Life” project, which the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living completed in 1998. The project had attempted to respond to concerns of parents and educators that when young people with intellectual disabilities leave the educational system, there are often very few options open to them. It then examined best practices of transition planning in Saskatchewan and elsewhere.

One of the project’s recommendations was the creation of a Handbook that would help young people in transition and their families to learn about the transition process and help them get more involved in the planning for their future.

The full report of the project, and the executive summary with all the recommendations, are available from the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL) provincial office.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of all the people who made production of this Handbook possible. First, the participants of the original project, who proposed the idea of developing a handbook. People who reviewed the first draft of the Handbook — D’Arcy Blacklock, John Coflin, Debra Klashinsky, John McLeod, Susan Mooney, Wendy and Sid Petrisor, Cynthia Wolkowski and a group of Saskatchewan educators. Also thanks to the late Bob Auser, Susan Campbell, and Karin Melberg-Schwier for contributing stories.

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A special “thank you” to Dean Smith of the School-to-Work Interagency Transition Partnership (SWITP) and to Dr. Allen of Allen, Shea and Associates for their kind permission to use and modify their materials for this Handbook.

We acknowledge the Canadian Association for Community Living who funded the “Transition from High School to Adult Life” project through their “Community Living 2000” campaign.

Last, but not least, we thank the Saskatchewan Ministers of Education; Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training; and Social Services. Their financial assistance enabled the Handbook to be designed and printed. We also appreciate their active support in distributing the Handbook to schools, families and various agencies.

Purpose Of The Handbook

This Handbook is designed to help young people who are in the process of transition from school to adult life.

It provides basic information for them and their families about transition planning, by giving an overview of:

- ▶ When to begin planning for transition.
- ▶ What areas of adult living to plan for.
- ▶ How to go about starting the planning process.
- ▶ How the meetings should go.
- ▶ Who should be part of the planning team.
- ▶ What the roles and responsibilities of individual team members are.
- ▶ How to carry through with the transition plan.
- ▶ Where to get more information about resources and materials.

The focus of the Handbook is on the person in transition. So, after the first section, the text, as well as the worksheets and checklists are directed to “me, the student in transition”. The main reason is to reinforce the basic principle of *person-centred* planning. That is, the student is central and the most important person in the transition process, and her or his participation and input is crucial. Another reason is to help others who read the Handbook to “put themselves in the shoes” of the student.

An attempt has been made to use language that is easy to understand. Some young people will not be able to read the Handbook on their own but another person can help them work through it.

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The Handbook is written in relatively general terms, so that it can be used in transition planning for young people with different kinds and degrees of disabilities – and even for students without disabilities. Some modifications and adaptations may be necessary to accommodate needs of all individuals in transition. It should also make useful reading for family members and others, such as teachers, social workers, agency people and employers, who want to learn more about the transition process.

The Handbook is organized into three parts. The first part contains information about what is transition planning. The second part is the practical part with a section on why it is important to plan for transition, and sections describing specific steps of the planning process. The final part of the Handbook includes sections for parents and teachers, as well as the Appendices.

The Appendices include a section called Further Reading, for anyone interested in learning more about transition. It lists materials and resources, which are available in the John Dolan Library at the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL). There is also a section containing a list of organizations and agencies who provide financial help, social advocacy and answers to questions that people might have. Addresses and names of contact people are provided, as well as a list of websites that provide information about transition planning and related issues.

Sections of the Handbook are separated by divider pages, which contain examples of successful transition stories, in the hope that they will provide inspiration and encouragement.

The worksheets and checklists are printed on differently coloured pages, so that they can be easily found. They may be taken out and photocopied, as needed.

The material is ready to put in a three-ring binder. This allows the Handbook to become user-friendly, flexible and dynamic, as readers can add notes from their meetings, and insert pages with telephone numbers and other relevant information.

If you would like more information about this Handbook or about any other issues related to the transition planning process, please contact Cynthia Wolkowski, Employment Opportunities Consultant at the SACL (phone number: 306-783-1355, email: cwolk@hmtnet.com), or the SACL main office at (306) 955-3344.

What Is Transition?

Transition is a bridge from one situation to another. Transition is about change and moving. People go through many transition stages in their lives. There is transition from family life to school. In school students move from one grade to another. There is the move from elementary school to high school. Then the big move from high school to the rest of adult life and doing things that other adults do in the community. This might include getting a job, post-secondary training at a university or college, finding a place to live, being involved in the life of the community, developing personal relationships with other adults, getting married, starting a family, and much more. Not everybody does all of these things at the same time. Some people, for example, continue living with their parents after they finish school.

All young people leaving high school go through a transition period. For some this period is smooth. Others find it difficult.

For young people with disabilities, there are many extra questions and challenges. People with disabilities often find it harder to get a job and they might be unable to go to university or college. Often, they are not very involved in the life of their community. When young people with disabilities leave the school system, they and their families leave behind a relatively organized system of services and become almost solely responsible for finding information to prepare for adult life.

In the past, many young people with disabilities leaving school entered a service system, where they were kept occupied in sheltered workshops, and lived in institutions or group homes. Some adults with disabilities *do* require services in the community, but adult life is much more than receiving services. It

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is about living a full life, with family and friends, and doing things that are enjoyable, rewarding and meaningful.

Planning transition from school is about making decisions where to live, how to find work and how to get involved in the community. It is about what to do in spare time and for fun. It is about how to develop and keep relationships.

In its Special Education Policy Manual (1989), Saskatchewan Education recognized that programming for all exceptional children and youth needs to be well coordinated at all levels to ensure appropriate goals and program continuity, and that good communication and cooperative planning are required between the family and appropriate support personnel. It further acknowledges that a major transition occurs as the exceptional pupil prepares to leave the school system, and that appropriate advance planning in anticipation of post-secondary education or suitable employment, is important.

Major goals for many disabled pupils are identified in the Policy Manual as the development of appropriate living and social skills, independence, leisure skill development and vocational preparation. Effective transition practices that are suggested include emphasis on the development of functional skills; community-based education in leisure and social domains; part-time vocational placements during the last year or two of the educational programs; and referral to an appropriate agency for continued assistance in need areas.

Ryan

As told by the late Bob Auser

Ryan is a really personable and friendly guy with multiple disabilities. He left our school at the age of 21, after being here five years. He was in the functional integrated program at the school, following a curriculum set out by government standards.

During his time at the school, it was his future that determined what his program would be. We focused on his abilities and then determined what skills we needed to teach him so that he could have a productive and fulfilled life.

We started to plan for his transition in grade ten, his second year here. We felt that he would need a sheltered environment, and someone who could provide personal care for him, because he needs care during the day. For part of his program he was doing work experience in the community. He worked at various places, such as a local grocery store, where he was stocking shelves, sweeping floors and washing windows. This was always with the help of a teacher assistant. He had some job training here at the school, as part of a work crew that would go out and do work in the community, such as raking leaves, and so on. He was also in charge of recycling paper and cans in the school's recycling program.

One semester he worked at the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, again with the help of a teacher assistant.

In his last year of school, Ryan spent a lot of time at Cosmopolitan Industries, doing the same type of work he had been doing here at the school, that is recycling. When he first started there, they were very impressed with his 98% efficiency at recycling paper. That's how well he was trained from the school experience.

