



Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's well known in our community that I was raised by a mother who taught me about the importance of an education, and insisted that all her children apply ourselves to our studies, and move on to good paying jobs in various fields of expertise. She was also a woman who never went to school a day in her life, spoke only *Saulteaux*, and who washed clothing and grew vegetables to keep us all fed. While she didn't have an education, she had wisdom, strength, and intelligence. She made sure I understood, along with my brothers and sisters, that an education is precious. It is yours, and once you have it, no one can ever take it away from you.

We can also never forget that it was not too long ago that our people regularly received poor treatment in schools. Called names, discriminated against for our skin colour, and beaten for speaking Indigenous languages, including *Michif*, many left school at very young ages to escape the hate and cruelty they faced at the hands of other classmates, teachers, and even school administrators. Because of this, many members could only find jobs in the unskilled labour market. The resulting poverty and marginalization experienced by these individuals was a direct result of their negative experiences in the school system.

The lessons our Elders and seniors have given us about education have ensured that supporting you as you obtain higher education or expand your skill

sets through training has remained a key focus of mine throughout my time as your President, just as it is a key focus of your Red River Métis Government.

While we know there are still pockets of racism and intolerance in our school systems, things have gotten better as our Nation has grown stronger. Today, we are better educated than we ever were in the past. We are stronger and more united, and better able to defend ourselves in any forum or fight, against any foe, regardless of their education level. The investments we have made in the future of our Nation are paying off. More and more of our Youth are graduating from high schools and post-secondary institutions across the country and even internationally. It touches my heart to see so many bring their education back to our Red River Métis Government, and lend their newly gained knowledge to the work of advancing our Nation.

Each student gets up to \$5,000 for each year of their education, so we need to make sure that those who are taking four-year degrees can access the same amount of funding each year of their post-secondary education. Since the inception of our education support program in 2019, we have funded nearly 5,000 students with a total investment of over \$21 million.

In last year's school year 2023-2024, a total of 1,646 students were funded for their schooling, which is a 37% increase from the year before, an investment that totals over \$6.5 million. We expect to outpace that number each year, as interest in post-secondary education and demand for support grows. This spring and summer session we are on track to fund 250 students at nearly \$800,000. We expect this will put us on pace to support 1,900 students in total this year, which is an investment of approximately \$8 million.

This funding is part of a total MMF commitment to invest \$90 million in the education of our Citizens over 10 years. I thank Minister Joan Ledoux and Associate Minister David Beaudin for their work in provincial education.

Our Regions also play a role in celebrating and honouring the accomplishments of our graduates at this time of year. Whether you're graduating from high school or a post-secondary education program, your Region wants to celebrate you. For example, the Interlake Region has honoured 76 Red River Métis high school graduates, along with their post-secondary graduates. The Winnipeg Region celebrated a whopping 236 post-secondary

graduates this year. The Northwest has celebrated 41 post-secondary graduates and 61 high school graduates. Further north, the numbers of graduates may be smaller – 19 high school graduates and 12 post-secondary graduates in The Pas, for example – but they instill as much pride in me and my Cabinet as the Youth in the south.

We must also thank the parents and grandparents in our Nation, who have long advocated for the right school programs and the right tools to be put in place to support our children, to help them receive their education. I know how proud these parents and grandparents are when their children succeed in school, and how the community rallies around and celebrates the successes of graduates from the towns and villages our Citizens call home. Even if it's a kindergarten graduation, the joy of these families watching their children advance themselves academically is something special. No matter what level of graduation our children experience, I know our community is out there to celebrate as our children move on to the next level of schooling. Community halls, school gyms, and churches in towns and villages have hosted so many of our families in recent weeks as we mark these occasions, and I join all the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in being proud of each and every one of our children.

Your Red River Métis Government honours all our Youth in their educational achievements, including our kids in care. The Agencies and Authority also mark important milestones, including graduations, through annual coming of age ceremonies, where the community comes together to recognize the kids and affirm our ties with them as they move into their adult lives and careers.

Seeing so many of our Youth graduate has been a long-cherished dream for so many in our Nation, including me, your Red River Métis Cabinet, Elders, seniors, parents, and past leaders. Our Nation has made so many advancements that the future is bright for us all. I hope our Youth feel this simple truth in your hearts and souls: these advancements are for you. The investments we've made are for you. The future of our Nation is yours. This is the gift our Ancestors wanted for the Youth of our Nation, all those years ago when they fought against Canada to secure prosperity in the creation of Manitoba. It is also your responsibility to honour the sacrifices of our Ancestors, ensuring that you build on the legacy prepared for you, so that our Nation, like our flag, is infinite, always supported by the deeds of our Ancestors, and brought into the future by our Youth.



In honour of our Ancestors, I encourage our Youth to pursue your dreams, receive an education, and achieve excellence. And, above all, be proud to be Red River Métis, just as I can assure you that your Nation is proud of you.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. O.M. ∞

RED RIVER MÉTIS ATHLETE REFLECTS ON MULTIPLE MUAY THAI CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

Red River Métis Citizen Ashley Viner is poised to continue making a name for herself in Muay Thai.

The athlete is a North American world champion, international world champion, has fought and trained in Thailand, and is a two-time Thai Boxing Association world champion. Viner started training eight years ago after having her first child and wanting to get in shape.

"I trained for a year and a half. Another girl in our gym was supposed to fight," she said. "She ended up not fighting, and then I took her spot."

