

# The Métis Trailblazer



OCT 2023 ISSUE #01

## p. 22 **Shaping the Future of Construction**

Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Program Sets Red River Métis Students up for Success.

## p. 42 **STEM Hero**

Red River Métis, Gracie Grift, Empowers Indigenous Youth in Science and Research

## p. 56 **Empowering Red River Métis Communities**

The Impact of the ISET Program

## **INSIDE**

- Exclusive interview with Red River Métis opera singer bringing culture to the spotlight
- Red River Métis Success Stories: graduates making an impact in the workforce
- Boosting Business & Bolstering Communities: Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP) is helping Red River Métis entrepreneurs succeed



**Métis  
Employment  
& Training**



**Métis  
Sports  
& Youth**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4-5

Foreword

7-9

Greetings from the Ministers of MET and Sports & Youth

10-17

Red River Métis Success Stories

Celebrating the accomplishments of Red River Métis Citizens who have excelled in their chosen fields.

18-19

Soaring High

Single Red River Métis Mother's Inspiring Journey to Success

20-21

Red River Métis Graduate Eager to Start Teaching

Brittney Rocan's Graduation from College and University Marks the Beginning of a New Career.

22

Shaping the Future of Construction

Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Program Sets Red River Métis Students up for Success.

24-25

Success Stories: Isabel Dueck & Eugene Fenez

From figuring out their direction in life to finding full-time employment, these stories are ones of inspiration and hope.

26-27

Selkirk fiddler Nominated for Three MCMA Awards

Morgan Grace's incredible talent is being recognized at the young age of 16

28-29

From Apartheid to Transitional Justice

Truth & Reconciliation Insights from a Red River Métis Student's Journey into Post-apartheid South Africa

32-34

Lifelong Friends Launch Nursing Careers in Ashern

Two Red River Métis friends welcomed as full-time nurses at Ashern Hospital.

35

Health Care Heroes

Opportunities for nursing education in the Interlake

36-37

Boosting Business & Bolstering Community

St. Malo Meats Succeeds with Métis Employment & Training (MET)

**38-40**

**Pupil Pursuing  
Physics Passion**

Red River Métis graduate discovers passion for physics, taking him to Waterloo, Ont.

**38-40**

**Red River Métis  
Youth Believe**

Through Artistic & Athletic Programming

**42-43**

**STEM Hero**

Red River Métis, Gracie Grift, Empowers Indigenous Youth in Science and Research

**44-46**

**Red River Métis  
Phenom**

Connor Church Strives for Wrestling Greatness

**47-49**

**Red River Métis  
Athletes Shine**

with Manitoba Selects at American Football Tournament.

**50-51**

**The Heart of  
the North**

Cameryn Dewar Celebrates Red River Métis Heritage Through Opera

**52-53**

**From Stopping Pucks to  
Coaching Future Stars**

Red River Métis, Colton Phillips, Balances Sports Leadership and Cultural Pride

**54-55**

**Athlete, Student, Teacher**

Red River Métis Heritage Fuels the Success of Athlete and Budding Educator Josée Roy

**56-57**

**Empowering Red River  
Métis Communities**

The Impact of the ISET Program

# EDITOR

## BRETT CARTER

As the editor of The Métis Trailblazer, I have worked closely with the Métis Employment & Training (MET) and MET-Sports & Youth Departments to gather these stories and craft them into a vibrant and dynamic narrative.

Through these stories, we celebrate the resilience, determination, and unyielding spirit that unites the Red River Métis Nation. Serving as a reflection of the past, present, and future, each story encapsulates a unique aspect of the Red River Métis Nation and showcases the remarkable power of believing in oneself and taking action.

I want to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this issue and to our readers for joining us on this journey of inspiration and celebration. It is an honour to share these stories with you, and I hope they leave you feeling empowered and inspired to continue blazing your own trail of success.

# Foreword

## Kerry Smith & Tracey Hart



Dear Readers,

As Senior Director and Director of the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), we are privileged to welcome you to the inaugural issue of The Métis Trailblazer.

For over 25 years, the MMF has been a steadfast supporter for Red River Métis job seekers, empowering generations of Red River Métis Citizens through our labour market training programs. We are proud to play an active role in the remarkable journeys of growth and self-sufficiency for thousands of individuals. The impact of our efforts is not only on individuals we directly support, but also on their friends, families and communities.

This magazine is a tribute to the strength, determination, and resilience of the Red River Métis, who have overcome countless obstacles on their journeys to success. It is a testament to the power of community, the support and opportunities provided by the MMF, and the limitless potential of our belief in the Red River Métis Nation.

The Métis Trailblazer is more than just a collection of stories; it is a celebration of our past, a snapshot of our present, and a road map for our future. Through the pages of this magazine, we hope to inspire you, uplift you, and remind you that as Red River Métis, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

We invite you to join us on this journey of transformation, empowerment, and community building. Thank you for being a part of this story and supporting the MMF and the Red River Métis Nation.

Sincerely,

Kerry Smith  
Senior Director  
Métis Employment & Training (MET)

Tracey Hart  
Director  
Métis Employment & Training (MET)



**Métis  
Employment  
& Training**



# Foreword

## Rilee Prychun



Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Métis Employment & Training (MET) – Youth Programming team at the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), I am delighted to introduce you to the first issue of The Métis Trailblazer.

As the Assistant Director of Youth Programming, I have had the privilege of witnessing the incredible potential, resilience, and passion of the Red River Métis youth. Our youth are the future leaders of our Nation, and it is our responsibility to support and empower them on their journey towards success.

Through the MMF's Sports & Youth initiatives, we have seen firsthand the transformative power of education, leadership, and cultural awareness. Our programs are not just about teaching skills; they are about instilling pride in our heritage, cultivating leadership qualities, and promoting excellence.

I am honored to share the inspiring stories of our youth with you through this magazine. Their journeys are a testament to the unwavering spirit and determination of our Red River Métis youth and serve as an inspiration to all of us.

We are proud to be a part of the MMF and to contribute to the success and well-being of our community. We invite you to join us on this journey of growth, empowerment, and community building as we continue to support and uplift the next generation of Red River Métis leaders.

Thank you for your support and for being a part of this incredible journey.

Sincerely,

Rilee Prychun  
Assistant Director of MET - Youth Programming



**Métis  
Sports  
& Youth**

# Greetings From Our Ministers



**Métis  
Employment  
& Training**



**Métis  
Sports  
& Youth**

# Greetings from the Minister of Métis Employment & Training (MET)



## Minister John Fleury

As I reflect on the strides taken by the Manitoba Métis Federation's Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department since inception, I'm filled with a deep sense of pride and appreciation for the progress we've made throughout our Nation. Our success continues to be a testament to the resilience and determination of the Red River Métis people, who have persistently strived for economic independence and better lives.

Through the many relationships and partnerships we have worked hard to build, we have created and implemented employment and training initiatives to support our Red River Métis Nation - initiatives that have irrefutably transformed the lives of those who have walked through our doors.

From providing career counselling, facilitating skills training, promoting higher education, or making it easier to find well-paying employment opportunities in our communities, we have provided the much-needed support for our people to elevate their career paths and achieve their dreams.

The recent signing of the Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement marked a significant milestone and a new era of our progress.

This agreement recognizes the MMF as the sole National Government of the Red River Métis, giving our people a new wave of empowerment and opportunity.

Looking down the road, the MET Department remains dedicated to addressing the evolving needs of our Red River Métis community, and is committed to not only sustaining the momentum, but to also nurturing more robust relationships with our partners, exploring more funding opportunities, and extending our reach to Red River Métis Citizens living beyond the borders of Manitoba.

Everyone's journey is unique, and as we continue to prove through the work we do, we remain resolute in our commitment to empowering our Red River Métis Citizens to become key players in Canada's workforce. To the Red River Métis Nation - your dreams can be realized, your potential harnessed, and an enriching future attained. This is what the Métis Employment & Training Department (MET) stands for, and our continued success affirms it.

# Greetings from the Minister of Métis Sports & Youth



## Minister Richard Genaille

It is an honour to have this opportunity to address you as the Minister of Métis Youth & Sport. It is truly humbling to be part of a team that is so deeply committed to empowering the future leaders of our Red River Métis Nation.

The culture, spirit, and enthusiasm to keep active amongst our Youth are reflected within our Nation's achievements. When we encourage Youth to foster skills in healthy environments, we instill values of positivity, optimism, and provide Youth opportunities to reach their potential and achieve new heights.

At Métis Employment & Training (MET) – Youth Programming, we believe in equipping our Youth with the tools and support they need to succeed, not just in their athletic pursuits, but in life. We have a variety of programs aimed at providing youth with opportunities to develop their skills, boost their confidence and instill values such as discipline, hard work, teamwork, and leadership.

This year, we launched several camps and programs that saw incredible levels of participation, proving that our efforts are being recognized and appreciated by our Red River Métis Youth. Beyond our commitment to fostering sporting talent, we have also launched initiatives aimed at enhancing cultural learning and connection amongst our Youth.

The success of the Individual Youth Support Program (IYSP), which has seen an increase in applications each year, speaks to our Citizens' appetite for these opportunities. Our Believe – Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program has also been instrumental in supporting accomplished athletes and artists in reaching their full potential. I am proud to see these programs continue to thrive and positively impact the lives of Youth across our Nation.

We understand that our journey does not stop here. Our aim is to build on this momentum and continue advancing sports and the arts as powerful ways to strengthen our community, promote inclusivity, inspire leadership, and ensure our Youth are best-positioned to make their dreams a reality.

As we move forward, as your Minister of Sports & Youth, I remain as committed as ever to delivering programs and services to support the personal, athletic, and artistic growth of Red River Métis Youth.

Remember, you are the masters of your fate, and with the support of the Manitoba Métis Federation, you can achieve anything you set your sights on. Keep pushing forward, keep chasing your dreams, and never forget the strength and determination within you as proud Red River Métis Citizens.



# Greetings from the Minister of Provincial Education



## Minister Joan Ledoux

In our journey towards educational empowerment and self-determination, the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department embodies the resilience and indomitable spirit of the Red River Métis Nation.

As your Minister of Provincial Education and Associate Minister of Métis Employment & Training, it gives me great pride to see the tenacity and resilience of our students, educators, graduates, and learners of all ages, as we navigate the landscape of education together.

I'm continually moved by these victories – both big and small – that we have achieved in our pursuit of excellence in education, and each milestone a testament to our Nation's will, adaptability, and desire to grow.

We have significantly expanded our educational initiatives - from K-12 assistance and post-secondary supports to adult learning and training programs that have contributed to the growth and success of our Red River Métis Citizens.

With the continued development of educational opportunities and employment services, we are laying an empowering foundation for the personal and professional growth of Red River Métis Citizens. Through our collective efforts, more of our Citizens can attain their dreams of owning a home, furthering their education, and creating rewarding career paths.

As we look ahead, our Department remains dedicated to pushing the boundaries of education, constantly evolving, and innovating to meet the needs of Red River Métis Citizens. Together, we are working towards a future where every Red River Métis Citizen has the necessary tools and opportunities for educational advancement.

Through collaborations and partnerships with government, industry, and educational institutions, our Nation has been able to amplify our students' voices, provide them with more opportunities, and empower them to reach their full potential.

There is always more work to be done, more stories to be shared, more dreams to be realized, and I am honored to journey alongside each of you in this spectacular voyage of continuous growth, discovery, and progress. Together, we will continue to deliver positive outcomes and widen the scope of opportunities available to our Citizens.

Let's remember that every small step is a leap towards realizing our dreams and potential. Let us remain firm in our resolve, and in our vision of a prosperous and fulfilling future for the Red River Métis Nation and all of its Citizens.

# Red River Métis Success Stories

---

From completing higher education programs to achieving career success, in fields ranging from healthcare to commerce, aviation to trades, the Red River Métis have proven themselves to be trailblazers in every sense of the word.

In this section, we proudly showcase the inspiring journeys and accomplishments of Red River Métis beneficiaries who have overcome challenges and barriers to reach their goals.

These success stories demonstrate the endless potential of the Red River Métis and the power of determination, hard work, and support from the Manitoba Métis Federation through the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department.

At MET, our goal is to support Red River Métis Citizens in pursuing their dreams and achieving success in their chosen career paths.

Through improving access to education and training programs, as well as financial assistance and career counselling, we have the honour of helping further the incredible growth and achievements of countless Red River Métis Citizens.

We hope that by sharing these success stories, we can inspire and encourage other Red River Métis individuals to pursue their passions and reach their full potential.