The work transition was quite smooth, not a big issue. The issue that was of more concern, was that of leaving the safe

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environment of the school. Ryan felt secure at the school, as he knew the people here and he felt so much a part of it. So we had to work on weaning him off school. Luckily he was teamed up with two other students who were in a similar situation. They were spending most of their school day out on the job and one hour a day at the school. This one hour concentrated on work education and life skills. As he spent more time with his two colleagues, he started to internalize the idea that he was not a student any more and that he was becoming a worker. He had actually made the decision that he wanted to work, and that he wanted to start earning money, even before his parents had. In fact, he phoned me the other day and told me he just received his first pay cheque and he was heading off to the bank to deposit it.

Going through the transition process with the other two students helped him to learn that the expectations of him were now those of an adult, that adults worked and that school was for kids. He began seeing himself as a worker.

The SACL was part of the transition planning from the beginning. In Ryan's last school year, it was decided that he would work at Cosmopolitan Industries and so they became members of the team. There were no other major players because there were no other concerns. As Ryan was going to continue living at home, there was no need for Social Services to be involved.

Ryan's transition went well and he seems to have had a natural flow into work. There are supports available to Ryan and his parents from his place of work. His parents are happy that things have gone well and he is content.

Why Do I Need To Plan

For Transition From School To Adult Life?

Transition planning helps me to become an adult. It helps me to make decisions and take responsibility for myself. To begin with, my family, friends and I, teachers and other people, decide goals that are important for me and my future. The goals provide a clear direction to the planning.

The transition planning should cover:

- ▶ my goals for future
- ▶ my personal strengths and interests
- ▶ ways to reach my goals
- ▶ what needs to be done to achieve my goals

Transition planning should begin by developing an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) while I am still in school. The ITP spells out what everyone needs to do in order to provide the training and services I need for a smooth transition from school. A transition plan is more effective when a team of people is involved. Step 2 of this Handbook discusses who should be on the Transition team. That section describes what people on the team have to do to make transition planning work.

Transition planning does not stop when I leave school. It can be a life-long process. Important parts of my Individual Transition Plan will change as my needs change. Some issues are more important while I am still in school. Others will become more important after I leave school and become an adult.

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Getting Ready

For The Transition–Planning Process

When should planning for transition begin?

Some young people begin early to plan for the time they leave high school. They know what they want to do and they plan for it. But some do not know what they will do after they leave school. That is why there needs to be transition planning to help them decide what they want to do and how best to reach their goals.

If I am one of these people, the transition planning has to begin early, so that there is plenty of time for me to decide what I want to do after I leave school. There must be time to look at ways to get to where I want and there must be time to learn the skills to get what I need.

Transition planning often starts when a student begins high school. It is even better when planning begins in elementary school. That way, my elementary school teacher can be part of the transition team. Elementary school teachers know their students well and can provide valuable information about our strengths, abilities and interests.

In the United States, it is the law to start planning for transition not later than age 14. A group of agencies in California, called the *School To Work Interagency Transition Partnership (SWITP)* have prepared checklists for planning successful transition. These checklists target issues that the transition team should be looking at one, two, three and four years before young people leave school. The lists have been changed to fit Saskatchewan environment. They are reproduced with SWITP's permission.

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What questions do I, the student, need to ask?

If the planning process is to go well, I have to do some things **before** our first meeting. Here are some questions I should be asking myself:

- ▶ What are my hopes and dreams for myself?
- ▶ What I want to do after I leave high school?
- ▶ What do I need to learn?
- ▶ How do my dreams fit with my abilities?

The answers to these questions will become my transition plan. The Worksheets on the following pages (after the checklists) will help me work out the answers. I might have to ask my Transition Helper to help me with the Worksheets. My Transition Helper will be somebody who knows me well and who is willing to work closely with me. He or she might be a teacher, counsellor, family member or friend.

After I have thought about my goals for the future, we will be ready to put together the transition team. Then we can start planning for my first transition meeting.

Most worksheets in this Handbook have been modified with permission from “Getting from Where I Am to Where I Want to Be”, a document found on the website of Allen, Shea and Associates, and from the book by Dr. Allen *Read My Lips, It’s My Choice*. Their permission is gratefully acknowledged.

What To Do When

The checklists outline the activities that the transition team should think about. They indicate when the team should begin exploring them. My skills and interests will decide which activities fit my needs. The checklists will also help decide who should be included in the planning process.

Four to Five Years Before Leaving School

- ▶ Find out my learning style. How do I learn best and what help do I need to be able to learn new things?
- ▶ Find out my interests, and what jobs I would like to have. Do a career assessment. Identify further education or training that I need.
- ▶ Look at options for post-secondary education. Find out what I need to get into the programs.
- ▶ Learn how to tell other people what my interests, preferences, and needs are.
- ▶ Learn to explain my disability, and what help and support I need.
- ▶ Learn and practise making informed decisions.
- ▶ Look into modern technology tools that might help me to get involved in the community and find a job.
- ▶ Get involved in community activities. Build friendships.
- ▶ Think about getting a driver's licence.
- ▶ Learn to use public transport on my own.
- ▶ Learn how to use money. Identify what help I need to manage money.
- ▶ Be able to tell people my name, address, telephone number.

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- ▶ Get to know telephone numbers of my home, school, parents' work, doctor and my Transition Helper.
- ▶ Decide what skills I will need to learn to live on my own.
- ▶ Learn how to look after my health.

Two to Three Years Before Leaving the School System

- ▶ Find out what community support services are available. I will need help with education, employment, health, and living arrangements.
- ▶ Ask adult service providers, friends, and others to the planning meetings.
- ▶ Make sure that I am taking the right classes at school so I can get the job I want.
- ▶ Get more information on post-secondary programs and the support they offer.
- ▶ Get a summer job, after-school job or voluntary work.
- ▶ Find out who provides health care. Learn about sexuality and family planning.
- ▶ Decide what kind of financial support I need and apply for it.
- ▶ Learn and practise how to get along with others in different settings at work, in school and in fun activities.
- ▶ Look at legal matters issues related to becoming an adult. Will I need a personal guardian or a financial manager?
- ▶ Begin to develop a file of things that might be useful when I want to get a job (career portfolio). Keep it up to date.
- ▶ Find out where I would like to live and what support I might need.
- ▶ Practise independent living skills. For example, budgeting, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, transport, personal care.

One Year Before Leaving the School System

- ▶ Decide the post-secondary school I plan to attend.
- ▶ Practise what to do at a job interview.
- ▶ Practise how to ask for help in school and at work.
- ▶ Find out what employment support is available. Things like a job coach, job shadowing, job sharing.
- ▶ Decide what job I want. Get the job, with support if needed.
- ▶ Practise skills such as getting to work on time, keeping appointments on time and mixing well with workmates.
- ▶ Apply for Social Insurance Number (SIN) before my first job.
- ▶ Practise getting to and from doctor and dentist.
- ▶ Apply for health coverage available from Social Services.

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Step 1

Getting To Know Me

1. Who is this about (my name): _____

2. What I like to do and what I can do:

At home: _____

At work (if working) or in school (if a student): _____

In the community (outside home, school or work): _____

For fun: _____

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3. What makes me mad or sad: _____

4. What makes me happy: _____

What Are My Dreams

And Hopes For The Future?

