



# Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was in the Northwest Region last weekend, both to attend the Northwest Regional Meeting and to participate in the Grand Opening of the Dauphin MEDOCare Pharmacy, our second pharmacy location, but definitely not the last. We look forward to welcoming all residents of the Parkland Region, our First Nations friends and relatives, and of course, our Red River Métis Citizens to our pharmacy and our hospitality.

This pharmacy represents our growth, and our ability to invest in our Citizens, through programs and services made possible by the earnings of our pharmacy. It's in the community and for the community. Our Elders and seniors asked for a pharmacy located in Dauphin, and we've delivered. As always, it is their wisdom, knowledge, and needs that guide our decisions.

More pharmacy news will be coming in the next few months, and I encourage everyone to come to meet the team and learn more about our MEDOCare Pharmacy.

I can share that it took time to find the right pharmacy team, which serves to highlight the importance of education, as a plan for the future economic well-being for our families. Your Red River Métis Government provides support for education for this reason.

### Supports for students

I cannot say enough to emphasize the importance of education. It not only allows our Citizens to gain well-paid employment, it creates economic benefits and gains for their families, and the cities, towns, and villages they call home.

An education is something that, once you have it, cannot be taken away from you – it is yours for life.

There was a time, not too long ago, when many Red River Métis were treated poorly in schools and felt unwelcome. I share this with you as a reminder that education is a right, but it is a right that many of our people weren't able to fully exercise.

Our Elders and seniors remember these times well, and I'm certain that's why they guided us to create supports for you as you obtain higher education. This is the reason we offer up to \$5,000 for every single student pursuing college, university, or other post-secondary education.

In the upcoming school year, more Red River Métis students than ever before will be supported by our Post-Secondary Education Support Program. With an expected 2,000 students within Manitoba and Beyond Borders, which is a 25 per cent increase in the number of students year-over-year, MMF is proud to invest close to \$9 million in our future leaders in this school year alone.

To make things easier this year for students, we have streamlined the application process for the Post-Secondary Education Support Program and the Louis Riel Bursary.

**Step One** is to fill out the general bursary and awards application from your post-secondary institution.

**Step Two** is to fill out the MMF's Post-Secondary Education Support Application form found on our website: <https://www.mmfeducation.ca/>. This application will also involve students enrolling in our Red River Métis history and culture courses.

By taking these two steps, students will be considered for up to \$5,000 per year in rights-based funding for full-time students, and \$2,500 per year for part-time students, as well as being considered for the Louis Riel Bursary.

It's important that students apply to ensure we are using our investment in the Louis Riel Bursary fund – a fund that is now worth close to \$30 million! Last year, \$975,946 from the Louis Riel Bursary was awarded to Red River Métis students, and we want

to ensure the whole bursary amounts are utilized every year.

This year's streamlined process will ensure that students receive their Post-Secondary Education Support with less delays from years past, ensuring students can focus on their studies knowing they are supported by their Red River Métis National Government.

Also new this year, Louis Riel Institute will launch a Peer-to-Peer tutoring programming funded by MMF's Provincial Education. The program will employ Red River Métis post-secondary students who will provide tutoring to Red River Métis students in Grades 4 to Grade 12.

The pilot program will not only support our younger students academically but will also provide meaningful employment and job experience to our Red River Métis post-secondary students.

### Summer employment for our Youth

I often speak about the strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit of the Red River Métis – something that has been passed down in our families through generations. In the past, we worked hard, paid our taxes, and only rarely saw the economic benefit we created delivered back to us. Times have changed and we are much stronger now, but the tradition of being a hardworking community continues.

One of the ways we engage our Youth in this part of our culture and values is through summer employment.

This summer, Métis Employment & Training made significant strides to support Red River Métis Youth through its extensive Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP). The SSEP collaborates with employers across the province to provide summer jobs for Red River Métis high school and post-secondary students, giving them the chance to earn money and gain valuable work experience.

The 2024-2025 SSEP saw significant growth, with over \$3.5 million invested and 393 students hired, and in partnership with the Infinity Women Secretariat, facilitated the employment of 57 female Red River Métis Youth.

Students filled roles across a variety of industries, showcasing their diverse skills and interests. They took on critical positions in sectors such as administrative support in government offices, health care facilities, educational institutions, and trades and construction within private businesses.



This exposure provided Red River Métis students with valuable experience and skills essential for their future careers. Moreover, 16 MMF departments offered 30 positions, including roles such as administrative assistants, legal policy interns, and horticulture technicians, contributing to the health and beautification of our environment.