These narratives exhibit not just personal achievements, but also extend the broader reflection of our Metis community's strength, resilience, and indomitable spirit.

Join us as we delve into their unique educational journeys, their professional pursuits, and their dreams for the future. We believe that these success stories will serve as a beacon of inspiration and hope for our aspiring scholars and the entire Red River Metis Nation.





## Janelle Verrier

*"The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped me immensely as I was able to dedicate my time to studying without having to worry about working and/or worry about any financial struggles. I was able to focus all my time and energy in the program thanks to the support that the MMF and Métis Employment & Training (MET) gave me.*

*They also checked in on me, my training counsellor made sure to contact me and check in to see how I was doing, which was nice and made me feel motivated to not give up and continue to work towards my goal. I can say with certainty that I would not have graduated and received my diploma if it wasn't for the support from the MMF"*



## Nicole Regey

*"Talking to Skylar, Lori and Linda from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) throughout my course was both supportive and made me feel like I wasn't on my own for this journey. Their check ins, reminders and phone calls helped keep me on top of what I needed to do.*

*There were days where I felt like giving up, whether it be from what I felt was lack of guidance for what I was learning or felt I wasn't comprehending it, I would usually receive an email from Linda on those days and it would remind me not to give up, that I had people cheering me on and that this is what I wanted for myself and that I wanted and needed to complete this course."*



# Red River Métis



## Cynthia Cote

*"The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and Métis Employment & Training (MET) helped me obtain a Bachelor's in Arts with an Honours in Psychology by allowing me to put my education first and help alleviate the barriers that could limit my potential.*

*With the support of the MMF and MET, I was able to focus solely on my studies and volunteer activities, which allowed me to be successful in both areas. Given the time-consuming task of completing an honours thesis, the support provided by the MMF allowed me to prioritize my research and complete the program successfully."*



## Curtis Rebeck

*"The Manitoba Métis Federation helped me obtain a Bachelor of Commerce Degree from the I.H. Asper School of Business. They helped by allowing for my education to be put first, which helped alleviate any barriers that could have restricted my full potential. The Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department helped out financially in the second portion as well as helping with the job search process by connecting me with good potential career opportunities."*



# Success Stories



## Tia Perreault

*"...the support of the Manitoba Métis Federation helped to alleviate the financial stress I was dealing with at the time so I could focus more solely on my schooling. I was able to devote time to planning my lessons for the students, which took additional time due to the restrictions teachers had to follow in schools. I had more time to complete my assignments because I did not have to work too many hours and I was able to take care of myself mentally during the most difficult time. I am now moving into my future as a proud Red River Métis graduate, with a career that I have always dreamed of."*



## Cedric Raffard

*Just before I received the money from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), my vehicle went out of commission, costing me almost my whole student loan. Without the help of this program I am not sure I would have made it though the program financially, especially since my commute was rather long and costly in fuel. This program also allowed me to participate in more in class time when I needed it, since I was able to travel to school more often without having to worry if I could afford the gas to make it. For this, huge thank you to the MMF!"*

# Red River Métis



## Gabrielle Laliberte

*"Thanks to the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) I was able to attend courses full time at the University of St Boniface, which I couldn't do before receiving funding. I am incredibly grateful for this gift, and because of it I was able to receive my Bachelors of Arts this semester. I received 4 A's in my courses and I'm now working as an archive technician for the Centre du Patrimoine! (St. Boniface Historical Society)"*



## Remi Stockwell

*" I wanted to tell you that I'm still very grateful for the money that the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped me with. I felt bad for not being able to attend the graduation. The truth is that I work in the industry that the MMF helped me get in. I'm currently working at Jonair trying to get a spot as an ag pilot there. I really appreciate all your help with the school and I wanted to make sure you felt appreciated because you were a great help! Thanks again!"*

# Success Stories



**Riley Gagnon**

*"The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped me obtain a Diploma in Business Administration by allowing me to put my education first and help alleviate the barriers that could limit my potential. I was also awarded the Business Administration Outstanding Indigenous Student Award and I know that the MMF played an integral role in my achieving these awards. With the continuous support from the MMF, I am now able to go on to my career journey with a strong educational background. I am excited for the next step in my life, and I feel confident in my skills because of the support that I received from the MMF."*



**Harmony Peters**

*"I have been honoured and privileged to receive funding from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) for my last year of my Education Degree at the University of Manitoba. The support, guidance, and frequent relay of communication I received from the MMF is what allowed for myself to feel a sense of stability, especially during the unknown times during the pandemic. I can now say that I have successfully completed my Bachelor of Education and am excited to impact my students' lives positively, just like MMF contributed to my education journey as a lifelong learner."*



# Red River Métis



## Victoria Lalonde

*"The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped me pursue my Bachelor of Nursing Degree by allowing me to put my academic and future success first. Without the support from the MMF, I wouldn't have been able to dedicate 100% to my studies, without worrying about all the financial burdens that come along with pursuing post-secondary school and achieving high grades. The MMF's open communication, check-ins, and support gave me the courage to continue to focus and believe...."*



## Carson Bourgeois

*"...the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) allowed me to put my studying first and complete this program maintaining an A+ average. I really appreciated the check-ins from the MMF family which made me feel motivated to do great and keep up the proficient study habits I learned.*

*The MMF was very supportive throughout my time in the program and I'm forever grateful for everything they helped me with and supported me through."*



# Success Stories



## Aiden Smolinski

*"The courses that I need to become a trade-certified electrician are quite short in length of time but contain an exponential amount of knowledge that I will use day to day for the rest of my career. The support from the Manitoba Métis Federation allowed me to be comfortable and stay on top of everything....I appreciate how concerned they were about how everything was going, while keeping everything organized and being only a phone call away if I had any questions or needed assistance."*



## Brienne Catellier

*"I am grateful for the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) because I would never have been able to attend Red River Polytech without them. My training counsellor did an amazing job making sure everything was done right and efficiently."*

*During my time at RRC Polytech, my counsellor would check in on me weekly to see how things were going and it made me feel like the Manitoba Métis Federation really cared about how I did and my wellbeing. I graduated with honours. I would not be where I am today without the help of the MMF."*

# Soaring High

## Single Red River Métis Mother's Inspiring Journey to Success

By Brett Carter

From scraping a living through multiple jobs to provide for her four children, to earning a business accounting certificate and landing a fulfilling job, Kathaleen Lavallee's inspiring story is a testament to her resilience and that hard work pays off - no matter your situation.

Before emerging as a beacon of hope for the Red River Métis, Lavallee, was grappling with a relentless cycle of financial challenges she faced as a single mother. Finding that her current education was hindering her earning potential, Lavallee found herself juggling five different jobs to make ends meet for her family.

Recognizing she was in a race against time, Lavallee enrolled in the grueling business accounting program through Louis Riel Vocational College (LRVC).

Kathaleen's program ordinarily would take 18 months, but was condensed to an intense nine months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic and the necessity to study online, all while homeschooling her children, Lavallee remained undeterred. She used this as an opportunity to set an example for her children that perseverance wins against all odds, adversity, and hours in the day.



2021-2022 Winnipeg Region Graduation with (Left to Right) Minister JoAnne Remillard, Kathaleen Lavallee, Vice President & Minister Andrew Carrier (R), and Infinity Women Secretariat Adrienne Carriere

"There were times when I wanted to give up. But I pushed through because I wanted to show my kids that they can do anything they put their mind to," Lavallee admitted, revealing an important part of her winning mantra.

Lavallee's journey to success began the moment when she decided to go return to school at the age of 49. Supported by the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department at the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Lavallee was able to

successfully graduate from her program at LRVC and expand her horizon of career opportunities.

MET's support program was a critical role in her success, empowering her to connect with peers and create a supportive study environment.

"I'm so grateful for their support," Lavallee said. "Because of the help I received through MET, I could afford to focus on my studies and make the most of the opportunity while making sure my family was taken care of," she said.

***“Because of the help I received through MET, I was able to afford to focus on my studies and make the most of the opportunity while making sure my family was taken care of.”***

Lavallee's remarkable journey doesn't stop at transforming her own life. Now employed as a Project Officer at MET, she uses her firsthand knowledge to guide others facing similar hardships.

"I understand the unique struggles of being a single mother trying to better yourself and others – and I feel I can reach out to others in similar situations and show them that it's possible to achieve success, no matter how difficult life seems, and no matter how old or young you are," she explains. Lavallee's mission is to help the next generation of Red River Métis chart their own paths and strive toward achieving their goals.

She thrives on the opportunity to encourage youth to leverage the MET's services and champion their own success stories, fuelled by their entrepreneurial spirit. "Going back to school wasn't easy, but it paid off," she said.

An inspiration to many, her story continues to underline the transformative power of education.

"Not only am I making a good living, but I'm also making a difference in peoples' lives and for the Red River Métis Nation," Lavallee said.

Her journey, driven in part by her tenacity and resilience, is a narrative of ambition and believing in oneself.

# Red River Métis

## Graduate Eager to Start Teaching

Originally Published Jul 11, 2023 - mmf.mb.ca

**Red River Métis bowler Brittney Rocan may have just graduated from college and university, but the Red River Métis student is already counting the days until she starts her new career in the fall.**

**B**rittney Rocan has spent the past five years attending Red River College Polytech and the University of Winnipeg for her Industrial Arts/Technology Teacher Education Degree.

The Youth grew up working in the garage and spending time outdoors with her father, and Rocan's grandpa was a welder, which helped influence her passion for woodworking.

The Red River Métis graduate recalled attending a Girls Exploring Trades & Technology camp through Red River College (Polytechnic) in middle school, which further propelled her dream of working in the field.

"I always wanted to be a teacher since (I was in) kindergarten, and I just didn't know what kind of teacher I wanted to be until I went to that trades camp, as well as taking woods class in high school," she said. "Then, I realized that's the kind of teacher I wanted to be."

Rocan would attend the University of Winnipeg (U of W) and Red River College Polytech



*Red River Métis student Brittney Rocan poses with her University of Winnipeg degree after her graduation ceremony in June.*

on alternating days. As a student her experiences were quite unique, noticing distinct differences between college and university. "In college, you have super small class sizes, so I gained some great friendships over the five years," said Rocan. "In university, you meet more people because of the bigger class sizes. It was a good challenge, being in both schools."

During Rocan's first and second years of university, she taught Grade 6-12 students graphic design and woodworking at Grant Park High School. The aspiring teacher also taught woodworking and power and energy at Bernie Wolfe School. This year, the graduate had the chance to return to her high school in Lorette to teach her minor study, drama. She had the privilege of being mentored by her former high school band teacher.

"Being able to work with the person that taught you is pretty surreal," she said. While teaching in Lorette, Rocan was able to help run the school musical. "It was cool to be there from November to April



because I was there for the whole process of the musical," she said. "Compared to my other practicums, which were eight straight weeks at the end of the school year."

While attending school, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) helped the Red River Métis Youth financially through the Post-Secondary Education Support Program. In addition, she was assigned a mentor from the Métis Employment & Training (MET), who she could count on for valuable guidance and support as she begins her new career.

Rocan appreciates the help from the MMF and encourages other Youth to reach out for support. "It was nice having someone check up on you, see how you're doing, and want to know where you're finding a job after school," she said. "I thought that was good."

"They have a lot available, whether it's financially or through mentorship," said the graduate. "I thought the MET program was a big help."

The Red River Métis Youth kindly offered valuable tips for those venturing into post-secondary education: try your best to build new connections and friendships along the way.

"It's all about who you know later on down the road and see who you can rely on and ask questions to," she said. "I have a few classmates who are also Red River Métis. We've become good

friends and always help each other out."

Now that Rocan has wrapped up her education, she is excited to begin teaching full-time in the fall. "I'm going to be moving to work in Manitoba, and I'll be teaching woodworking," she said. "I got a permanent position right off the bat, which is nice."

The graduate is moving on to a new stage in her bowling journey as well. The Red River Métis Citizen has received many accolades in the sport including capturing five medals and being named the Senior Girls All Events Champion at the Canadian Tenpin Federation 2022 Youth Championships.

Rocan has since aged out of youth leagues and transitioned to playing in adult leagues. She received her coaching certificate and was able to help coach Team Manitoba at the Canadian Tenpin Federation 2023 Youth Championships in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

"One of the kids I coached won two silver medals. I've never felt prouder because now I know what my coach felt like for the last 12 years. I think it was easy to relate to kids because I know exactly how they feel in that high-stakes situation," she said. "I have my ways that I deal with (the pressure), so passing on that information and knowledge helps them when they're bowling."