1. New things I would like to do and learn:

At home: _____

At work (if working) or in school (if a student): _____

In my personal life: _____

In the community (outside home, school or work): _____

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For fun: _____

2. What worries me about my future? _____

3. What worries or scares those around me (parents, brothers and sisters, close friends, girl/boyfriend)? _____

4. If anything were possible, what would I like to see myself doing three to five years from now? _____

What Do I Need Help With?

At home: _____

At work (if working) or in school (if a student): _____

In the community: _____

In my personal life: _____

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Having fun: _____

What Are The Dreams And Hopes Of Others For _____*?

This checklist should be photocopied and completed by as many people as possible.

Who completed this checklist?: _____

Relationship to * _____?: _____

1. What is most important to me about * _____'s transition from school to adult life?

2. New things I would I like * _____ to do or learn:

At home: _____

At work (if working) or in school (if a student): _____

*Insert the name of the person for whom transition is being planned.

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In his/her personal life: _____

In the community: _____

To have fun: _____

3. What worries me about her/his future? _____

4. If anything were possible, what would I like to see her/him doing three to five years from now? _____

Who Should Be On The Transition–Planning Team

Planning the transition from school to adult life has to be a team effort. Results are easier to get when people work together. I, the person in transition, have to be involved and so too should my family and friends. Together with my school and other agencies, we are all partners coming up with ideas and building my Transition Plan.

Why should we work as a team?

Working as a team

- ▶ makes me and my family feel that we have a say in our own future;
- ▶ makes it easier for services to work together;
- ▶ cuts down on paperwork;
- ▶ means that each agency knows what the others are doing;
- ▶ saves time and money. People at the meeting can brainstorm ideas. They can talk about services and solve problems. They can deal with matters such as funding, assessment or financial needs.

The following paragraphs describe key people on my team.

1. As the person in transition, I am the most important person at the planning meeting. At each step of the planning process, I am an equal partner. The planning is about my future, about my needs and wishes. These are the things I have to do:

- ▶ Let others on the team know what are my interests, goals, and expectations.
- ▶ Indicate whether suggestions or plans are okay with me.

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- ▶ If I am not able to speak, arrangements have to be made for someone to speak for me. He or she will pass on information about my personal interests, goals and expectations.

2. The Transition Helper is someone who helps me to begin developing my Individual Transition Plan before the first meeting. He or she can help me describe my goals, dreams and hopes. The Transition Helper will:

- ▶ Help me and my family get answers to questions about my future.
- ▶ Make sure that we cover important items at the meeting.
- ▶ Organize the first meeting.
- ▶ Help me decide who should be invited to the meeting.

Before the first meeting, the Transition Helper should:

- ▶ Help me and my family to think about my needs, wishes and preferences.
- ▶ Explain to me and my family how the transition process works.
- ▶ Help me and my family decide:
 - (a) Can my needs be met by one agency? Or are more agencies needed?
 - (b) Who should be invited to the team meeting?
 - (c) What are the most important things to do now?
- ▶ Find out whether my family and I have the same ideas about what we want for me. If we don't, the Transition Helper should help us sort things out.
- ▶ Collect information about any current or previous assessments or services.
- ▶ Arrange, or help to arrange, first team meeting.
- ▶ Get consent (release of information) forms, if they are needed.
- ▶ Share information with other team members.

- ▶ Arrange for other support, if needed. For example, a translator or interpreter.
- ▶ Help me and my family prepare for the meeting.

My Transition Helper will stay in touch with me during the transition period and will help me keep on track.

- 3. Parents and other family members**, such as my brothers and sisters, should be encouraged to take part in planning my future. They know me and can provide information about me. They can give support, and help me to reach my goals.
- 4. School representatives**, such as my teacher, counsellor and/or teacher assistant. The school has a duty to develop my Personal Program Plan and activities to prepare me for adult life.
- 5. Friends** should also be invited to come to the planning meeting. They can provide information and support. They can also help me with specific transition goals.
- 6. Student representatives:** Students from my school can often help.
- 7. Representatives of agencies.** These may include my social worker or field worker. People from advocacy organizations and service providers are others who might be asked.
- 8. Representatives of the community** to make sure that I can get to community services, to help me to be a part of the community. They might include my employer, a neighbour, priest or a minister, an elder.

Every member of the transition team is important. We all have something to give. Some people might be members of the team for only a short while. Others will be on the team for a long time. It all depends on my needs.

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At the first transition meeting, the planning team should choose a **Meeting Facilitator** and decide who will be the **Transition Coordinator**.

Why is it important to have a Meeting Facilitator?

The Meeting Facilitator runs the meeting. Some of the Facilitator's duties are to:

- ▶ Start and end the meeting.
- ▶ Keep track of what is happening at the meeting.
- ▶ Keep the focus on the person in transition.
- ▶ Make sure that the transition plan is written.
- ▶ Keep time. Remind the team how long they have spent on an issue.
- ▶ Keep notes of the meeting.
- ▶ Keep track of who is going to do what, and when a task has to be completed.

Why is it important to have a Transition Coordinator?

The **Transition Coordinator** will keep the transition plan on track. The Coordinator should be chosen at the first meeting of the transition team. Her or his duties are to:

- ▶ Make sure that all team members get copies of the plan they have written.
- ▶ Check to see that the plan is running smoothly and is on target.
- ▶ Make sure the team sets up a method for easy exchange of information.
- ▶ Help solve problems.
- ▶ Prepare progress reports.
- ▶ Call the team (or some members of the team) together, as needed.

Sometimes, my Transition Helper might become the Meeting Facilitator or the Transition Coordinator.

The team should follow these principles:

- ▶ Know that I am the person in transition. The focus has to be on my needs and my wishes.
- ▶ One member of the team will become the Meeting Facilitator. He or she makes sure the meeting covers my needs and wishes. The Facilitator also makes sure that discussion is *with* me, not *about* me.
- ▶ Each member on my transition team is an equal partner.
- ▶ The Individual Transition Plan will set out:
 - ▶ Activities or services that I need.
 - ▶ Dates and timelines for the specific goals.
 - ▶ Who will help me to reach the goals.
 - ▶ How we will know that the plan is working.
- ▶ Within a week of the meeting, each member of the team will get a written copy of the transition plan that we have developed.

The worksheet on the next page will help decide who should be invited to the transition-planning meeting.

Beginning

The Transition–Planning Meetings

After my Transition Helper and I have identified my goals, and after we have put together the planning team, it is time to think about the first transition meeting.

Where should the team meet?

While I am still in school, it is often easiest to have the meetings there. But, meetings don't always have to be in the same place. Sometimes, I might like to invite the team to have the meeting at the place where I live. This could be at my parents' house or at my place, if I don't live with them. We could also meet at a restaurant, or somewhere else. The meeting place should be as convenient as possible for everybody.

What should we do at a transition-planning meeting?

The focus of the meeting should be on my goals, abilities and interests. This is called *person-centred* planning. Person-centred transition planning means that:

- ▶ My abilities and goals are at the centre of the planning.
- ▶ The team finds out what I need to learn a job and live a full life according to my abilities and wishes.
- ▶ The team looks at new ways of using community services.
- ▶ The team develops formal and informal support networks for me.
- ▶ We all know that sometimes things will not go as we had hoped. We will have to review our plans from time to time.