The SSEP provides hands-on experience, but also fosters the growth and development of Red River Métis Youth as they navigate their way into the workforce. This work includes efforts in support of our Elders and seniors, which helps strengthen cultural values and community connections.

Employment and education for our Youth is another part of fulfilling the wishes of our Elders and past leaders. They understood, just as your Cabinet and I understand, that the strength we build today is a legacy that we create for our Youth. We must do everything we can to ensure they're ready to inherit it. It is the work of a lifetime, and your Cabinet and I are dedicated to this work. I thank you for your support in us, and for the strength and spirit of our Locals, who are the foundation of our government.

There are times when we experience a lot of loss and grief. I have recently experienced the loss of good friends and beloved family, and I am reminded

that these times come into all of our lives. Trust me that I pray for those we lose, both yours and mine. And that is why I always say: 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. ∞*

## DIVINE CONNECTIONS: EXPLORING FAITH, TRADITION, AND RED RIVER MÉTIS IDENTITY THROUGH THE ST. MALO PILGRIMAGE



*The sanctuary is a historical site in Manitoba known for its tranquil beauty and visited by thousands of parishioners from around the world each year.*

From priests performing Mass during buffalo hunts to the religious devotion shown by Louis Riel, the deep-rooted relationship between Red River Métis and the Catholic Church is a prevalent aspect of our Nation's rich history. The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) has continued this relationship through our commitment to preserving and maintaining the historic St. Malo Grotto.

Serving on the financial committee of the Parish, Red River Métis Citizen Leo Roch acknowledged the longstanding tradition of attending the grotto's annual pilgrimage.

"Over 120 years ago, people would come with horses and buggies, and hardly any came with vehicles. So, it had a humble beginning," he said. "I read that in 1939, there were over 7,000 people that attended the Pilgrimage. It took six masses that day to

accommodate all of these attendees, so it has quite a history."

In 1817, a year after Red River Métis won the Victory at Frog Plain, residents of Red River submitted a formal request for a ministry to Archbishop Joseph-Octave Plessis. This gesture highlighted the Catholic Church's significant role in the lives of Red River Métis at that time.

Following the requests to Archbishop Plessis, the Catholic Church's presence began to expand throughout Manitoba. In 1895, Father Abel Noret, the second Roman Catholic priest to serve the St. Malo Parish, first arrived from France and began to explore nearby areas suitable for a sacred site. Shortly after he discovered land that greatly resembled the Grotto of Lourdes in France, where the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared in 1858. With

the help of volunteer parishioners, diligent efforts were made to clear the brush and later construct a small chapel in 1896.

The St. Malo Grotto, which the RM of De Salaberry recently gave heritage status, attracts thousands of parishioners from around the world who are captivated by its profound historical significance.

"The grotto today is an attraction across the world. We have more and more people registering in our guest book, and they indicate where they're coming from and how they find this place," said Roch.

In 2022, the MMF donated a new cross and statues to the grotto after noticing the earlier one was starting to weather.

"Immediately, President Chartrand said, 'no, we can't continue with this,'" said Roch. "So, he got on the telephone and contacted his connections, and first thing you know, he brought in a new cross for St. Malo."

It was through the help of a friend, Hussein Hassan, that President Chartrand was able to obtain the cross and statue for the grotto from Jordan. The cross is derived from rosewood, a sacred wood originating from a holy tree found in parts of South America that smells like roses when it has been cut. Following the construction of the cross, the religious symbol was then blessed by the holy waters of Jordan. In the future, the MMF and the Parish will also be working on a plaque with Hassan, which will provide more history on the importance of the cross and the blessing from Jordan.

The cross and statues were later moved into the chapel for protection against the elements and to enhance accessibility for visitors.

"People will be able to see it up close, whereas if it was outside in its original site, people could only see it from afar. (Now), people will be able to enjoy the beauty of it, and we will have the proper wording to explain how the cross came to St. Malo," Roch said.



The Parish financial committee member's participation in the development of the grotto has led to a deep appreciation of the land and the serenity it provides.

"As I get older, I realize how much effort was put into this place many years ago. If Father Noret were alive today, he would be overwhelmed by what has happened with his humble beginnings," he said.

The Red River Métis Citizen encourages all who can attend to come see the cross at the upcoming historic annual Pilgrimage to the St. Malo Shrine and Grotto on August 18.

"We're making a big push to have as many people as possible (attend the Pilgrimage). We encourage groups to come by bus if you can, especially for the older generation. It helps them so they don't have to drive," he said.