*Rocan with her medals and banner at the Canadian Tenpin Federation 2022 Youth Championships in Winnipeg.*

# Shaping the Future of Construction

By Brett Carter

## Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Program Sets Red River Métis Students up for Success

It's 7:45 am sharp on a brisk June morning. A group of hardworking students met at the worksite, eagerly waiting to dive into their hands-on learning experiences. They are participating in the Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Program, an initiative that's carving out a new path for aspiring construction professionals.

The HEO program combines five weeks of rigorous, practical training combined with classroom lessons. Sponsored in partnership with the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) through the Métis Employment & Training (MET) team, it's a game-changing ladder to success in the heavy construction industry.

The program not only taught the skills needed to operate heavy machinery, but also ingrained essential industry expectations. It includes comprehensive modules on Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS), Lock Out/Tag Out processes, and Load Securement.



*Photo Courtesy of SWS Training & Consulting*

Graduates of this program don't just come out as skilled operators; they come out as dependable, prepared, and reliable individuals. They learn the importance of punctuality, with eight students boasting perfect attendance and others falling just a few minutes short.

The training day typically runs from 7:45 am to 5:30 pm.

There's no pressure of operating a single piece of equipment all day long. The students switch machines in the afternoon, offering them a broader exposure and hands-on familiarity with different types of equipment.

An intensive focus on maintenance is another commendable feature of the HEO training program. The mentors, real-life industry experts, explain the importance of machine upkeep through vivid comparisons—grease to a machine is what water is to our bodies.

The latest batch of graduates, having completed their training on June 16, 2023, are eager to dive headfirst into the industry. Jason Leclerc, a driving force with MET behind this transformative initiative, is looking forward to new partnerships and future programs. "We are so proud of them," he exclaims, echoing the sentiments of the entire MET team.

The HEO Training Program is more than just a qualification; it's a comprehensive learning experience that transforms aspiring individuals into industry-ready professionals.

# Métis Employment & Training

ARE YOU  
**UNDEREMPLOYED?**

LOOKING FOR  
**CHANGE?**

NEED A CAREER  
**NOT A JOB?**

**CONNECT WITH  
US TODAY!**

Let's talk about *YOU*  
and your future goals!

**We Can  
Help**

**PLEASE  
CONTACT**

**MET@mmf.mb.ca**

**www.mmfemployment.ca**





## Success Stories



### Isabel Dueck

**When Isabel Dueck graduated from high school, she was unsure of her next move. Little did she know that a suggestion from her auntie and help from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) would pave a path to a fulfilling career in healthcare.**

Motivated by her passion for helping people, Dueck enrolled in the Healthcare Aide Program offered by the Academy of Learning Career College. What she received was more than just an education - it was a calling.

As one of the many promising careers in healthcare, the Healthcare Aide role melded her altruistic inclinations with a desire for continued learning and personal development.

She recounts, "The challenges of this job as a healthcare aide will give me room for growth and keep me hungry to learn more."

***"Without MMF's funding, I wouldn't have been able to complete this program. They helped with my costs for tuition and some of my day-to-day needs."***

In an industry as ever-evolving as healthcare, Dueck's academic pursuits are a testament to her tenacity. She was not simply content with passing grades, but found herself pushing for higher marks, every 90% only fueling her desire to reach the next level.

However, this journey did not come without its fair share of hurdles. Financial constraints, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, posed a significant threat to her academic pursuits. This is where the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), through the Métis Employment & Training Department stepped in.

With MET's support, Dueck could offset her tuition costs and cover some of her daily needs. Fiscally and morally, the MMF's support helped her to excel academically and professionally. She said, "The MMF really made it possible for me to go to school this year."

Armed with her diploma, Dueck has landed a position with Gilas Healthcare Services, a health agency that sends workers across Manitoba to different facilities. With every job being first come, first serve, Dueck has the unique opportunity to travel and explore various facilities and

***"The MMF really made it possible for me to go to school this year."***

hospitals. This has helped her in shaping her career aspirations.

But for Dueck, this is just the beginning. Fueled by a new found love of learning, Dueck has set her sights on furthering her education within the healthcare field..

Her story is a shining example of opportunities and one that MMF funding can unlock for Red River Métis Citizens. With a deep commitment to her continued growth in the healthcare field, Dueck sets the pace as a beacon for future generations of Red River Métis students.

In her story, we see a true embodiment of determination, resilience, and the Red River Métis spirit. As Dueck strides forward with her career ambitions, we look forward to the many ways she will continue to leave her mark, both within the healthcare field and beyond.





### Eugene Fenez

**Success, for this Red River Métis student, is a combination of hard work, determination, and the unwavering support of the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department at the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF).**

From the very beginning of a challenging journey to secure a Diploma in Full Stack Web Development, a program known for its grueling workload and stringent study commitments, Eugene Fenez faced significant barriers that could have deterred him from his dream.

Fighting financial challenges and devoid of any substantial support, he found himself at a crossroads, confronting the challenge of managing his expenses while dedicating his time to a demanding academic schedule.

"Without the support of the Manitoba Métis Federation, I would have been focused on my finances and not able to study and graduate with honours," says Fenez.

***"MET helped me find financing when all other avenues had been closed to me and they really had my back when I felt very much alone and defeated at times."***

The MMF swiftly alleviated financial barriers and provided one-on-one support throughout the journey, fostering an environment where the student could focus intensely on their education, rather than monetary concerns. One standout element of support that Fenez attributes his success to, is his Métis Employment & Training (MET) counsellor.

Alongside regular academic supervision, the MET counsellor provided weekly reminders to keep him on track, assisted him in locating alternative financing avenues when his options seemed bleak and served as a beacon of support in the challenging world of academia.

According to Fenez, "They sent me reminders on a weekly basis, they helped me find financing when all other avenues had been closed to me and they really had my back when I felt very much alone and defeated at times."

With the crucial backing of the Manitoba Métis Federation and a strong educational foundation, Fenez is ready to embark on his professional journey, equipped with both the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to succeed.

Fenez's achievement marks more than just an academic milestone, it's a testament to the relentless spirit of the Red River Métis, the power of community support, and a beacon of hope for others struggling to overcome adversity.

At a time when barriers like financial constraints, age, and systemic disadvantages linger for Red River Métis students, Fenez's success is proof that all can succeed if provided with a supportive platform. Education has the power to level the playing field, and with Fenez's achievements serving as a testament to the importance of support, here's hoping more uplifting stories like his unfold across the Red River Métis Nation.

***"Without the support of the Manitoba Métis Federation, I would have been focused on my finances and not able to study and graduate with honours"***

# Selkirk Fiddle Player Nominated for three MCMAs

## Morgan Grace, 16, recognized for musical talent

By Becca Myskiw (Originally Published: September 28 2023 – The Selkirk Record)



Photo: Morgan Grace (The Selkirk Record)

A Selkirk teen is nominated for three Manitoba Country Music Awards. Morgan Grace is a 16-year-old fiddle player with strong Red River Métis roots. She began playing the violin when she was four, and hasn't put it down since.

Grace was raised around music. Even before she came out of the womb, she was surrounded by the songs of her ancestors and the joy their music brings her family. Watching their family friends play the fiddle inspired her to try, and the rest is history.

"Being around it, she just seemed to like that sound, that aspect," her father Keith Ginther said. "She seemed to have an ear for it."

When Grace's family first put a fiddle in her hand, they discovered she played it left-handed instead of the usual right. That adjustment didn't halt Grace

or her development as a fiddle player at all — she learned to play left just the same, and the music started flowing out of her, Ginther said.

"A lot of people comment that she looks bored when she plays," he said. "It just comes easily and effortlessly. I think it's because it's been in her since before she was born."

Grace has had eight fiddle teachers, each instructing her in different techniques to shape her personal style. Incredibly, she learned the instrument completely through ear — not with sheet music.

"A lot of musicians read sheet music," she said. "I can't do it with fiddle." So, she listens to each piece over and over, figuring out the notes completely through what she hears.



Photo: [www.morgangracemusic.net](http://www.morgangracemusic.net)

**The MCMA's are on Nov. 4 at the Club Regent Event Centre in Winnipeg, Man.**

Her favourite pieces to play are waltz. She describes the slower music as therapeutic, beautiful and graceful.

Grace's first gig was at Selkirk's Indigenous Days six years ago and she has continued to play at venues since, including Dauphin's Countryfest, the Métis festival in Batoche, North American Indigenous Games, the Winnipeg Jets Indigenous game and she's opened for William Prince, a Juno award winning artist.

Her favourite places to play are much smaller, quiet places. She adores playing in personal care homes, something she does once or twice a month in the winter.

"I like seeing how [music] affects them," she said. "How when these people, they can't talk or they can't do certain things, but you can see them tapping their fingers or toes."

Grace is a cover artist. She's nominated in the emerging artist, cover/tribute artist, duo or group of the year, and specialty band or artist categories in this year's Country Music Awards.

"I'm kind of hoping to win something but it's still great to be nominated," she said.

Her dad said the nominations are largely because of her following. "The people that support Morgan and her fans are instrumental in where she is today," he said.

Grace will be attending the awards with her mom, dad, boyfriend and numerous family members. Coming up, she'll be playing at the Indigenous Tourism Manitoba gala, Honouring the Languages at Lower Fort Garry, and the Selkirk Métis Local Fiddle Jamboree.

The music awards are on Nov. 4 at the Club Regent Event Centre.



Photo: [www.morgangracemusic.net](http://www.morgangracemusic.net)

# From Apartheid to Transitional Justice

## Truth & Reconciliation Insights from a Red River Métis Student's Journey into Post-apartheid South Africa

By Brett Carter

**Katherine Fleury, a young Red River Métis student, spent a summer abroad in South Africa, where she reflected on themes of truth and reconciliation that cross borders and cultures.**



*Photos Provided by Katherine Fleury*

In the middle of July, the usually tranquil wineland region of Stellenbosch, South Africa, was abuzz with the profound, reflective insights of 40 young minds from 22 nationalities, all in attendance for the Association of Commonwealth Universities summer school program. Among these was a proud Red River Métis student from Manitoba, who brought with her a deeply personal and professional

interest rooted in research, public policy, and veterinary sciences.

The program, set against the backdrop of an apartheid-scarred South Africa, focused on themes of truth and reconciliation, diving deep into the country's history and drawing comparisons with other cultures. A significant insight is realized here - the histories of various countries, though separated by vast oceans, run parallel, connected by the shared experiences of colonization - from apartheid to transitional justice.

Katherine Fleury, the 23-year-old Red River Métis student, experienced a rare privilege on her visit to South Africa - the ability to choose whether or not to disclose her Indigenous ancestry. As she returned to Canada, she was keenly aware of the opportunities and equality that sharing her heritage had opened up, leading her to reflect on the invaluable contribution that truth and reconciliation has made towards establishing a more just and equitable society.

Exploring the socio-political landscape that molded 20th-century South Africa provided the



students an invaluable perspective, and our Red River Métis scholar found resonance with her own country's history. The narratives of colonization were disturbing and sobering, yet also a testament to the indomitable human spirit.

The stark inequality plaguing post-apartheid South Africa was striking to the participants. This intense experience amplified an understanding of Black consciousness during apartheid—an insight that demands attention and respect.

The paradox of "white passing" indigeneity was a significant topic of reflection. While ethnic disclosure remains a choice for some, including our Red River Métis participant, it's pivotal to recognize the privilege that modern realities afford them. They do not bear the scars of past atrocities their ancestors suffered.

The course left her with empowering learning's and inspired her to move forward with real actions to promote equality. From an understanding of the bigger picture around marginalized communities and critical analysis of the systems that perpetuate inequality, to a healthy outward representation of the epistemology that values all people - these are the truths that Fleury draws on as she pursues her dream of becoming a Veterinarian.

The skills that Fleury acquired

through her study abroad endeavour has etched in her the importance of being a host, rather than a guest, in creating positive change.

Ultimately, it is stories like Katherine's, lived experiences, and the emotionally moving reflections that remind us of the importance of unity and resilience, encouraging us all to keep moving forward, together, in the face of adversity and systems that try to divide us.

This deep dive into the intricate tapestry of Indigenous heritage inspired a firm resolve. To use this privileged state not as a sanctuary, but as a platform to amplify ancestral voices and continue their legacy. After all, every country has its crucial historical narratives and traumas in desperate need of reconciliation and remedy.

The Red River Métis scholar, in drawing on her experiences

in South Africa, distilled her learnings into crucial takeaways about the importance of understanding systems and beneficiaries of inequality, being cautious of political stunts, conducting community research, examining underlying philosophical growth, and recognizing that justice is an act to be performed, not simply an end state.