At the first meeting, we will decide the things that we will work on in the next little while. We will also decide who will do what to

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help me reach each of the goals. We will fix times when we will check on progress.

During a planning meeting, the team will come up with a concrete plan how to achieve the goals for my future. Questions that my transition plan should answer are:

1. Where will I live?
2. What about a job or further training?
3. How will I get involved in the community?
4. What do I want to do in my spare time, for fun?
5. What about friendships, relationships, starting a family?

On the next page, there is a Suggested Meeting Outline Checklist for a transition-planning meeting. Each team can develop its own agenda, but this outline might help to get things started.

The Worksheets (on the pages that come after the Checklist) will help pinpoint goals in each of the areas covered by the five questions.

Suggested Order

For Personal Transition Team Meetings

This checklist might help the Meeting Facilitator to run the meeting.

1. Meeting Facilitator:

- ▶ Starts the meeting;
- ▶ Introduces the individual in transition, her or his parents and significant others (such as sisters/ brothers, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend).
- ▶ Passes around attendance list.
- ▶ States how long the meeting will last.
- ▶ Suggests ground rules, such as:
 - ▶ The person in transition is the focus of the meeting - eye contact and conversation are directed to him/her;
 - ▶ He/she gets first chance to talk for each topic;
 - ▶ The team talks with, not about, the person in transition;
 - ▶ One person speaks at a time;
 - ▶ Everyone's opinion is important.
 - ▶ Everybody has an opportunity to say what they want to say.
- ▶ Helps team decide how decisions will be made. (For example: by consensus, voting, or person in transition to decide).
- ▶ Reminds team members that the main focus is on the needs of the youth and not on available services from the agencies;
- ▶ Encourages team members to be creative in finding solutions that reflect the youth's personal goals.

2. Transition Helper states reasons for this transition-planning meeting.

3. Meeting Facilitator:

- ▶ Encourages all present to participate and assures each member of the team that they all have an equal right to participate.

4. The other team members introduce themselves and state why they are at the meeting. Agency representatives briefly describe services they can offer.

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5. Meeting Facilitator reviews the agenda and lists issues in order of priority (For example: employment #1, transportation #2, independent living #3);

6. Any necessary changes are made to the agenda.

7. The team then works through each issue:

- ▶ What do we want to achieve?
- ▶ Clarify situation, if necessary.
- ▶ Identify problems that could get in the way.
- ▶ Brainstorm and problem solve.
- ▶ Check with the youth and other team members who are familiar with the person.
- ▶ Choose best option.
- ▶ Produce written summary of the plan, individual responsibilities of team members, and timeline.

8. Choose Transition Coordinator.

Transition Coordinator is responsible to:

- ▶ keep track of decisions;
- ▶ serve as central point of contact;
- ▶ be the contact person if problems arise;
- ▶ call group back together as needed;
- ▶ involve the youth in carrying out the plan.

9. Meeting Facilitator:

- ▶ Sums up what has been decided in the plan.
- ▶ Checks for clarity and agreement.
- ▶ Reviews who is responsible for what.
- ▶ Outlines what will happen next and together with the team sets the date of the next meeting.

10. Final check and evaluation:

- ▶ Is there anything else?
- ▶ Is anyone uncomfortable with anything?
- ▶ What worked?
- ▶ What could we have done better?

11. Meeting Facilitator closes the meeting.

12. He or she will make copies of the transition plan and will distribute them to each team member. (These may need to be mailed later, within a week or so).

How I Live

And How I Would Like To Live

Step 3

1. How do I live now?

- Alone?
- With a roommate?
- With my parents?
- With other relatives?
- In a group home?
- Other? _____

2. What are the best things about where I live now? _____

3. What are the biggest problems with where I live now? _____

4. What kinds of support do I need where I live now? (For example, getting around, doing chores, cooking, personal care, managing money, other) _____

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5. Am I living where I want to live? _____

6. Where would I like to live in three to five years' time?

Alone?

With a roommate?

With my parents?

With other relatives?

In a group home?

Other? _____

7. What kinds of support will I need then? (For example, getting around, doing chores, cooking, personal care, managing money, other) _____

What About Work?

1. Right now, I am:

- Going to school Working (including volunteer work) Doing something else

(If not working, please go to Question #4)

2. How is my job?

Do I like my job? Yes No Sort of

Are the working hours and days OK? Yes No Sort of

Do I get the support I need? Yes No Sort of

If NO, what kinds of support do I need? _____

How do I get along with people at work?

- Great OK Not very well

When I think about my job,

- I am glad I have it It's OK that I have it I wish I didn't have it

3. What kind of jobs or careers interest me? _____

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4. Do I want to get a job, or find a different job than I have right now? Yes No

5. Am I looking for my first job? Yes No

6. Do I need help in getting a job? Yes No

If YES, what kinds of help? _____

7. Does it take me a long time to learn a job? Yes No Don't know

8. Do I need help in getting to work? Yes No Don't know

9. Do I need any special training or experience? Yes No Don't know

If I answered YES to any of questions 4 through 9, I could probably use some support in getting and keeping a job.

Getting Involved

In The Community

1. How do I get around? (I can check more than one.)

- I drive a car.
- I walk.
- I ride a bike.
- I use public transport independently.
- I need help using public transport.
- I depend on others to take me where I need to go.
- I use supported transportation (e.g. SaskAbilities bus).
- I use a wheelchair.
- I don't get around much.

2. What advice do I need?

- I need help with managing money.
- I need someone whom I can phone when I need advice (for example an advocate, social worker, counsellor).
- I need information on guardianship.
- I need advice on trusts and wills.
- I need legal assistance.

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3. I am involved in the following community activities: _____

4. I would like to get more involved with: _____

My Free Time

1. What I like to do for fun after school and on weekends: _____

2. My hobbies and interests: _____

3. New things I would like to learn how to do: _____

4. I prefer to be: with other people alone

5. I prefer to do things for fun: outdoors indoors

6. School activities I would like to be involved in: _____

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7. **Activities in the community I would like to get involved with:** _____

My Personal And Social Life

Step 3

1. Do I prefer to be alone or with other people? _____

2. Who are my friends? _____

3. Do I visit them as often as I would like? _____

If not, why not? _____

4. Do I need help in getting to visit my friends? _____

5. Do I need to know more about family life and dating? _____

6. Who can I talk to when things are not going well or when I need more help? _____

Carrying Out The Plan

At our first meeting, the team has identified:

- ▶ the issues that we will work on,
- ▶ who is responsible for helping me reach my goals, and
- ▶ when we will check on progress.

I have to make sure that I do what we have decided that I should do. Unless I am keen and willing to work, the plan will not work. It is also important that I keep in touch with my Transition Coordinator, maybe through my Transition Helper. They are there to help me, if I need it.

The Worksheet “Transition plan at a glance” will help me keep track of what I have to do and when.

As part of transition planning, I should be working on my career portfolio. This keeps a record of my experiences, accomplishments, personal strengths and interests. The career portfolio can include:

- ▶ reports I have prepared in school
- ▶ photographs of things I have made
- ▶ certificates
- ▶ awards
- ▶ letters of recommendation
- ▶ progress reports.