The Pilgrimage, in honour of the Assumption of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, will feature a mass hosted by the Blessed Margaret Catholic Parish, confession, and adoration.

## RED RIVER MÉTIS YOUTH HONOURED WITH GOVERNOR GENERAL'S ACADEMIC MEDAL



**Renelle Saurette won the Governor General's Academic Medal, which recognizes the outstanding scholastic achievements of students throughout Canada.**

Renelle Saurette, a recent graduate of École/ Collège régional Gabrielle-Roy, has been awarded the prestigious Governor General's Academic Medal for her outstanding scholastic achievements.

The Red River Métis Citizen was shocked to be nominated for the accolade.

"I had many classmates who were just as strong academically, and I did not think I would be the winner. The results were close, and I'm thankful to have won," she said. "The moment is still a bit of a blur as I was not expecting it, but it was a special moment for me. It was something to show that all my hard work paid off in the end."

The Governor General Academic Medals recognize the outstanding scholastic achievements of students throughout Canada. The medal is given to the student graduating with the highest average from high school. Despite her studies coming naturally to Saurette, the Red River Métis Citizen worked diligently to achieve her high grades.

"I believe that being overall solid in all my classes helped me win this award. In some classes, I had others do better than me, but what helped me win this award was being consistent," she said.

"Especially since this medal looked at all your scores for the 11th and 12th grades. The consistency helped me keep my grade average higher."

To top it off, Saurette was named one of École/ Collège régional Gabrielle-Roy's valedictorians for the class of 2024, an honour she held in high regard due to valedictorians being selected via class vote.

"I was so honoured. Despite winning different awards, this was the one I was most proud of, as it was thanks to my friends I've had for the past four years," said the Youth.

After being diagnosed with osteochondritis dissecans disorder - which occurs in the joints when a piece of bone and the attached cartilage break down and become loose - in the eighth grade, Saurette transitioned from playing sports to being actively involved in many other school activities.

"I got surgery in the ninth grade and a second more severe surgery in the 11th grade," she said. "While I had to stop playing sports, I stayed involved by participating in other activities in school. I was on my school council, my school's yearbook committee, the pancake breakfast committee, my graduation fundraising committee, and more. It was a great way to fill my time now that I don't play as many sports."

With graduation in the rearview mirror, the Red River Métis Youth has her sights set on attending the Université de Saint-Boniface (USB), before continuing her studies elsewhere.

"Once done (at USB), I hope to be accepted into the French medical school at the University of Ottawa. I hope one day to become a doctor," she said. "It was hard picking what university I wanted to go to as I was accepted in USB, the University of Manitoba, and Queen's University, but in the end, I decided that I wanted to keep my first language, French."

Saurette knows that school can be challenging, and encourages Red River Métis Youth to stick it through.

"Don't be discouraged. If you hit a little bump, keep going. One rough test isn't going to affect you that much overall," she said. "Work hard and don't lose track of what you're trying to achieve."

## MMF CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF MEDOCARE PHARMACY IN DAUPHIN



On August 9, the MMF announced the grand opening of our new MEDOCare Pharmacy in Dauphin, Manitoba. This pharmacy will offer a full range of services, including free delivery to Dauphin and surrounding communities. The pharmacy is open to all, and will work closely with the MMF Health & Wellness Department to deliver the Prescription Drug Program, flu clinics, and other community health initiatives for Citizens. Come on by and show your support for the health and well-being of Dauphin and surrounding communities.



WE ARE  
**RED  
 RIVER  
 MÉTIS**

The MMF AGA  
 Sponsorship &  
 Tradeshow  
 registration is now  
 open at  
**mmfaga.ca**

RED RIVER MÉTIS  
**CONSULTATION** ON NORTHERN  
**CONSERVATION**



Myrtle deMeulles Hall  
 CHURCHILL, MANITOBA

Join the MMF for a consultation meeting to learn about and discuss 3 projects occurring near Churchill in the Thompson Region including:

- The Seal River – Indigenous Protected Area initiative
- Western Hudson Bay – National Marine Protected Area
- Prince of Whales National Historic Site– 10-year management plan.

Due to limited accommodations, meeting will be in person for Red River Métis Churchill Residents and virtual for all other citizens.

**AUGUST 25, 2024 | Meeting 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. | Honorarium will be provided!**

Register now by contacting our Community Projects Specialist [tanner.barlow@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:tanner.barlow@mmf.mb.ca)