Imparting an understanding of the importance of truth and reconciliation for establishing a more equitable and just society, Katherine's experience underscores the power of global exchange and the significance of the study of African history, often marginalized in international discourse.

Quoting Nelson Mandela, the renowned leader who served as South Africa's first democratically elected president in 1994 to 1999, Katherine urges us all to make choices that reflect our hopes and passions, rather than our fears.

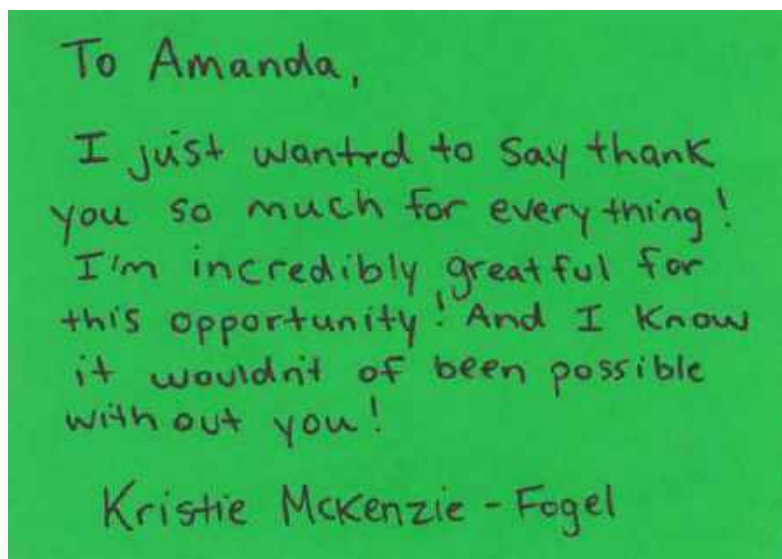


Courtesy of Kristie McKenzie-Fogel



At **Métis Employment & Training (MET)**, our team goes above and beyond to provide the best resources to help you!

We want to take a moment to recognize and thank the amazing **MET** team members for their work to help others succeed.



Courtesy of Annette and Hudson Sigurdson

Dear Rilee : mmf MET dept,

Just a quick note to say thank you for your support of Hudson Sigurdson under the Believe Elite Athletic and Artistic Program for his last hockey season. We are so very grateful. He plans to compete at the same level again this season, and has goals in the future to play NCAA hockey!

Sincerely,  
Annette & Hudson Sigurdson

If you're searching for a reliable and compassionate team to help you succeed in your career, contact us at **MET@mmf.mb.ca** and one of our dedicated staff members will be ready to work with you to reach your goals.



**Métis  
Employment  
& Training**

# Lifelong Friends Launch Nursing Careers in Ashern

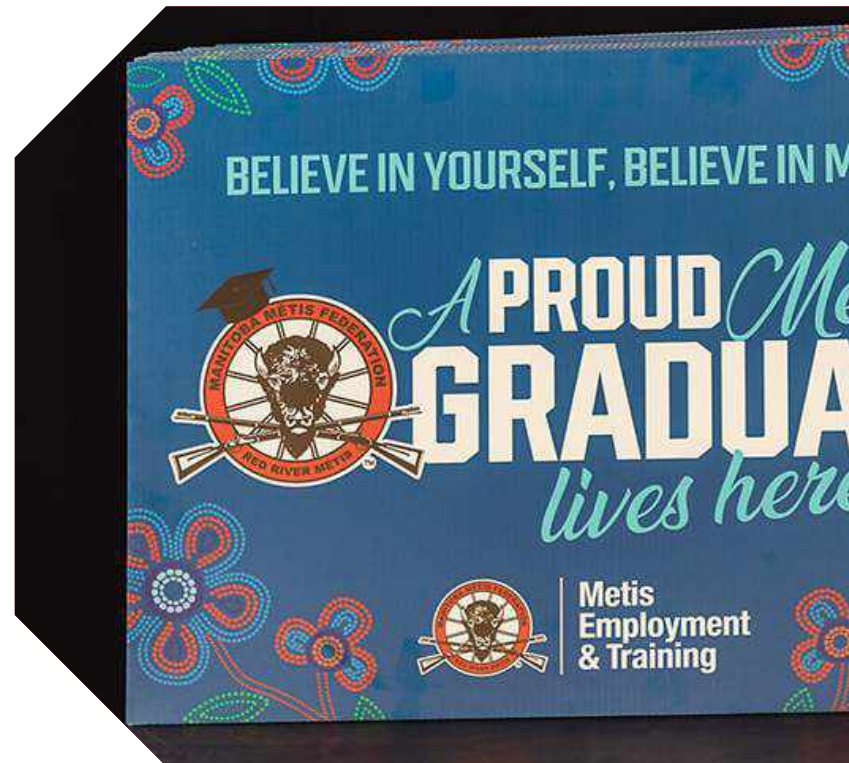
Originally Published Nov 25, 2022 - [www.ierha.ca](http://www.ierha.ca)

Kaylee Smith and Taylor Buors, who grew up together in St. Laurent, both completed their first day as full-time nurses at Ashern Hospital on Sept. 12.

Although they've ended up on the same career path, they took different routes to arrive at their destination. Kaylee, a registered nurse, graduated in October from the bachelor of nursing program at the University of Manitoba. But her journey started even earlier with summer employment as a health-care aide at Stonewall Hospital.

"Here I was able to hone some of my clinical and professional skills," she said. "I also met some of the most helpful and kind health-care professionals who took the time to teach me how to care for patients at the bedside."

Then for her internship, Kaylee gained experience in primary care throughout the region. "In this position, I was able to work within my home community of St. Laurent where I got to better understand the challenges in delivery of primary care to an underserved community and how the healthcare team works so hard to provide the best care possible, including prioritizing the French language program," she said. "I also had the privilege of experiencing the leadership side of primary care. It gave me an



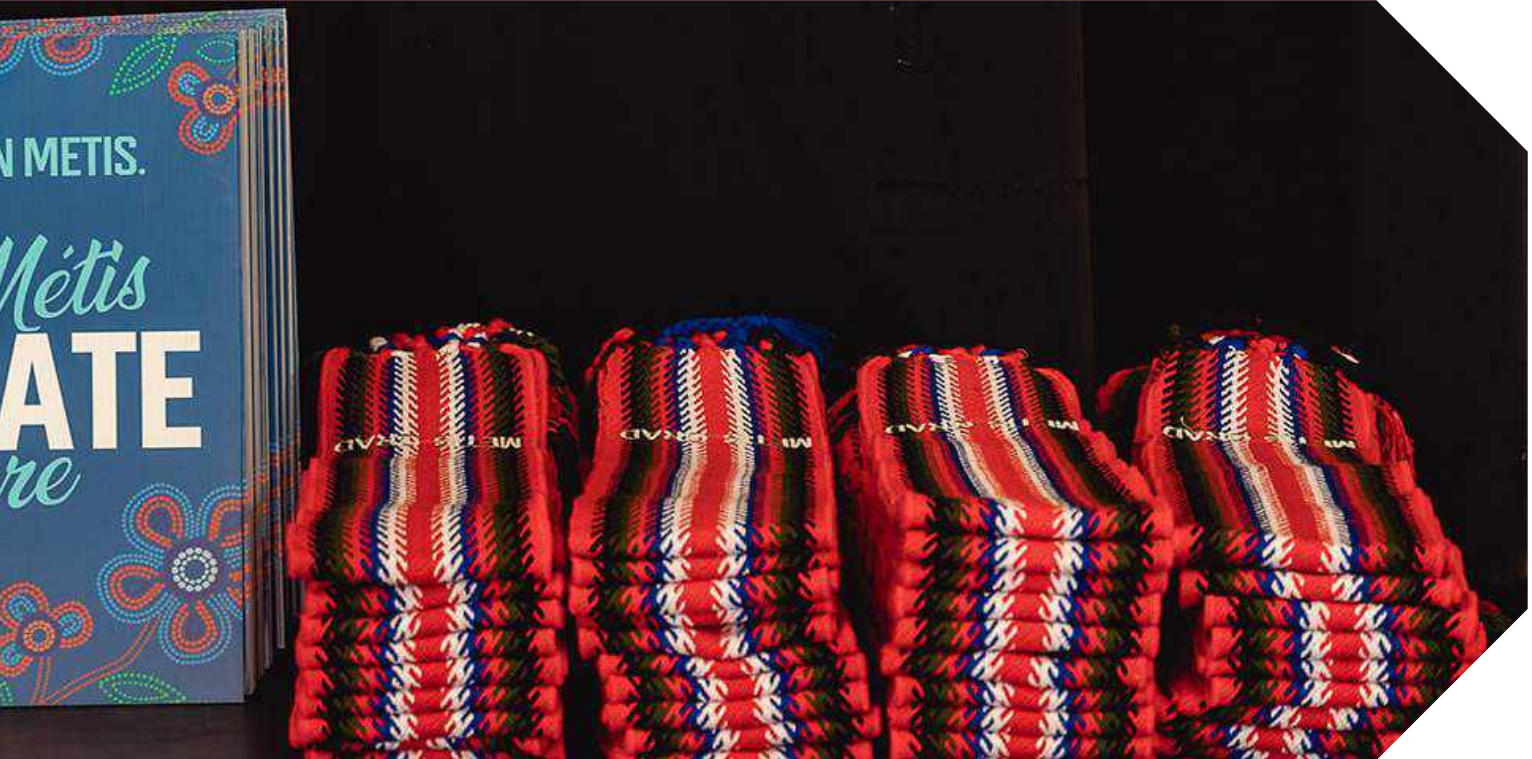
It gave me an appreciation of how hard our leadership teams work to serve our communities in the best possible way."

Kaylee expressed gratitude for these foundational work experiences, as well as for resources that helped along the way, such as the Home for the Summer program offered by Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

"I also had the opportunity to work as a health-care aide full-time for several summers through generous funding from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) in collaboration with Indigenous Human Resources at IERHA. The Grow Your Own Bursary program was essential for funding my education but also in ensuring that I would work within my communities and give back some day," she said.

"These resources were so impactful throughout my education in preparing me for my career every step of the way. I was able to gain valuable clinical and leadership experiences as a student through the various positions, and the funding allowed me to worry less about tuition and more about focusing on my courses and eventually giving back to my communities."





Looking back, Kaylee always knew she wanted to work in health care but was particularly drawn to nursing.

“Nursing is very hands-on and you get to be personable with patients and clients,” she said. “There is also so much opportunity for growth, whether that be moving into leadership or there is always an opportunity to continue learning as you move into different fields of nursing.”

At the same time, she is also grateful for the chance to work in the Interlake. “As a new nurse, I wanted the feeling of working close to home while still gaining a wide variety of clinical experiences. Here at Ashern, I get the opportunity to work closely with a large Indigenous population and serve the surrounding communities, including my own,” said Kaylee, who now lives in Eriksdale.

“I feel proud to be a part of the growing number of Indigenous health-care professionals within our region and to feel supported,” she said.

Similar to Kaylee, Taylor always knew she wanted to pursue a career that would allow her to make a positive impact on other people’s lives.

“Nursing is a profession where you are able to do that every day — this is what initially drew me to the career. I enjoy nursing because you get to meet people from all walks of life and are able to be there and help them during a time of need,” said Taylor, who graduated in June from the University College of the North in Selkirk.

“In addition, I like that it is very hands-on and that every day brings a new challenge. I like that there is so much opportunity for continuous learning and growth within the profession.”

Ashern Hospital is already familiar ground for Taylor, who completed a three-month senior practicum placement there, with the majority of her shifts in the emergency room.

“This is integral to me as a new nurse because I am able to continue to enhance my clinical knowledge, critical thinking skills and gain more hands-on experience, all while being in a rural hospital close to home.

“Working at Ashern Hospital gives me the opportunity to provide health care to a large Indigenous population and many surrounding communities

## The Métis Trailblazer

within the Interlake-Eastern region, including my own,” said Taylor, who continues to reside in St. Laurent.

“It felt really good to obtain full-time permanent employment within the IERHA as a new grad nurse. I am proud to work at a hospital that serves so many communities within the Interlake-Eastern region.”

In addition, Taylor expressed gratitude for the help she received from the Manitoba Métis Federation throughout her post-secondary education. “The MMF partnered with the University College of the North to deliver the nursing program in Selkirk. They funded myself and 13 other Red River Métis students throughout the entirety of the program.”

“This resource meant a lot to me and was crucial during my education, as it allowed me to focus solely on my studies and excel within the program,” she said.