The career portfolio shows others what I can do. It keeps track of my strengths, my growth, and my achievements.

Transition Plan

At A Glance

I should use the worksheet on the other side of this page to keep track of my transition plan. I'll look back at the worksheet occasionally to remind myself what happened in the Transition-Planning Meeting, and whether or not I am following my plan.

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Date and place of today's meeting: _____

Identified goal or objective	What needs to be done to achieve this	Who is responsible for achieving this	When will this be achieved	How will we know that we have succeeded

When and where will the next meeting take place? _____

Checking

How The Plan Is Working

The first meeting was only a beginning. My team will meet again to check on how our plan is working. There is no rule about how often the team should meet. It is a good idea to meet about every six months, so that everybody stays in touch. In my last year of school we might have to meet more often, to make sure that everything is on track.

If things are not working as well as I would like, or if I need help, it is OK to ask the Transition Coordinator to call another meeting.

Sometimes my situation may change or something might come up that is important to me. This is all right. The transition plan has to be flexible, and the team has to be prepared for changes. This is only natural. We never stop learning more about ourselves and about the world as time goes by.

The Worksheet “How to tell if things are working” is on the next page. It will help me keep track of things and help me decide when I need another meeting.

How To Tell If Things Are Working

I should review my transition plan about every six months to see if things are working out for me.

Here are some of the questions I should be asking myself:

1. Am I becoming more independent? Yes No
2. Do I get around in the community? Yes No
3. Am I living where I want to? Yes No
4. Am I working where I want to? Yes No
5. Do I get to see my friends? Yes No
6. Can I get help if I need to? Yes No

What could be working better? _____

What am I learning? _____

If I answered NO to any of the questions or if I think things could be better, I should talk to my Transition Coordinator and ask for another meeting.

Putting It All Together

Here are the five steps put together to help me with the transition planning.

1: Getting ready for the transition-planning process.

- ▶ I talk to my family, friends or others who I trust, about my future.
- ▶ I pick someone to help me get started (a Transition Helper). He or she can be someone from my family, a teacher, friend, or social worker.
- ▶ I think about my dreams, hopes and needs for the future.
- ▶ With the help of the Transition Helper I complete the following worksheets:
 - “Getting to know me”
 - “What are my dreams and hopes for the future?”
 - “What are dreams and hopes of others for my future?”
 - “With what do I need help?”
- ▶ We use the “When to do what” Checklists.

2: Deciding who should be on the transition-planning team.

- ▶ The Worksheet “Who will I invite to my transition meeting?” helps me.

3: Beginning the transition-planning meetings.

- ▶ The team uses the Checklist “Suggested order for personal transition team meetings” or we use our own agenda.
- ▶ I complete the following Worksheets
 - “How I like to live and how I would like to live”
 - “What about work?”

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“My recreation and free time”

“Getting involved in the community”

“My personal and social life”

4: Carrying out the plan.

- ▶ I make sure that I do the things we have decided.
- ▶ I keep in touch with my Transition Coordinator.
- ▶ I use the Worksheet “Transition plan at a glance” to keep track of what to do.

5: Checking whether and how the plan is working.

- ▶ About every six months, the team meets and reviews how the plan is working.
- ▶ I keep in regular touch with my Transition Coordinator. Together we check whether the plan is working out.
- ▶ If things are not working as well as I would like or if something happens and I need help, I ask my Coordinator to call another meeting.
- ▶ Worksheet “How to tell if things are working” helps me to decide whether the plan is working.

Ernie

As told by the late Bob Auser

Ernie came to our school in grade nine and was placed in the alternate program. In his last two years, he was heavily involved in career education. He spent afternoons going out into the community and working in various places developing work skills, life skills and getting ideas as to what sort of work he would like to do.

His work placements included Wal-Mart, OK Economy, and Budget Rent-A-Car, and he also worked at the school in the maintenance department. At Wal-Mart he was stocking shelves, at OK Economy he stocked shelves and worked in the fruit and vegetable department and at Budget Rent-A-Car he cleaned cars. He also had a placement with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, working in the woodwork and packaging departments. From that experience, it was quite evident that he wanted to have regular work in the community. In the summer before his grade 12, we got him a work placement at McDonald's, which turned into paid summer employment. During his last year in school, he was placed at Pizza Hut, because he liked the restaurant industry where he was good at both washing dishes and preparing pizzas. He did very well there. They actually hired him to work during weekends, and during the week he worked there for his work experience. His paid employment at McDonald's also continued into the school year.

His Mom and Dad wanted to explore options for Ernie to live in the city, because they live out of town. So we did a fair bit of work with the Community Living Division of Social Services and, with the support of an SACL advocate, a housing situation was established for him. However, at the end Ernie felt that he would rather stay at home for a while. Right now, he is still living at home with mom and dad. I think though that in the next year or so he will be thinking about moving out on his own. He will be probably living semi-independently, because he needs some help to survive on his own in the community.

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During the summer after Ernie graduated, the Saskatchewan Abilities Council arranged a full-time job through New Careers at the Riverside Golf Club. After his summer job ended, the Abilities Council set up a full-time job at Pasta La Vista, working on food preparation and washing dishes. They continue to provide Ernie with support when there is a problem, but generally he is capable of keeping a full time job.

We started transition planning at the end of grade ten and then continued to touch base to see how the plan was going. Depending on how things were, if things were going well at work or if intervention was needed, we would get together. It could be a small group or it could be all of us depending on what the issues were.

Who was on the team? Mom, Dad, Ernie, I as the special education coordinator, and several other teachers. Community Living Division was involved with the housing issue, and SACL as the advocate. They did a fair bit of work with Pizza Hut as well, making sure the work was going fine after we backed off, in the last month or so. SACL actually took over the work training situation. They took over contact with the boss and made sure the connection with Mom was in place. At that point I was out on the perimeter. Sometimes Mom would call me if she was uneasy about something and I would go back and make sure that things were going well and that it would stay in the realm of CLD and SACL. By the time he finished grade twelve, we haven't been involved, and the Abilities Council got more involved. I guess that facilitating the shift of responsibility to the other members of the team, making sure that things would be taken care of and that Mom and Ernie were happy with those people supporting them, meant that we had played our part.

Ernie's transition went very well. He gained paid employment, the possibility of moving into the community was in place if and when he was ready to take it. People who were put in place to provide supports were willing and able to do that and they did it. As his needs changed, he had some times when he would become quite depressed. That is just part of his personality, it has been an issue and will remain an issue for him. The important thing is that when he needs more support it is there, the employer knows whom to contact, Mom knows whom to contact. All this contributed to Ernie's successful transition.

A Word For Parents

The word “parent” is used in a generic sense, to describe adults who have responsibility for “parenting” young people with disabilities. This group includes biological parents, foster parents, and informal or legally appointed guardians.

The period of transition from school to adult life is often a confusing time for parents. Parents usually expect that their involvement in their teenager’s life will slowly diminish and that their parenting role will become less active. However, for families of young people with disabilities, the reality is that this period often places greater demands on parental resources. As parents look for assistance to help their adolescent child become as independent as possible, it can be a startling realization to discover how limited are the services to meet the needs of adults with disabilities.