The Red River Métis athlete won her first match, driving her passion for the sport, also known as "Thai boxing," which originated in Thailand.

"It's originally called Muay Boran, which is the traditional martial art. It's the art of eight limbs, which means it uses hands, feet, knees, elbows, and there's clinch work involved in there," she said. "There's no grappling or groundwork, so it's a complete stand-up, combat sport."

Viner, who has been competing for six years, puts in hours each day to train for Muay Thai when a fight is approaching. She said training is very gruelling, which requires a lot of discipline.

"I train at least three to four hours a day. I'm off at 5 a.m. I'm running five to 10 kilometres every morning," she said. "I still work a job, so I come home to get my kids ready for school. I get my weights in over my lunch hour and then go back to work. I train for another probably two hours in the evening, and that goes for six to 10 weeks, depending on how long you know beforehand that you're going to fight."

The Red River Métis Citizen prepares for each fight with the same intensity, but recognizes the pressure when a belt is on the line.

"You push yourself harder because there's a bigger stake on the line. Even though I take every fight the same way mentally, I find when there is a title on the line, you're a little more anxious," she said.

Being able to achieve these titles in a short period



Red River Métis Citizen Ashley Viner has been competing in Muay Thai events around the world for six years.

of time has proven gratifying for Viner. She is impressed by her longevity in the sport and is always looking for what is next.

"I never really intended that I was going to become a world champion when I started doing Muay Thai. It wasn't something on my radar until I realized, 'hey, I'm pretty good at it,'" she said. "It kind of runs in my blood. I have people in my family that are world champions. I have my cousin on my father's side who was a world champion boxer I recently found out about."

Last year the athlete took her passion for Muay Thai to the next level when she and her husband opened their own boxing gym, Gorilla Muay Thai, located at 873 Notre Dame Avenue in Winnipeg.

"It wasn't something I intended to do. It was a dream of mine that I've had. Life turned out that way, and it fell into my lap, and now it's something I can see

growing," she said. "My main target is working with the inner-city youth. That's why I decided to put my gym where it was."

Viner shares a profound connection to the area, having been raised in part in Winnipeg's inner city.

"It's hard to walk away and turn a blind eye," she said. "This is the community that I grew up in. It wasn't that safe then, and it's getting worse. We need to go back into these communities, look at the youth, and see what we can do."

As Viner's gym expands, she hopes the sport, currently not sanctioned in Manitoba, will finally receive provincial recognition.

"Kickboxing was recently sanctioned, so that would be great for Muay Thai to be recognized and sanctioned," she said. "Hopefully, we will be next."



Viner is a North American world champion, international world champion, and a two-time Thai Boxing Association world champion.




DISCOUNT SEA BEARS TICKETS FOR MMF CITIZENS!





It'll be great to see that coming forward in Manitoba and to be a part of that, especially with having the gym open now."

The athlete encourages Citizens to get involved in the sport, even if it's just to get some movement into their day-to-day lives. She said the best way to start is to just do it.

"The confidence and the self-discipline that it gives you is amazing. Not only what it does for you physically, but what it does for you mentally. As an Indigenous female, I feel more confident in myself, and I feel that I can protect myself if I have to," she said.

Viner is proud to represent her culture both within her community and while she is competing abroad.

"To be able to say, 'hey, we're always fighting to be heard, we're fighting to be seen, let me fight to get my point across.' Anytime I'm entering the ring or showing up for a fight, I'm always trying to represent my culture," she said. "I'm always trying to implement that into my fighting, whether it's here, in Thailand, or in the United States. I'm always trying to represent home."



RED RIVER MÉTIS YOUTH CELEBRATE NIPD WITH THE WINNIPEG SEA BEARS



Red River Métis Youth had the chance to join the MMF's Youth Department and the Winnipeg Sea Bears for a special celebration game in honour of National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 19. The fun didn't stop there – the next day our Youth were invited back for a basketball clinic hosted at Canada Life Centre, where they were able to learn basketball fundamentals, skills, and drills from an elite coaching team!

MMF CELEBRATES NIPD WITH CN RAIL



On June 20, the MMF was thrilled to join CN Rail in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day! The railway company graciously invited us to share our vibrant Red River Métis culture and heritage at their CN campus. The following day, CN Rail joined us in our NIPD celebrations at Selkirk Park, where they presented us with a cheque for \$10,000. The donation will go towards the continued development of Michif Manor.

Authorized by the Court of King's Bench of Manitoba

Digital Notice

Were you in the care of Métis Child, Family and Community Services Agency Inc. and/or Michif Child & Family Services Inc. between 2005 to 2019?

You may be a member of a class proceeding and entitled to compensation.

Visit <http://metisclassaction.ca> to learn more.

GET MORE INFORMATION:

Call Toll Free: 1-877-835-4546 or visit <http://metisclassaction.ca>





STE. MADELEINE MÉTIS DAYS
JULY 19 - 21, 2024

JOIN US AT
STE. MADELEINE MÉTIS DAYS
JULY 19 - 21, 2024

Featuring acts from:
Gary Lepine Band,
The Dutiaume Band,
Michael Audette Band,
& MORE

Visit mmf.mb.ca for more information

Le Métis
∞ EST. 1871 ∞

SCAN HERE
to view our Le Métis digital edition.

YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS
GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.

To JOIN our Le Métis email list,
email communications@mmf.mb.ca.