“I strongly encourage others to utilize the available programs and funding that are offered to Métis post-secondary students pursuing a career in healthcare. All of the support that is out there truly helps in being successful throughout your program and chosen career path.”

Adding to the excitement of embarking on her new career, Taylor is energized by the opportunity to work with her long-time friend. “It feels great to work in the same hospital as

Kaylee, especially since we grew up especially since we grew up together. I feel proud to work alongside her since we share similar values to provide holistic, ethical and compassionate care to our patients,” she said.

“It is also nice to have someone that is new to the profession that I can go to for support, especially with all the challenges working in healthcare brings.”

Similarly, Kaylee shared her excitement about starting her nursing career alongside Taylor

“It feels amazing that even though we took different paths after high school, we still ended up in the same career – let alone at the same facility,” she said.”

“I’m glad I have a friend, a colleague and a carpool buddy to share these new experiences with as we begin our careers.”

***“The MMF funded myself and 13 other Red River Métis students throughout the entirety of the program... This resource meant a lot to me and was crucial during my education, as it allowed me to focus solely on my studies and excel within the program”***

# Health Care Heroes

## Opportunities for Nursing Education in the Interlake

Originally Published Nov 25, 2022 - [www.ierha.ca](http://www.ierha.ca)

**Nursing education is an invaluable part of providing quality health care services and training the next generation of health care providers in the Interlake- Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA).**



Tanya Cheetham, chief nursing officer and regional lead for acute care and public health for Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA), draws attention to opportunities in the Interlake to obtain nursing education close to home.

The recent course at Assiniboine Community College in Arborg, held in partnership with Fieldstone Ventures and IERHA, was successful in bringing 25 nursing students to the region.

"They were able to complete their senior practicums – and for those who reside in the region, they were able to obtain positions in their communities, whether it was acute care, home care, long-term care or dialysis," Tanya said. "To date, IERHA has hired 16 students from the Arborg program".

"We have also hired two licensed practical nursing students from University College of the North and six registered nurses from either University of Manitoba or Red River College."

A recent communication from the University of Manitoba suggests that 86 per cent of students obtain employment where they have completed their senior practicums.

"Evidence indicates that people never know something as thoroughly as when they have to coach or teach others; therefore, having students in the work environment strengthens the knowledge and professionalism of the existing workforce," Tanya said.

"Coaching and mentoring junior staff and students is a professional expectation of all nurses by their regulatory bodies. We thank the nurses and care teams that welcomed students and supported them in their learning journey."

"We welcome nursing students to the IERHA and will provide safe environments that foster learning and growth. Once the students complete their practicums, we want them to begin their nursing careers in the IERHA."

***To learn more about exciting employment opportunities in healthcare, visit [www.ierha.ca/careers](http://www.ierha.ca/careers)***



# Boosting Business & Bolstering Community

## St. Malo Meats Succeeds with Métis Employment & Training (MET)

By Brett Carter



In rural Manitoba, history and the future harmoniously meld through a tale of entrepreneurial spirit and community support. This success story was made possible through the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training Department's (MET) Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP).

St. Malo Meats, a long endeared fixture of St. Malo, was sold to new owners Patrick Gosselin and Jesse Lariviere on May 1, 2022. Like many small businesses braving a new venture, this duo faced a string of financial challenges including legal costs and a need for modernizing their business.

This is where the support from Métis Employment & Training's SSEP emerged as a beacon of hope. Gosselin and Lariviere qualified for this program which reimburses wages for hiring summer employees.

"The program's been a blessing," says co-owner

Gosselin. "We were able to not only hire Meagan, a Métis student for the summertime but also pivot ordinarily wage-designated funds to upgrading the store."

This involved the purchase of new products for the storefront and procuring essential equipment such as an energy-efficient industrial freezer. These upgrades proved beneficial for their business, simultaneously pulling in new customers, increasing revenue, and lowering their carbon footprint.

St. Malo Meats also proved instrumental in providing employment for local Red River Métis Youth. Meagan, who worked with the team over the summer, is commended by the owners for her hardworking nature, efficiency, and determination.

"We're pleased to offer employment opportunities for our local Métis community," says Lariviere. "Having the community's support and benefitting



from Meagan's contribution to our team, it's a win-win."

The journey at St. Malo Meats goes to show how programs like SSEP can not only foster economic growth for Red River Métis businesses, but also empower communities with employment and training opportunities, as well as financial support.

Gosselin and Lariviere concluded, "We can't express enough our gratitude towards the MMF for supporting us through this program. The positive impact goes beyond the business, leaving a lasting mark on the community as a whole."

For the MMF and MET, helping local entrepreneurs and small businesses like St. Malo Meats is just another way the Red River Métis achieve self-sufficiency and prosperity.



**PHOTOS** » Courtesy of St. Malo Meats Instagram.  
Visit them out at 110 218 Pr, Saint Malo, MB!

# Pupil Pursuing Physics Passion

Originally Published June 30 2022 – mmf.mb.ca

**Red River Métis University of Manitoba graduate Cole Coughlin discovered a passion for physics, which led him to the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ont.**

University of Manitoba graduate Cole Coughlin noticed he had an aptitude for math, physics, and computer science throughout his secondary school days.

"I sort of pictured myself as maybe developing an app and then retiring early, and then going back to school and maybe studying philosophy or something," he said. "But near the end of high school I realized that I could just pursue a topic that I'm very interested in from the beginning, like physics."

He completed his joint honours degree in physics and computer science at the University of Manitoba over five years. While physics is his true passion, Coughlin found computer science to be beneficial as well.

"Computer science is now incredibly useful in physics, and



it's necessary to know how to code nowadays, so it ended up being a really great degree and has really helped me out in many, many ways," he said.

The pandemic ramped up towards the end of his third year, with classes immediately moving online. In summer of 2020, Coughlin got a position at McGill University in Montreal, Que., researching particle physics.

"If it were a normal summer, I would have been out in Montreal for the summer and working with the group there," he said. "But, I was able to do all my work virtually and had regular meetings with the team, and it ended up being a great experience regardless."

Classes remained online the following year, and Coughlin was one of a few Canadians selected for a research position through

an international student program with the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Geneva, Switzerland, which ended up being virtual.

"So, there's two summer trips that I missed during the pandemic," he said. "Regardless, they were truly incredible experiences, and I'm so lucky to have been selected for those positions." In August, the University of Manitoba graduate will head to the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, Ont.

"I'm truly thrilled to be going there. It's one of the most selective institutions in the world for physics," he said. "They select around 25 students every year from many, many different countries, and despite being in Waterloo, there's only I think maybe two other Canadians going there along with me."

Coughlin said he has already communicated with some of the students in his cohort. "They already made a group chat of all the students that'll be going there for the next year, and we all introduced ourselves. I counted all the countries that everyone is from and it's like 20 different countries the 26 of us are from," he said, "so it's going to be an incredible time and I'm going to make lots of friends from all around the world who I can visit in the future. I couldn't be more excited about it."

The Perimeter Institute offers a one-year master's degree, which is entirely course-based. "Every

course is about five weeks, and we're taking two, maybe three of them at the same time, and it's a 10-month program. Sort of everyone's just working through all the courses together for the first semester and then the second semester you have a bit more choice in the specialization of the classes that you want to go into," Coughlin said.

The Red River Métis student is hoping to specialize in quantum information theory, which he said is becoming increasingly favourable to theoretical physicists.

"It's a new way of looking at physics as we see it today, and hopefully in search of a theory of quantum gravity. We today are unable to unify two of our greatest theories in physics," he said, referring to quantum mechanics and gravity.

"Quantum mechanics has been experimentally shown for over 100 years, and we have an incredible theory that predicts all the things that we see in quantum mechanics for the most part, but we still don't fully understand it, and it tends to confuse physicists regardless all the time," Coughlin said.

"But we also have an incredible theory of gravity, which is general relativity, and these two theories seem incompatible. They do not fit together, but they both exist in the same universe, and we know that they have to. So, we've been searching for a theory that will encompass both

of them, and we're still searching for one that is able to experimentally show that it is part of the same theory."

The graduate is excited to further pursue this passion for a master's degree. The Perimeter Institute has an incredible faculty that are working on quantum information, and I am thrilled to be able to sit down and talk with many of them over the next year," he said.

Beyond the next year, Coughlin hopes to help in the search for a theory of everything. "Something that can describe all of the phenomena we see in the universe," he said.

He also plans to obtain his PhD and become a professor. "I truly love teaching. It's not only a great way to engage with students, but also test your own knowledge, and every time I try to prepare lectures or slides or try to explain an idea to someone else, I learn something in return as well," he said.

"Being able to explain these ideas in an engaging and interesting way is truly important."

He credits great communicators like Carl Sagan, John Carroll, Carlo Rovelli, and his own teachers for his decision to pursue physics. "I think science communication is incredibly important," he said. "I would love to be a professor and conduct my own research and teach as well. That's the dream."

The Red River Métis graduate has also been able to teach



## The Métis Trailblazer

through the Kinew Métis Council, which he joined when he moved from his hometown of Selkirk to Winnipeg about a year ago. Through the Council, Coughlin has presented on topics such as astronomy and particle physics.

"I gave a very fun and compelling talk about our history of the knowledge of the scale of the universe, and it's quite incredible looking at the sort of turn of events," he said, noting that it took thousands of years, through the evolution of telescopes, for astronomers to realize that other galaxies outside of our own existed.

"For thousands and thousands of years we questioned and thought about how big was this universe of ours? Was it just the earth and the backdrop of the sky? And slowly we built better telescopes and saw some things further away than we expected, and even less than 100 years ago we didn't know that other galaxies outside of our own existed," he said. "Edwin Hubble, with one of the most powerful telescopes at the time, was able to show that objects existed outside of our own universe, which we now call the Milky Way galaxy. But that was the entire universe to us at that point, and since then we've discovered a seemingly infinite number of galaxies."

The budding physicist's talk also covered the fact that the universe extends much further than currently known. "We don't have any real reason to believe that it doesn't extend much further than we can see, so the universe continues to get bigger and bigger and bigger," he said.

"It was a really fun talk to sort of explore that." The opportunity to present on topics he's enthusiastic about isn't the only benefit Coughlin has received from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). Funding through the **Post-Secondary Education Support Program** has allowed him to focus his time and energy on his education.

"The MMF was a large part of how I was able to focus on school rather than sort of juggling jobs along the side," he said. "That made it possible for me to

truly focus on school and on my studies and (to) treat my studies as a job." Coughlin credits the support from the MMF for his ability to excel beyond his undergrad, from holding his past research positions and his acceptance to Perimeter Institute.

"I was able to focus and put all of my effort into my studies," he added. "It's something I'm truly thankful for, and I'm glad that these services are available to Métis students. It's truly incredible and absolutely important for how I got to where I am."

The Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department at the MMF congratulates Cole now and on all the successes he'll have throughout his long and outstanding career in theoretical physics!

The MMF created the Post-Secondary Education Support Program (PSESP) to help Red River Métis students achieve their educational goals. The PSESP program helps Red River Métis Citizens by providing needs-based funding and an array of support services and resources.

It is graduates like Cole that inspire us—Red River Métis Citizens—not to limit our pursuits of higher education dreams and ultimately is what we constantly strive for at the Métis Employment & Training Department.

***"The MMF made it possible for me to truly focus on school and on my studies and to treat my studies as a job."***



**Empowering Red River Métis Youth  
with cultural, athletic, and individual support!**

For more information, please email  
[youth.coordinator@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:youth.coordinator@mmf.mb.ca)



**Métis  
Sports  
& Youth**



# STEM Hero

## Gracie Grift Empowers Indigenous Youth in Science and Research

By Brett Carter

**Gracie Grift leads Indigenous advocacy for STEM at the University of Winnipeg, promoting the next generation of Indigenous scientists and researchers.**

As President of the Indigenous Student's Association at the University of Winnipeg (U of W), Gracie Grift has become a driving force for students in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), particularly those of Indigenous heritage. She not only leads with impact, but also strives to create an enriching environment that connects students to their Indigenous culture through various events such as book clubs, beading nights, and medicine walks.