Families face many dilemmas. For instance, parents understand the importance of independence and letting go of their young adult child, but they often do not know whether their child can do a particular activity, or whether it is safe to try. If a parent cannot predict success, the natural desire is to protect their child from failure. On the one hand parents want to create opportunities for their children’s independence, but at the same time they need to make sure that health and safety needs, which might sometimes lead to restriction of independence, are met.

Many parents also want to find a way to have a life of their own, now that their children are grown up. Yet they feel that they need to assist the child to live fully in the community, to work and to have other people involved in their life. Sometimes this can be a real balancing act.

These dilemmas are only a sample of what parents of young people with disabilities might experience. There are no simple solutions but there are some ideas about how to cope.

Some tips

- ▶ First and most important is to acknowledge and accept the fact that the period of transition can be confusing and that the feelings of turmoil are real. Sharing these concerns with others in similar situations can be helpful. Others often have suggestions concerning problems that you have found insoluble and, at the same time, your experiences might help some one else deal with their problems.
- ▶ It is important to identify your needs and the needs of your children. Then work on a solution, one step at a time.
- ▶ Getting involved in your child's transition planning is one of the ways in which you can feel good about preparing for her or his future. Other members of the transition team should be there to offer you support and information.
- ▶ Being involved also means being informed. You have to learn about transition planning, about work experience courses offered by schools, and options in supported employment. You have to learn more about your local community. Who are the employers and what kinds of jobs are available? What are the opportunities for summer and after-school jobs? Does your local regional college offer any programs that might interest your child? What programs and services in your community might help your child achieve her or his goals? What opportunities are there for recreation and social activities?
- ▶ In some cases, as a parent of a young adult with a disability, you should also seriously consider whether you need to think about the issues of personal guardianship. You should become aware of the rights and options relating to supported decision making and adult guardianship.
- ▶ And, finally, don't give up! Things can sometimes get discouraging, but it is important to remember that you are doing all this so that your son or daughter can have a full life in the community, doing what they want to do and meeting people they want to meet.

A Word For Teachers

This Handbook is written primarily with the young person in transition and her or his family in mind. We attempted to write the material in such a way that the main content would be easy to read and yet cover the basic elements of transition planning. This material is intended to help young persons in transition identify their goals for the future, and also help their families to understand that they have a vital role to play in an effective transition planning.

Research and anecdotal experience indicate that although educators say they welcome parent involvement while the young person is in school, families often feel intimidated when dealing with educators and other professionals. This leads to their more passive role in transition planning. This Handbook emphasizes to families – and to other readers — that their child is the focus of the transition process and that their role is extremely important in providing support.

The Handbook focuses on two basic principles:

1. Transition planning has to be *person-centred*, with the person in transition the only client and his or her transition planning the only agenda;
2. Cooperation and mutual respect between families, educators and other professionals is crucial for effective transition planning for young people with disabilities.

Person-centred planning is a creative approach that encourages innovation and risk-taking. It focuses on goals and abilities of each individual, and on personal choice and self-determination, rather than being shaped by available services and programs. The process involves the individual and those who care about her or

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him. It explores the individuals' experiences, leads to understanding of their goals, and discovers their gifts and abilities. It fosters listening and valuing their dreams for the future, and results in plans of action designed to make those dreams come true.

Person-centred planning should be used in developing Personal Program Plans, beginning in pre-school and elementary school. This might require changing a belief that the educator is the only expert and in control of all educational decisions, to acknowledgment of the need for an interdisciplinary team approach to decision making. A collaboratively developed PPP is a first step toward shifting from a system-oriented approach to person-centred approach.

As an educator you are probably familiar with the principles of transition planning and you probably have access to transition materials and resources. When the school is getting ready to initiate the transition planning process, you might want to offer this Handbook to young persons in transition and their families.

The Checklists and Worksheets can help you in assisting the young person and the transition team in identifying the goals and dreams of the young person, and in planning an effective transition from school to adult life. They will familiarize everyone with the language and concepts associated with transition.

Andrea

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The local paper announced it as “a new business and number of new recycling opportunities” in the environmentally conscious community of Eston. Andrea, who graduated from Eston High, will work at the business along with three part-time helpers.

Andrea’s parents Cliff and Margaret, who have always envisioned and worked for a life in the community for their daughter, will manage “Andrea’s 3R’s.” “The work she does every day must be meaningful, valued and interesting,” say her parents.

“We were very fortunate to be in a financial position to afford to start this business,” says Andrea’s Mom. “If we couldn’t have done it and didn’t want her in the workshop, I guess I would have stalled for two years to keep her in school and prayed for something wonderful to happen in the meantime,” she adds. A lack of options after school has always concerned the family.

As part of the business promotion campaign in the community, Cliff and Margaret and the support workers sent out a “Dear Friends” letter to local businesses, organizations and citizens. The letter introduced Andrea’s new business and encouraged people to drop in, say hello and ensure Andrea remains a familiar member of the community.

“She’s very happy,” says Margaret. “She was a little worried in the summer about what she was going to do when everyone started school, but then we opened on August 19th and she hasn’t looked back.” Margaret says the community has been interested and supportive of the new venture; many stop in to buy, others stop in to see how it works.

Andrea will work with plastic and paper in the recycling department, even though Margaret says this work is not a moneymaker. Andrea handles various reusable items in the “reusing” division and also a Second Hand Treasures Department

where second-hand items are sold either on consignment or donated. Used soft and hard cover books are also handled and this department is expected to pay the bills. Two students from the high school come by for an hour or two of work every week.

Margaret says, "This is a new option and it's very difficult to explain to people that not everybody who is handicapped has to be in a program. This is Andrea's job. We all have jobs, but for some reason we relegate people with handicaps to programming for their entire lives." Andrea's parents have supported their other children as they attend university, so to support Andrea in her career aspirations was the logical thing to do.

In addition to her own business, Andrea also works at the local hospital twice a week and at Jubilee Lodge three times a week. This is a very important part of her workweek, says Margaret. "She's doing very well in both of those jobs and it just keeps getting better as time goes on."

"No government grant money is going into this," explains Margaret. "Andrea's 3R's is a business and will run like a business." As an illustration of Andrea's place in the Eston business community, she will be participating in the town's merchant display at the local shopping mall, side by side with other businesses showing their wares and services.

"Andrea's delighted," says Margaret, who adds there is no problem in getting her daughter up and off to work in the morning. "She's really happy with what she's doing and the community has been very responsive to the idea of someone who is handicapped running her own show."

Further Reading

Most materials are available from John Dolan Library at the Saskatchewan Association for Community Living in Saskatoon.
Phone: (306) 955-3344

All My Life's a Circle: Using the tools: circles, MAPS and PATH. (1997). By Mary A. Falvey, Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint and Richard L. Rosenberg. Inclusion Press, Toronto, ON.

Bridging the Gap: Charting a Successful Transition from School to Living and Working Independently within the Community. (1995). North Dakota Transition Guidebook. Minot, ND.

Building Bridges: A Parent Guide on Transition from School to Work, Adult Life and Community Participation for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities (1997). New Brunswick Association for Community Living, Fredericton, NB.