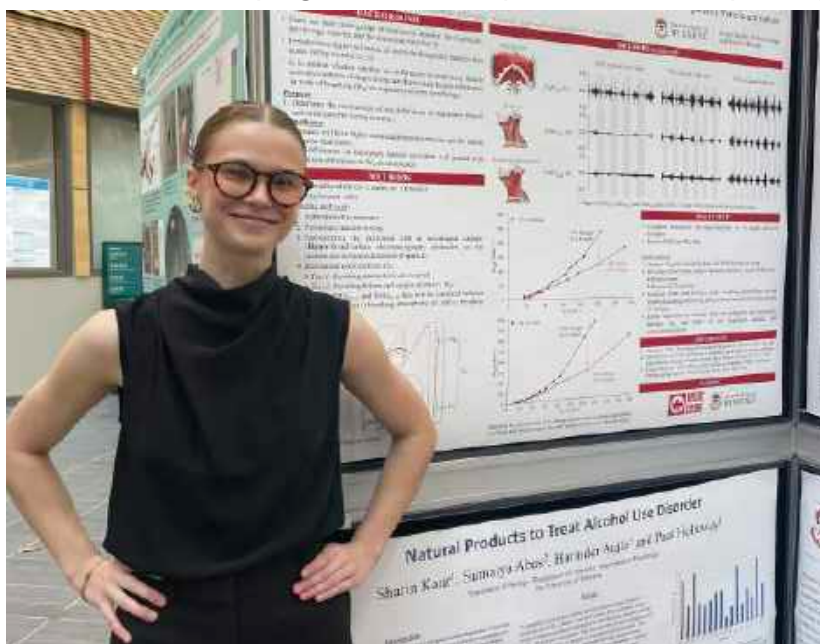
Moreover, as the Vice President of the Canadian Indigenous Science and Engineering Society, Grift is dedicated to ensuring Indigenous youth are well represented and heavily supported in the STEM field.



Photos Provided by Gracie Grift

Her responsibilities include the important task of securing funding for Indigenous youth's attendance at academic conferences, with efforts extending to organizing events that enable Indigenous students to build their professional networks and enjoy opportunities that they may otherwise have missed.

Grift's journey through the STEM field began with her undergraduate degree in Biology at the U of W. Her passion for research got her enrolled in a research program, that soon placed her in a respiratory





physiology lab, where she is currently working on her honours thesis.

Her ambitions take her ahead to a future where she dreams of becoming a physician and conducting part-time research on clinical trials and studies. For her, research signifies being at the forefront of medicine. "I like the idea of constantly contributing to that pool of knowledge," Grift said.

Avid about being a part of Indigenous advocacy in academia, Grift now eagerly looks forward to extending that advocacy to the Red River Métis Nation.

In her recent appointment as the Infinity Women Secretariat member of the Regional Youth Advisory Committee (RYAC) for the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Grift is enthused to strive to advance and advocate for her fellow Red River Métis Youth.

Grift's constant endeavour is to bridge the gap between the wisdom of the elders and the youth in her community. Drawing from her personal experience of the absence of Indigenous representation in STEM, she is determined to foster an environment for the next generation of Indigenous scientists, researchers and doctors that she herself once felt was lacking.

"I want to be the representation that I never had by creating the



Photo Credit: CBC Manitoba

conditions for others that I would've wanted. I don't want the next generation of Indigenous students to feel like they don't belong in science," she said.

As a child, her excitement for science sparked when she was able to help make a tooth mould during a routine trip to the dentist. It's moments like these, Grift says, that help her inspire and guide the next generation of budding Indigenous STEM students through her advocacy work.

Grift believes that everyone is smarter than they think they are, capable of achieving more than they foresee. She encourages everyone to remain curious, ask questions and never hesitate to approach people who can help.

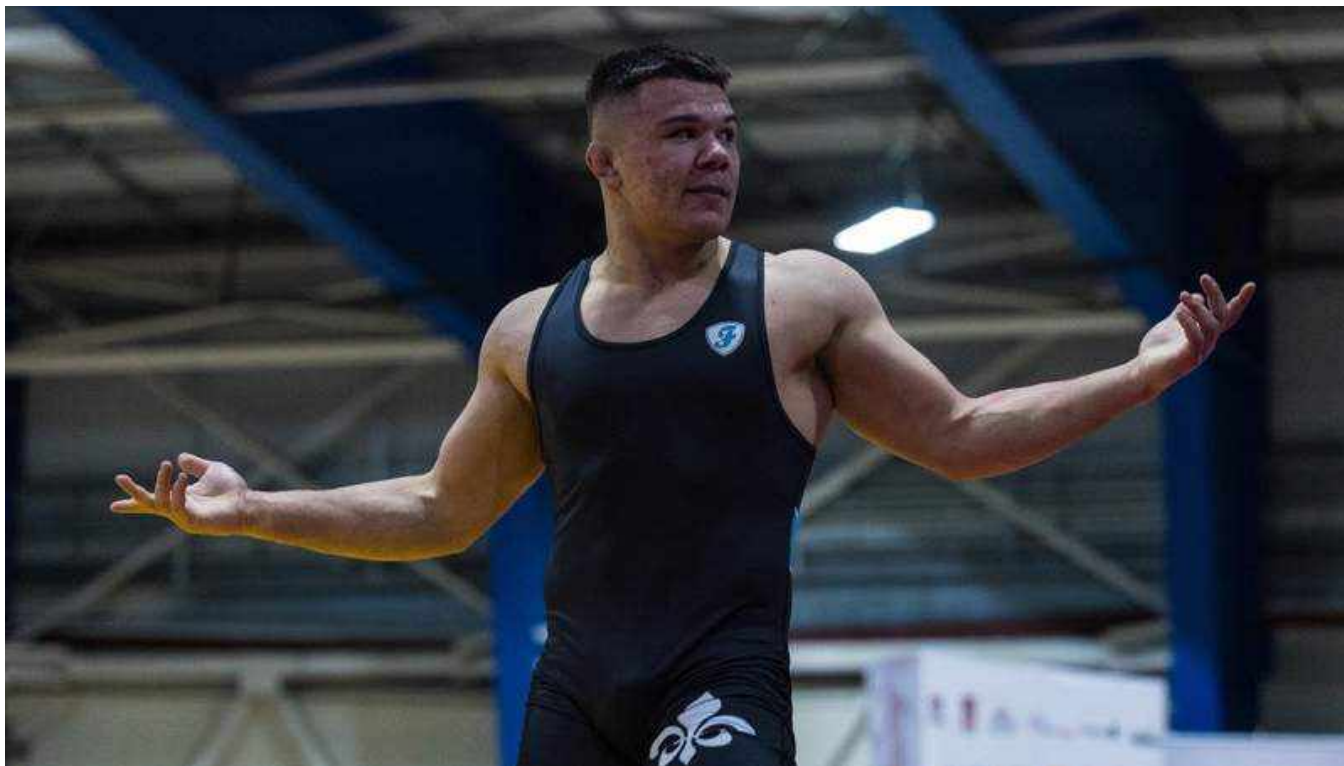
"You need to believe that you are capable", she says, "If you don't think you're capable, you just need to keep pushing. Eventually, you will get there."

**"If you don't think you're capable, you just need to keep pushing. Eventually, you will get there."**

# Red River Métis Phenom

## Connor Church Strives for Wrestling Greatness

Article originally published Jul 6, 2023 - mmf.mb.ca



*Métis wrestler Connor Church competed at the U20 Pan American Championship in Oaxtepec, Mexico, from July 8-10.*

Connor Church is fresh off winning a national gold medal in wrestling and is looking to jump to the next level.

The 19-year-old Red River Métis from Winnipeg is one of 20 Canadians competing at the U20 Pan American Championship in Oaxtepec, Mexico, from July 8-10.

For Church, combat sports have been a huge part of his upbringing, which he attributes to his father.

"He put me in (different classes) right since I was a little kid, and then I grew up and did a bit of hockey, but as I got older and older, I started excelling at boxing and wrestling," he said.

"And then, that competitive nature came over me. You keep winning, and I really like(d) this feeling, and I wanted to keep getting more of this, and I ended up just switching and solely doing combat sports."

Church vividly remembers attending the Manitoba Métis Federation Road to Gold sports camps, which also helped him gain a passion for wrestling.

"They built confidence, and they get you into the sport. (Those camps) were a great way to meet people, have fun, get a good workout in, and stay fit," he said. "I want to say, part of the things that keep you in the sport are those Road to Gold camps I did when I was younger."

In May, Church participated in the 2022 Canadian National Wrestling Trials in Edmonton and competed in the Junior Freestyle 79 kg category. Church admitted he had no idea what to expect.

"I had only been to one national (tournament) before because of injuries and COVID, and that was when I was 13. So, anyone who knows me knows that my goal for the longest time was to win a national

championship, but I've been kept out," the wrestler said. "I had no idea what the competition was like and how I'd stack up against other kids in Canada."

Church flew to Edmonton a few days before the event to fit in some practice and acclimate to the time change. He said the most nerve-wracking part of his experience was the weigh-in process.

"Every wrestler competing was cramped in one little basement of this hotel and are half-naked in our singlets, dehydrated and hungry. Everyone was dead-faced, looking to weigh in, get out of there, and eat as soon as possible," he said. "I made weight, so it was no big deal. I didn't have to cut any weight at all. So it was a breeze."

After weigh-ins, Church was eager to compete in the tournament but had one last priority before starting - seeing his family.

"My dad, my little brother, and my grandma were there, so that was a big moment, being able to see them for the first time in months," he said. "I moved away to Montreal, so now I never get to see them. It was important for me to have my dad

there, my little brother, and my grandma too. It was a big deal for me."

The 2022 Canadian National Wrestling Trials were Church's first time competing in the Junior category, and he knew he would be wrestling older, bigger kids.

"The wrestling itself was honestly a breeze. I 10-pointed everyone 10-0, so it went smoothly, exactly according to the game plan, and (the wrestling) couldn't have gone better," said Church.

"In wrestling, the rule is: if there's a 10-point spread, the match is over. So, if it's 10-0, 12-2, or 14-4, the match is over. You win by technical superiority."

After breezing through the round-robin, Church faced Jai Sodhi of GTA Alliance Wrestling Club for the gold medal.

"My match only lasted one minute. It was one take-down. I turned (my opponent), and it was over," he said. "Then, I got up, and it was crazy. I didn't even realize what had just happened. I was like, 'wow, I just won!'"



Church stands on the podium with his medal at the 2022 Canadian Wrestling Trials in Edmonton.



## The Métis Trailblazer

Church remembers the referee raising his hand in victory, then going over to his coach, Dave Zilberman, who gave him a big hug, and Victor Zilberman, his other coach, offered words of encouragement.

"(He told me), 'You work(ed) hard for this all year, and this is what happens when athletes work hard. You really deserve this,'" Church recalled.

"(When I looked up), it (was) all my teammates, my dad, my grandma, my little brother, and all my friends. Everyone was there, and they were screaming, cheering me on. It was a crazy moment that I think I'll cherish for the rest of my life."

With nationals in the rear-view mirror, Church now shifts his focus to the U20 Pan American Championship, which includes wrestlers from the United States, Brazil, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and many other countries competing for the gold. He's been training hard for this moment and admitted it took a while for his new reality to set in.

"After I got home for three, four days, that switch in my head just turned. Now, it's like I'm not going to be happy if I do anything besides go and win that tournament," he exclaimed.

"I've doubled down on training, and everything is going good. It's just that competitive edge of me. I need to go and win that tournament."

While not training for wrestling with the Montreal Wrestling Club, Church studies business management at Concordia University. He is also a part of the Concordia Stingers wrestling team.

Not only will the Red River Métis wrestler look to medal at the U20 Pan American Championships, he will also be vying for a spot at the U20 World Championships this August in Sofia, Bulgaria.

All in all, Church has one focus for this upcoming tournament.

"If I win that gold medal, I'd love to run around the wrestling mat with the massive Métis flag on my shoulders," said Church. "That's a dream of mine, and I feel like it's going to come true in July, coming up in Mexico."



*Connor Church poses for Wrestling Canada*

# Red River Métis Athletes Shine with Manitoba Selects at American Football Tournament

By Brett Carter



*Grayson, Gabryal, and Zayden Ross proudly hold up their team's flag after a hard-fought victory on the gridiron*

The frigid February weather in Manitoba is a long way from the heat of a Texas football stadium. Still, a group of young Red River Métis athletes didn't let the local heat distract them from their goal of becoming gridiron stars.

Manitoba Selects Football Club players made an impressive mark at the international football tournament held in the United States earlier this year.

Texas-bound Red River Métis athletes Zayden Ross, Graycen Ross, Gabryal Ross, and Brady Smith not only represented their home teams, but also the Red River Métis Nation with honour and pride. The Manitoba Selects Varsity club kicked off with a win in St. Cloud on Feb 22. They later produced satisfactory results on the 25th and 26th, securing consequential wins in San Antonio before recording a loss on the 27th.

Despite the score of the Selects' final game of the tournament, the grit and resilience of the Red River Métis Youth players remained firm.

Zayden Ross, a cornerback known for his swift feet and solid tackles, is recognized as one of the brightest prospects from Manitoba, Graycen and Gabryal Ross, both linebackers, also garnered attention for their athleticism and ability to perform under pressure, with Gabryal now in his first season with the University of Manitoba Bison.

With support from the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) – Youth Programming Department, the trio contributed significantly to the Selects' games on the international stage.

Another Red River Métis Selects player, defensive



## The Métis Trailblazer

back Brady Smith, shared his excitement for having represented the Red River Métis Nation in this overall successful team effort in the United States.

Smith said, "It was such an honour to represent the Manitoba Selects and the Red River Métis Nation in the United States. We left everything on the field and played our best. Competing isn't just about winning, but knowing that you didn't quit and gave it your all."

While football reigns supreme in Texas, this competition was more than just about the love for the game. It was about challenging these Red River Métis athletes to reach their full potential, to pit themselves against the best, and to represent their Nation on an international stage.

MMF Minister of Sports & Youth Richard Genaille expressed his admiration for the young players.

"The MMF is proud to have these guys representing the Red River Métis Nation on the football field. This is great exposure for them and the community to see what our Youth are capable of, and we hope these young athletes had a great experience."

Through the Believe - Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program delivered by MMF's Métis Employment & Training (MET) - Youth Programming Departments, participated in the program to support these young competitive athletes.

The Ross brothers are grateful for the contributions MMF-MET - Youth Programming towards their success. "This truly was a special experience. Thanks to the Believe program, attending the tournament was possible.



Brady Smith getting ready for the big game with intense focus and determination.



Gabryal Ross greeting a fan after a stellar performance on the field.



***“It was such an honour to represent the Manitoba Selects and the Red River Métis Nation in the United States. We left everything on the field and played our best. Competing isn’t just about winning, but knowing that you didn't quit and gave it your all.”***

We could put all our focus on the game, and having the opportunity to compete internationally was a great opportunity,” said Gabryal.

The Believe – Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program provides opportunities for Red River Métis Youth to access valuable resources that will contribute to their success while also removing barriers to engage in extracurricular activities.

The MET - Youth Programming Department also aims to create an environment that instills the importance of teamwork, leadership skills, and cultural awareness that will benefit participants for years to come.

Minister Genaille reiterated, “Creating opportunities for our Red River Métis youth is important, and bridging the gap between youth and parents is a key to success. Because of the MMF, we can keep making opportunities like this happen and make a real difference in the lives of our best up-and-coming athletes.”

While youth sport continues to thrive and grow in Red River Métis communities across Manitoba, the opportunities for success are endless because of MMF-MET – Youth Programming investing in our future leaders and communities.



University of Manitoba Bisons teammates Gabryal Ross (L) and Jerome Fouillard (R).

***To learn more about the Believe – Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program or other Youth Programming opportunities, please visit [mmfyouth.ca](http://mmfyouth.ca)***

# The Heart of the North

## Celebrating Red River Métis Heritage Through Opera

By Brett Carter

**Red River Métis opera singer, Camryn Dewar, is disrupting the norms of classical music, preparing to shine in *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* at the Manitoba Opera.**

The rippling notes of a practiced soprano emerge from the Centennial Concert Hall. They belong to Camryn Dewar, a rising opera star disrupting the norm with her Scottish/Scandinavian and Red River Métis roots.

Dewar, 22, originally from Stony Mountain, Man., brings a potent cultural blend to opera, traditionally known for its European popularity. Growing up, she said, her entire family was musical. Her father played bagpipes and her grandmother taught her folk songs on the piano, inspiring her love of music.

Dewar later received her undergraduate degree in music from the University of Manitoba and her journey continues as she undertakes her master's degree in music, focusing on vocal performance, at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Her initial plunge into opera was at age 13 with the children's chorus at the Manitoba Opera.



***Li Keur: Riel's Heart of The North* can be seen at the Manitoba Opera on November 18, 22, and 24, 2023.**

Dewar reminisces, "I remember standing on the concert hall stage, singing, and looking at the thousands of people in the audience and thinking "this is what I want to do."

Upon realizing her passion as an opera singer, Dewar honed her craft at the Royal Conservatory of Music, sharpening her sharpening her musical skills in voice, piano, guitar, and saxophone

Then, through the *Believe - Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program* delivered by the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) - Youth Programming Department, Dewar trained at

the heart of the art form, Tuscany, Italy, which she credits for deepening her understanding of both the Italian culture and her Red River Métis heritage.

"The connection of people to their music in Italian culture reminds me of the culture of Red River Métis people," shares Dewar. "For us, it's not just singing or playing an instrument, but also about honouring the historical and cultural significance of music."

Dewar postponed her master's degree for a year to serve as the understudy for the lead female role of Josette LaGrande in this opera about Red River Métis

## Métis Employment & Training



leader Louis Riel, and particularly the female influence that helped shape his movement.

Now back in Canada, Dewar is preparing for an upcoming opera that has already stolen her heart — *Li Keur: Riel's Heart of the North* — which can be seen at the Manitoba Opera, November 18, 22, and 24, 2023.

*Li Keur*, among the first Red River Métis operas to be featured on a main stage in Canada, is an amalgamation of history, mysticism, and a host of themes critical to the heritage of the Red River Métis.

Marking Dewar's first time performing in a role that shines a spotlight on her Red River Métis heritage, she shares, the experience itself has been an awakening to a legacy more complex than she had ever imagined.

"Li Keur is breaking traditional norms. It's creating space for Indigenous people to talk about our culture while singing in an art form that is new to many people," says Dewar.

"One of the most exciting things about this production to me is hearing the female voice and the female perspective," she explains.

Dewar's diverse heritage and passionate artistry infuse her music with an exceptional resonance, proving that the future of opera can be as harmonically rich and diverse as its complex past.

"It's going to be such a ground-breaking step for Manitoba Opera, Canadian Opera, the Red River Métis, and telling the stories of our ancestors in a way they've never been heard before," predicts Dewar.

Dewar's soprano voice, coupled with her dedication to her craft, serves as a poignant reminder that opera can and should embrace diversity and inclusivity. Her voice, enriched by her experiences and Red River Métis heritage, offers a refreshing perspective and narrative, paving the way for a more diverse and representative future of opera as she charts her path in the music industry.

As Dewar continues to make her mark on the operatic world, it's evident that the future of opera is in good hands, a bright and vibrant future that celebrates and embraces her Red River Métis culture and influence.





# From Stopping Pucks to Coaching Future Stars

By Brett Carter

## Red River Métis Goalie, Colton Phillips, Balances Sports Leadership and Cultural Pride

In a world where sports often determine not only glory but also the path to the future, there stand warriors like hockey goalie, Colton Phillips, 19, from the small town of Killarney, Man., who, through sheer grit, determination, and hard work, is carving out astonishing success while firmly rooted in his Red River Métis heritage.

Phillips embarked on his dynamic journey at the tender age of five. His passion for hockey began in his hometown of Killarney, playing minor hockey before making it to the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League (MMJHL). Blessed with an exceptional talent, Phillips juggled between school and a hardened regimen at the International Hockey Academy in Calgary, Alta.

"It's tough. You're on the road all the time playing hockey and then you're balancing school at the same time," shares Phillips. Yet, his perseverance shone through every obstacle along his path, "I just looked back and remembered how I got here."



Phillips's impressive early career took him from Seven Oaks Raiders in the MMJHL, where he hoped to remain, until an injury forced him to an early retirement; his steadfast focus fixed on his goal since childhood was to play junior hockey.

His gritty determination extends far beyond the time he spent on the ice. "I've been taking things day by day," Phillips muses. His method is a mantra of self-improvement: "What can I do better today?"

Back home in Killarney, Phillips immediately took on the role

of goaltending coach for the Killarney Wawanesa Raiders. Adding another feather to his cap, he also served as an assistant coach for the HO Youth Department's Youth Hockey Mentorship Camp in July, which was a resounding success

And where was this at? His home rink, Seven Oaks – the very place where Phillips then played, giving the young players a role model to learn from and look up to.

For those youngsters looking to follow in his skate tracks, he



advises them, "Don't give up. You earn what you work for. Set your eyes on it, and with dedication, hard work, and resilience, it'll come to you."

And in every stride, Phillips flaunts his Red River Métis roots. "The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) has been a huge helping hand with my progress in hockey. I am proud every day to be a Red River Métis hockey player and I wear the Métis infinity symbol on the back of my helmet with pride as a testament to my heritage."

Here's to Colton Phillips, who tethers the threads of sports, ambition, and cultural pride meticulously, demonstrating that an individual can scale the heights of the sports world while staying true to their Red River Métis roots.

***"I am proud every day to be a Red River Métis hockey player and I wear the Métis infinity symbol on the back of my helmet with pride as a testament to my heritage."***



# Athlete, Student, Teacher

## Red River Métis Heritage Fuels the Success of Athlete and Budding Educator Josée Roy

By Brett Carter

**Red River Métis athlete and aspiring teacher, Josée Roy, perseveres with passion fueled by pride of her heritage, leading to success - on and off the ice.**

Josée Roy's tale is a testament to determination, perseverance, and heritage. This young Red River Métis woman, with roots traced back to St-Malo's Desrosiers family, has demonstrated excellence and cultural pride not just through her academics and athletics but also with the quiet strength of tenacity.

A gifted athlete, a budding educator, her journey is a testament to her Red River Métis heritage that she carries with pride. "I'm proud to be of Red River Métis ancestry... My grandfather had a big great family in St-Malo where we as kids grew up and got to spend time with my Métis ancestry," said Roy.

Indeed, Roy has excelled in academic and athletic pursuits, succeeding in both, but it is her journey as a ringette player that forms a major part of her story.



For eight years, Roy has been a competitive ringette athlete with impressive accolades, including being a bronze medalist at the National Championships in Winnipeg in 2018 and at the Canada Winter Games in 2019.

Proudly, Roy recounts beginning to play at the age of six, with her father introducing the game to the Ste-Agathe community, and her delight in earning titles as Eastman Ringette League Champions and Winnipeg Ringette League Champions several times.

Despite a temporary setback when she was cut from her first year of AA ringette, her resilient spirit enabled her to channel that experience into energy to hone her skills further.

Josée explains, "What is unique about my journey from ringette is that I was cut by my own father who had helped with the Eastman Flames for a couple of years now.

As most athletes would do after failing a tryout, they would quit. On the other hand, I was one of



those players who decided to strive to work even harder on my ringette skills"

Triumphantly, she retried for AA and has been on the AA Eastman Flame team since 2014, leading the team as captain twice. This journey culminated in her making the U20 Team Manitoba and securing a bronze medal at the Canada Winter games in 2019 and an invitation for Team Canada trials. Her tale of perseverance holds an essential takeaway: that success is not in never failing, but in rising every time we do.

Parallel to her sports career, Josée is equally passionate about her academic journey. Interested in the human body and sports, she took courses at the University of Manitoba in Kinesiology. Subsequently, she continued her studies at the Université de Saint-Boniface, finishing her Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in history, and minoring in religion.

Her academic accomplishments resonated with her sports mantra, echoing her grit and resilience. Despite facing hurdles like the COVID-19 pandemic and juggling athletic commitments alongside school, Josée powered through. She attributes her success to her work ethic, an attribute fueled by her fierce determination.

The support provided by the Manitoba Metis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department,



Josée Roy (L) showing her skills on the ringette rink with the Manitoba Herd vs Calgary Rath on March 11, 2023

(Photo Credit: Darryl Gershman)

played an instrumental role in her journey, freeing her studying capacity from financial burdens and allowing her to excel in her academics.

Her words of appreciation for MMF and MET reflected gratitude and a mutual consciousness of the importance of her Red River Métis heritage.

"MET and MMF assisted me throughout this school year immensely. Without their support, it would have been a lot more challenging to balance my finances and still achieve good grades," said Josée as she paid her heartfelt gratitude to the MMF. "I am forever thankful for the support that I received from the MMF and MET."

With her experiences and achievements, Roy is stepping into another journey – teaching.

Now in the Faculty of Education at Université de Saint-Boniface, she is well on her way to becoming a primary school teacher.

Through times of trial and triumph, this budding teacher has harnessed her Red River Métis heritage and strength of

**"I am forever thankful for the support that I received from the Manitoba Métis Federation."**

purpose to dream big and actively pursue success in academics and athletics. Her story is a beacon of hope for future generations of Red River Métis, encouraging dreamers to fuel their ambitions with pride of their Red River Métis roots.