Best Practices for Transition from School to Adult Life from the Consumer/Family Viewpoint. (1996). California School To Work Interagency Transition Partnership.

I Openers: Parents Ask Questions about Sexuality and Children with Developmental Disabilities. (1993). By Dave Hingsburger, Family Support Institute, Vancouver, BC.

It's My Meeting! A Family/Consumer Pocket Guide to Participating in Person-Centered Planning. (1996). By D. DiLeo. Training Resource Network Inc., St. Augustine, FL.

Life Beyond the Classroom. (1996). Transition Strategies for Young People with Disabilities by Paul Wehman. Paul Brookes Publishing, Baltimore, MD.

Parents' Guide to Inclusive Education. (1998). Prepared by Karin Melberg-Schwier, Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Saskatoon, SK.

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Promoting Successful Transition for Students with Special Needs. By D. Richard Freeze. Canadian Council for Exceptional Children.

Read My Lips: It's My Choice. (1993). Prepared by William T. Allen. Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Transition Bibliography. (Current) A list of resources compiled by and available at the John Dolan Resource Centre, Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Saskatoon, SK.

Transition from School to Adult Life. (1998). Final report prepared by Rita McLeod, Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Saskatoon, SK.

The Right Stuff: A Plain Language Book about Basic Human Rights. (1997). Prepared by Karin Melberg-Schwier, Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Saskatoon, SK.

List Of Websites

The Internet is an important and essential source of information. The information on the Internet is topical and up-to-date. Most sites also provide links to other related sites, which allows the user to get more information. Also, lot of the information on the Internet is interactive and users can join discussion groups, or correspond with others.

Website addresses provided in this section are by no means meant to be comprehensive. They are those that we found useful in preparing this Handbook. The list will provide a starting point in exploring the Internet, as most of the websites have their own list of links. These days, most government and public agencies and institutions have information available through the Internet and it is therefore possible to obtain topical and recent information.

Allen, Shea and Associates provides professional services in the area of planning, research, training material development and evaluation within the field of human services with an emphasis on developmental disabilities.

<http://www.napanet.net/business/personal/ASA/ASA.html>

California School-to-Work Interagency Transition Partnership (SWITP) stems from a 1991 U.S. Federal Department of Education grant. Eighteen governmental, non-governmental and parent groups are represented, and SWITP has produced a large amount of practical material. Most of this can be immediately accessed through their “Best practices” booklet:

<http://www.sna.com/switp>

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities and/or the gifted. CEC advocates for appropriate government policies, sets professional standards, provides professional development, advocates for individuals with exceptionalities and provides resources for professionals and families.

<http://www.cec.sped.org>

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Family Village: A Global Community of Disability-related resources is a site that contains information, resources and communication opportunities for persons with disabilities, their families and those who provide support and services. It includes resources on education, communication, adaptive technology, health issues, worship, recreational activities, literature and much more.

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu>

National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities (NTA) aims to create bridges between agencies responsible for providing transition services and the lessons learned from people in the disabilities field.

<http://www.dssc.org/nta>

National Transition Network (NTN) aims at improving transition and school-to-work policies, programs and practices that relate to youth with disabilities.

<http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn/>

Saskatchewan Association for Community Living (SACL) is an advocacy organization supporting full inclusion and participation of people with intellectual disabilities. It represents 35 branches and over 2000 people with intellectual disabilities, their families, caregivers, professionals and others.

<http://www.shaw.wave.ca/~sac1>

Saskatchewan User-friendly Cyberspace Career and Employment Services Site (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) is developed by the Career Services Unit in the Department of Post Secondary Education and Skills Training.

<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/careers>

Transition Research Center at the University of Illinois promotes successful transition of young people with disabilities from school to adult life. It identifies effective practices, conducts intervention and evaluation research, provides technical assistance activities and is as an information resource for teachers, families, service providers and researchers. The Institute also established Tri-Talk, an electronic discussion group to facilitate sharing and networking. Tri-Talk is a free service and currently there are over 270 subscribers worldwide.

<http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/coe/sped/tri/institute.html>

List Of Agencies And Organizations

PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

ALVIN BUCKWOLD CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
(ABCDP). Dr. Richard E. Snyder, Medical Director
Phone: (306) 655-1257 / 1070, Fax: (306) 655-1449

ALZHEIMER ASSOCIATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.
Mr. Michael Zaleschuk, Executive Director
Phone: (306) 949-4141, (800) 263-3367,
Fax: (306) 949-3069

THE ARTHRITIS SOCIETY
Executive Director (306) 352-3312.
Regina Phone: (800) 667-0097, Fax: (306) 565-8731
Saskatoon Phone: (306) 244-9922
Fax: (306) 244-9903

AUTISM RESOURCE CENTRE
Phone: (306) 569-0858, Fax: (306) 569-0889

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY
Regina Unit: Mr. George D. Thomas, Executive
Director. Phone: (306) 757-4260 / (306) 522-7347
Fax: (306) 569-2133
Saskatoon Unit Phone: (306) 244-7600,
(306) 244-4389, Fax: (306) 244-5580, (306) 244-5657

CANADIAN CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION
Phone: (306) 543-8936, (306) 242-6502
Fax: (306) 949-1515

CANADIAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION
Saskatchewan Division: Mr. Nowshad Ali,
Executive Director. Phone: (306) 933-1238,
(800) 996-4446, Fax: (306) 244-2012
Regina & District Branch: Phone: (306) 584-8445,
Fax: (306) 586-9704
Saskatoon & District Chapter: Ms. Patricia
Melnychuk

CANADIAN DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY
Phone: (403) 270-8500, Fax: (403) 270-8291

CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION
Phone: (306) 352-3323

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
Saskatchewan Branch
Regina Phone: (306) 525-5601, Fax: (306) 569-3788
Saskatoon Phone: (306) 384-9333,
Fax: (306) 978-5777

CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (CNIB)
Mr. Dennis Tottenham, Executive Director,
Ms. Lynn Latta, District Administrator
Regina Phone: (306) 525-2571, Fax: (306) 565-3300
Saskatoon Phone: (306) 374-4545,
Fax: (306) 955-6224

CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION
Ms. Pat Harrison, Executive Director
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Ms. Sheila Flasko, Administrative Assistant
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Dr. John Hylton, Executive Director

Division Office: Phone: (306) 525-5601

Regina Branch Phone: (306) 525-9543,

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Mr. Bruce Anderson, Executive Director

Phone: (306) 522-5600, (800) 268-7582,

Fax: (306) 565-0477

E-mail: msdiv@sask.maple.net

Saskatoon Chapter:

Ms. Verna Faurit – (306) 343-8045 (Res)

Phone: (306) 244-0045, (800) 268-7582,

Fax: (306) 665-3376

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Phone: (306) 949-1600

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Melissa Rezansoff, Saskatchewan Regional Manager

Phone: (306) 781-6023, Fax: (306) 522-9474

E-mail: nsfsk@unibase.unibase.com

Website: <http://www.neilsquire.ca>

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Phone: (306) 665-5508, Fax: (306) 244-2453

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Regina Phone: (306) 787-6211, (800) 667-7180,

Fax: (306) 787-9090

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Mr. Doug Surtees, Co-Director

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Fax: (306) 373-2665

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Ms. Sue Delaney, Coordinator
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Ms. Deb Parker-Loewen
Regina Phone: (306) 787-6850, Fax: (306) 787-9090
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(800) 667-6575, Fax: (306) 665-7746
E-mail: sdhhs@sk.simpatico.ca

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Ms. Jan Ayers, President
Phone: (306) 359-3040

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Mr. Arliss Wright, Executive Director
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Ms. Donalda Ford, Assistant Director
Regina Phone: (306) 787-2530, (800) 667-8577,
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E-mail: heather.kuttai@usask.ca

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South Saskatchewan Chapter
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VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSONS' ACTION COUNCIL OF SASKATOON INC.