# Empowering Red River Métis Communities

## The Impact of the ISET Program

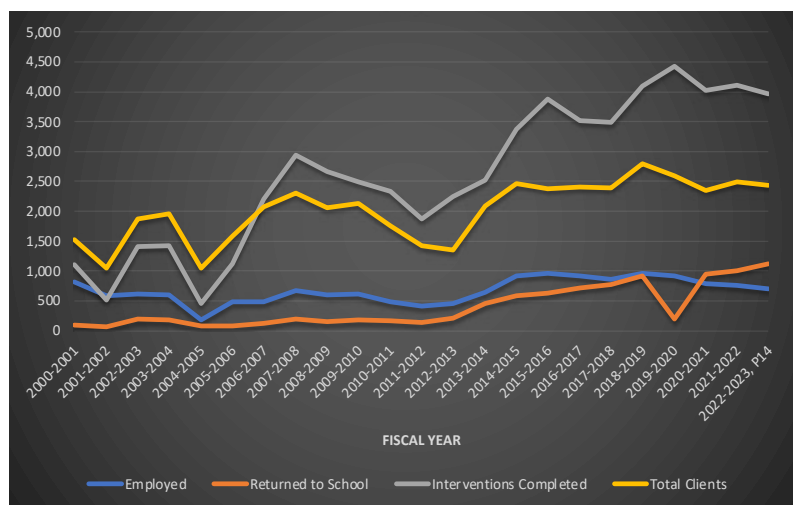
**Métis Employment & Training (MET) empowers Citizens to strive for and achieve their full potential.**

It has been a resounding year for the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department at the Manitoba Métis Federation. The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Agreement with Canada, splitting the strings of progress, continues to reverberate positively in the lives of Red River Métis communities in Manitoba, and across Canada.

The ISET program's ten-year labour market approach, signed in 2019, has been critical in accelerating work prospects for indigenous communities by improving skills and facilitating strategies that align with labor market demands.

In 2023, over 2,000 clients were served, leading to more than 800 individuals attaining meaningful employment and over 900 being supported in funded programs.

MMF MET HISTORICAL ESDC RESULTS FROM 2000-2023



These achievements were made possible through the collaboration of the MMF and Government of Canada. The Federation has long focused on developing partnerships, not just with the Canadian government but also with a diverse pool of private industries, non-profit and community organizations, and educational institutions.

Capitalizing on the success of the Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training Strategy, the ISET Program further bolsters efforts to propel the country's Indigenous population into the country's overall economic land-

-scape. The revised strategy warrants increased funding flexibility and respects the cultural nuances of Canada's Indigenous communities.

ISET and prior labour market strategies have allowed the MMF, through the MET Department, to provide employment and training programs and services for over 25 years.

MET programs have assisted thousands of Red River Métis Citizens to gain the skills, training, and education needed to successfully compete in Manitoba's and Canada's labour

market by obtaining sustainable and meaningful employment.

The ISET Program builds on what was successful about ASETS and reflects what was heard from Indigenous partners to include:

- a co-developed program with Indigenous partners;
- increased funding;
- greater flexibility for organizations to design programming to meet the needs of their people and communities; and
- a new distinctions-based strategy that recognizes, respects and reflects Canada's Indigenous peoples.

"The Métis Employment & Training (MET) program has, once again, exceeded its annual results targets," said Minister of MET, John Fleury, at the annual general assembly. "Thanks to the ISET agreement, our MET Department has continued its proven track of delivering robust employment services for over 25 years now."

Associate Minister of MET, Joan Ledoux, added, "Our partnership with Canada has enabled us to deliver specially crafted Métis Employment & Training programs that not only empower our people but also genially aligns with Manitoba's and Canada's broader labor market dynamics."

The ISET program faithfully extends services like job search assistance, career counselling, financial assistance for skills

development training, project-based training programs, and recruitment services.

The MET Department's diverse strategy to meet employment needs has already affected positively on over 1,000 unique clients engaged in sponsored/funded interventions. The program also caters to multiple-year sponsorship and wrap-around services, serving additional clients with supportive services.

"Fostering these partnerships and sustained investments in the future of our Red River Métis Citizens will always be our focus," said Minister Fleury.

"Through the continued collaboration and our dedication to improving the ISET program, we look forward to scaling to even greater heights in the years to come," he said.

This sense of optimism is shared by many within the Red River Métis community, committed to finding employment and contributing to society.

The triumphs of the ISET initiatives signal towards a future where all Citizens have access to the ladder of success.

**Métis Employment & Training continues to surpass our annual Results Targets. Our 2022-2023 results were:**

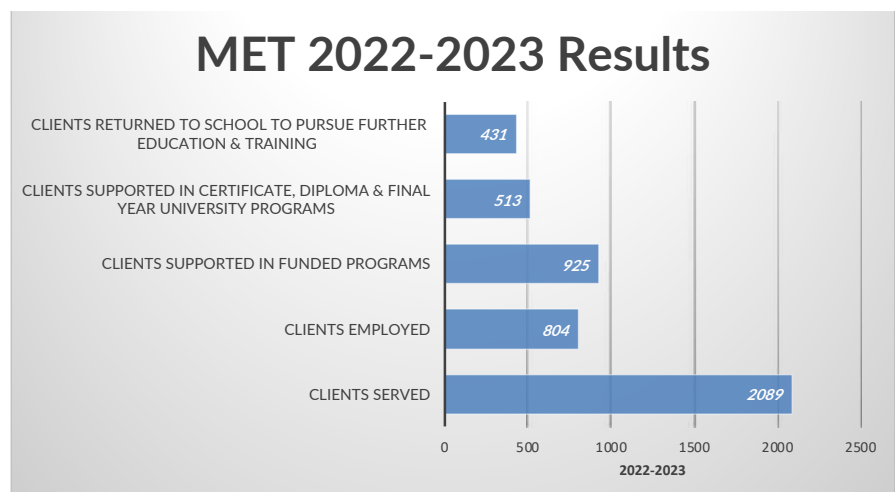
**2,089** Clients Served

**804** Clients Employed

**925** Clients Supported in Funded Programs

**513** Clients supported in Certificate, Diploma & Final Year University Programs

**431** Clients Returned to School to pursue further education & training





# Red River Métis Youth Believe

## Through Artistic & Athletic Programming



Minister of Sports & Youth, Richard Genaille, proudly representing the Red River Métis at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Halifax, N.S.

Offering an extensive variety of culturally rich and sports-driven programs, Métis Employment & Training (MET) – Youth Programming fosters ample opportunities that help young people of the Red River Métis community soar. The organization underlined its central role in cultural exploration, capacity building, and development of youth attributes in its annual report for 2022-2023.

MET – Youth Programming, part of Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), has crafted numerous initiatives with funding from Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) and Indigenous Skills Employment Training (ISET). These initiatives bolster avenues for Red River Métis youth, amplifying strengths and sparking meaningful economic and social transformation.

### Métis Employment & Training (MET) - Youth Programming offers culturally-rich programs for youth, promoting growth and strengthening the future of the Red River Métis Nation.

A strong emphasis on cultural learning forms the core of the department's approach. Workshop examples include fiddle lessons, jigging, beading circles, and moccasin making – each twining together time-honoured Red River Métis traditions with contemporary skills and interests.

A new program dubbed 'Land Based Learning' solidifies a profound connection with the earth, an integral aspect of Red River Métis culture.

MET's Sport Camps, including Hockey camps, weave in the spirit of positive sportsmanship, teamwork, and individual skill development. These camps give Red River Métis Youth an inclusive platform to recognize their potential and continue their athletic journey.

The Individual Youth Support Program, which provides, annual reimbursements for Red River Métis Youth



participating in sports, cultural, and recreational activities, saw a marked rise in applications. In the previous year, 1,433 young people were supported through the program.

In addition to these, MMF's ambitious 'Believe – Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program' supports gifted athletes and artists. The ambitiousness of this initiative is evident in how it encourages Red River Métis Youth to create a strong foundation and strive towards their goals.

Ste. Madeleine Days gathering featured a youth campsite, where young attendees not only enjoyed camping but also took charge of serving meals to elders, reinforcing the valuable connections between youth and elders.

MET - Youth Programming also organized a Youth and Elders Gathering that aimed at bridging the generational gap, increasing awareness, and keeping elders prominent within the community

Four culturally significant workshops were held, including beading and sewing, canning, harvesting, and a Medicine Walk, offering youth an enriched look at their traditions. Additionally, a 'Youth Consultation' brought together young Red River Métis from all over Manitoba, creating a space for open dialogue about the effectiveness of various programming initiatives and their personal growth.



■ A moment of unity and pride: Minister Genaille marching with Team Manitoba at the NAIG 2023 Opening Ceremony parade.

With its diverse programs and initiatives, MET-Youth Programming continues to shine a spotlight on the profound impacts of community-driven, culture-rich learning and development for the Red River Métis Youth.

*For more information about these programs, contact us at [youth.coordinator@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:youth.coordinator@mmf.mb.ca)*

# Contact Us

## Métis Employment & Training (MET)

### **MET Administrative Office**

1st Floor – 150 Henry, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7

Phone: 204-586-8474 ext. 2731

Fax: 204-947-3251

TOLL FREE: 1-800-665-8474

Email: METadmin@mmf.mb.ca

### **Interlake MET**

28 St. Laurent Drive, P.O. Box 160, St. Laurent, MB R0C 2S0

Phone: (204) 646-4091 Fax: (204) 646-4171 Toll Free: 1-866-317-3347

Email: INTMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **MET Recruitment**

1st Floor – 150 Henry, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7

Phone: 204-586-8474 ext. 2731 Fax: 204-947-3251 TOLL FREE: 1-800-665-8474

Email: METR@mmf.mb.ca

### **Northwest MET**

40-1st Avenue NW, Dauphin, MB R7N 1G7

Phone: (204) 638-9485 Fax: (204) 638-3878 Toll Free: 1-877-542-4925

Email: NWMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **Southeast MET**

56 Parkview Avenue, P.O. Box 13, Grand Marais, MB R0E 0T0

Phone: (204) 754-3112 Fax: (204) 754-2687 Toll Free: 1-888-304-2383

Email: SEMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **Southwest MET**

656 – 6th Street, Brandon, MB R7A 3P1

Phone: (204) 725-7525 Fax: (204) 725-7528 Toll Free: 1-888-627-9663

Email: SWMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **The Pas MET**

456 Fisher Avenue, P.O. Box 2878, The Pas, MB R9A 1M2

Phone: (204) 623-5701 Fax: (204) 623-2825

Email: PASMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **Thompson MET**

171 Cree Road, Thompson, MB R8N 0C2

Phone: (204) 677-1430 Fax: (204) 677-2240

Email: THOMET@mmf.mb.ca

### **Winnipeg MET**

Unit 10 – Main Floor, 150 Henry Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7

Phone: (204) 589-4327 Fax: (204) 582-0031

Email: WPGMET@mmf.mb.ca



# Contact Us

## Métis Employment & Training (MET) - Youth Programming

### **Youth Home Office**

1st Floor – 150 Henry, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7  
Phone: 204-586-8474  
Email: youth.coordinator@mmf.mb.ca

### **Winnipeg Métis Association Inc.**

406 McGregor, Winnipeg, MB R2W 4X5  
Phone: 204-586-5716  
Email: wpgmmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **Interlake Métis Association Inc.**

Lot 28 St. Laurent Drive  
P.O. Box 390  
St. Laurent, MB R0C 2S0  
Phone: 204-646-2706 Fax: 204-646-4171  
Email: intmmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **Northwest Métis Council Inc.**

40 - 1st Avenue NW Dauphin, MB R7N 1G7  
Phone: 204-638-9485 Fax: 204-638-3878  
Email: nwmmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **Southeast Regional Métis Corp.**

P.O. Box 13 55 Parkview Avenue  
Grand Marais, MB R0E 0T0  
Phone: 204-754-2721 Fax: 204-754-2687  
Email: semmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **Southwest Regional Office Inc.**

656-6th Street Brandon, MB R7A 3P1  
Phone: 204-725-7520 Fax: 204-728-9085  
Email: swmmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **The Pas Region Inc.**

P.O. Box 2467 456  
Fischer Avenue The Pas, MB R9A 1M2  
Phone: 204-623-5701 Fax: 204-623-2825  
Email: tpmmfyouth@mmf.mb.ca

### **Thompson Regional Office**

171 Cree Road Thompson, MB R8N 1P1  
Phone: 204-677-1430 Fax: 204-677-2240  
Email: thommfyouth@mmf.mb.ca



# Métis Employment & Training



# Métis Sports & Youth

Published October, 2023