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Fax: (306) 766-5550

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APPRENTICESHIP & TRADE COMMISSION
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Mr. Robert Priebe, Principal
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 Phone: (306) 425-4307, Fax: (306) 425-4383

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Moffatt, Larry – Executive Director
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Neufeldt, Bob – Director of Children and Family Services
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Newman, Alma – Director of Adult Care
 (306) 953-2644 (P.A.)

Nurse, Murray – Director of Field Operations
 (306) 933-6285 (Saskatoon)

West, Betty – Director of Psychological Services
 (306) 787-8521

For other related organizations, please refer to the book: *Directory of Programs and Services for Persons with Disabilities*, 1997 by Saskatchewan Labour, Communications Branch. Available at: 1870 Albert Street REGINA SK S4P 3V7 Phone: (306) 787-3662, Fax: (306) 787-1064 TTY: (306) 787-9105

To purchase a more complete directory of service agencies, please contact: Saskatchewan Association for Community Living 3031 Louise Street SASKATOON SK S7J 3L1 Phone: (306) 955-3344, Fax: (306) 373-3070 e-mail: johndolan.rc@home.com

Shane, Kevin and Greg

(Reprinted and adapted with permission from *Dialect*)

The lives of three young men in Humboldt are the proof that new ways can work, and it is happening because of creative dreaming, practical support and the enthusiastic cooperation among parents, educational administrators, teachers, social workers and community members. For Shane, Kevin and Greg, there is a life in a small rural community with real work and their own apartment after high school graduation.

The Transition Program at the Humboldt High School has paved the way not only for Shane, Kevin and Greg, but also for students with even more significant needs who will graduate in the years ahead. Several years ago, the parents of these young men approached the Director of Education and pushed for a different kind of future for their sons after high school. They did not see group home living and the sheltered workshop as options; they wanted something different. Today, after meetings, strategy sessions, and action planning, Shane, Greg, and Kevin share an apartment and each have jobs in the community.

Principal of the Humboldt High School says the publicity generated by the new program has been good. The program has been tailored to meet the needs of the students, but the model is one that can be used for students with more challenging needs. “There’s always a bit of tennis that gets played between funding bodies even if everyone involved is highly supportive, but now that we’ve cut a pathway the first time through, this model can be used and adapted.”

“In the past, the vision was ‘let’s get people ready for the sheltered workshop.’ I felt we could do more than that and I offered to take over the programming so we could work on individualized assessment and start getting people ready for something else. We had the Community Living Division, the Department of Education, the school principal, some strong parents and wonderful employers who all really embraced the idea of life in the community.” She advises other people interested in the transition model from high school to community living that support of a strong parent advocate “who can articulate their dreams for their son or daughter and bring along other parents” is a key element.

For Deb and Jim, the changes they’ve seen in their son Shane, 18, have made the work on the transition program worthwhile. “There have been

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wonderful changes in him,” says Deb, and adds that parents wanting a different future for their children must take a few risks and do some “pioneering work.”

“If you can surround yourself with people who share your vision and who say ‘let’s do it,’ then it is much easier. There has to be more school programs with higher expectations for the student moving out into the world, and into the community. There’s a whole generation of kids now who’ve been through early intervention and integrated education; their whole life has been geared for a life in the community. I get really frustrated by people stuck on the way things are; we have to keep the momentum going.”

Shane’s siblings think “it’s great” their brother has his own place. “They couldn’t wait for Shane to get out of the house so they could have his room! He’s matured so much over the past year. He’s a student, an employee, a community member, a family member, and his life reflects all those roles. He’s not pigeonholed.”

The regional coordinator of special education says the costs for alternatives “aren’t exorbitant at all. The will to use the money to do something differently is the key. The issue is no longer if, but how.”

For 18-year-old Shane, his own apartment and job have earned him a reputation as “a hard worker” and his co-workers at Image Printers describe him as “a fun guy to have around in Humboldt.”

Kevin, 19, smiles broadly as he pours coffee at Rick’s Place Restaurant. Co-workers Betty, Margo and Marnie kid him about having his picture taken. Humboldt old-timers Wendel and Pete, regulars on coffee row, tell Kevin he’s doing a good job and the smile becomes even wider.

“Like it really good,” says Kevin, returning to his work in the kitchen. His employer praises Kevin and says, “He’s a great help at dinnertime and he helps me out every morning at coffee rush.”

All on the transition team agree that “It was something we did because these guys deserve and are entitled to a good life. We never dreamed people would pay so much attention to it or that it’s so unusual. We are getting them ready for where they want to be: in the community, have an apartment, a real job, with their neighbours.”

Kevin reports with considerable amusement that his restaurant co-workers can sometimes be “grumpy in morning.” When asked how he likes his apartment, the smile reappears. He shrugs and says, “It’s home.”

Lori

Submitted by Susan Campbell

When I think back about some of the people I've worked with over the years, Lori keeps coming back to mind.

I first met Lori in 1994 when her resource teacher invited me to a transition-planning meeting. I worked with the school for two years. I helped set up Lori's work placements and offered suggestions along the way. When Lori was in her last year of high school, I set up a placement at Delanies Restaurant in Kindersley. Lori enjoyed working there. When I asked Bart, the restaurant's owner, to hire Lori after graduation, he said yes. After she graduated, she still needed some training and supervision on the job, so I set up a training-on-the-job contract. Lori's parents had a big decision to make to help their daughter decide leave home and they wondered if she was ready. But Lori was so excited about getting her own place and a job that her parents supported her.

When the end of Lori's one-year contract was approaching, Bart and I talked about employing her with no training-on-the-job contract or funding support. Again, he said yes. In fact, he said it would be a bad business decision to let her go. Why? Because Delanies' customers "enjoy Lori's pleasant smile, her friendly services and great personality." Lori's job included seating customers, filling water glasses, pouring coffee, and clearing tables. She added a valuable element to customer relations.

Although Lori's work situation fell into place, her accommodation didn't. Lori's parents, who live on a farm, were not comfortable with their daughter living on her own. It wasn't easy for Lori either. She battled homesickness, and she had little to do with her leisure time. With the help of the social worker, the family was able to find room and board accommodation. But the caregiver became ill and Lori's search had to begin again. In the meantime, Lori's parents were driving her 150 kilometres a day to and from work, five days a week. However, there was never a question about quitting her job just because a place to live could not be found.

"Lori just loves her job too much," Lori's mother says. "We could never pull her away from that."

One word summarizes the approach to Lori's employment: dedication. Lori, her parents, teachers, employer, vocational counsellor, social worker, caregiver and support network continue to be committed firmly to her success.

