



# Le Métis



## President's Message

I especially look forward to these times of celebration with our Métis Citizens. I know our staff also put in a tremendous effort in making our guests feel welcome. They have fun decorating their departments and entertaining our guests who come visit. It seems the Christmas Festivities really kick into high gear after our annual Open House takes place.

The Christmas Season is upon us. This past week the Manitoba Métis Federation hosted its Annual Open House. Each year we invite everyone in to visit the Home Office, talk to staff and your Métis Government representatives. It is a grand time of visiting, getting reacquainted, discovery and genuine fellowship between friends, colleagues and supporters. This year we again had a large number of people come and visit.

During our Open House, each department is brightly decorated and all kinds of healthy and fun treats are given to our guests as they explore the Home Office. When guests arrived they were greeted by members of the President's Office and given a 'passport' they use as they visited each department. When they visited a department, they are greeted by staff who 'stamp' their passports, provided information about what the department does on behalf of the government for the Métis Citizens and engaged them in fun activities. Once a guest had their passport filled out, they submitted the passport for a chance to win fun prizes. You can find some photos of our Open House in this issue of *Le Métis* as well as on our Facebook page.

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This year I am very pleased and proud of the work our Métis Child and Family Services Authority does in coordinating Christmas Hampers for Métis families during the Holidays. Our staff also participate in this worthy and important mission with great gusto and enthusiasm. Each year staff from all across the Métis Government take it upon themselves to raise money as a department or donate from their own pockets to make Christmas Hampers. It humbles me to see generosity in action at this time of the year. It warms my heart and gives me great pride to know that the Métis really are a 'Society of Generous Ones'. From time immemorial, we have always stood up for and looked after others. May we never give up in our well doing.



Visitors and MMF Staff share a laugh during our Annual Open House. It was a great time had by all!

I am also excited to see how many of our departments have taken it upon themselves to support the Christmas Cheer Board by volunteering their time to make hamper deliveries. I look forward to participating in making deliveries to needy families across our city. If you have opportunity to volunteer for a worthy cause in your own towns and villages, I encourage you to do so!

In closing, I send my thoughts and prayers to those who are shut-in, ill or have cause for grief. Especially during this Christmas Season, remember those who have little. It does not cost much to extend a hand of friendship, love and support but yet the returns are huge. Be safe. Be festive. Be thankful and above all, be together. Merry Christmas.

Meeqwetch,

∞ *President David Chartrand, LL.D. (hon), O.M.*

## MAYAA: Celebrating Aboriginal Youth in Manitoba



The 2016 Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement award recipients gather for a photo at the Victoria Inn and Conference Centre.

Sixteen beaming youth were proudly celebrated by over 400 friends, family, and colleagues at the 22nd Annual Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards (MAYAA). The MAYAAs were founded in 1994 to combat negative perceptions of Aboriginal Youth. By honouring the outstanding achievements these youth have accomplished in their communities and activities, the MAYAAs create positive role models for other Aboriginal Youth and inspire them to strive toward success in their own lives. This year's awards ceremony was held the evening of November 24th, 2016, at the Victoria Inn and Conference Centre in Winnipeg.

MAYAA recipients nominated by peers through their community or school, and then are selected by a committee of Indigenous youth. This makes the selection process unique and engages youth committee members to consider their own future ambitions.

Award recipients were recognized for their successes and high standards of excellence, dedication, and leadership in the following areas: Academic, Athletic, Community/Volunteerism, Cultural, Personal Achievement, Artistic, Health, Business/Entrepreneurship, and Employment in a traditional field. Each recipient is honoured with a crystal plaque, a special blanket created by Indigenous design company *Tammy Beauvais*, and a \$1000 scholarship to help them in their studies and future endeavours.

Five of the sixteen award recipients at this year's ceremony were Métis youth. Julie Desrochers, Manitoba Métis Citizen who received the Cultural Female award, has been extensively involved in Métis

culture since she was a teenager, including working with Le Musée de Saint-Boniface Museum. For the past three summers, she has been employed by the Louis Riel Institute and the Manitoba Métis Federation to coordinate programming and manage summer staff at Riel National Historic Site in Winnipeg. In this role, she has trained students at both high school and post-secondary levels in Métis history and culture.



Métis Citizen Julie Desrochers (centre) accepting her award at the 2016 annual MAYAA ceremony.

"I help them get reconnected, if [they are] not already connected, with their cultural heritage and help them develop the skills to educate the public on who we are, where we came from, the troubles that we've been through, and also the proud moments we're living today in Métis history," explained Julie.

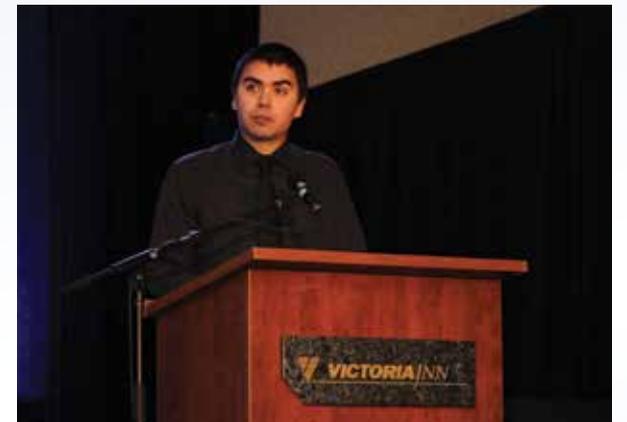
Currently, Julie is actively involved with the University of Manitoba's Métis University Students' Association

as Treasurer. She has also delivered her own programs to teach Métis culture to the broader community and in rural areas, including workshops for two different techniques of beading as well as sash weaving.

"I'm very proud," said Dan Desrochers, Julie's father. "Julie has been involved in a lot of different activities since she was a young girl, and she's always very proactive in her community and culture."

Now in her third year of Education at the University of Manitoba, Julie aspires to be a French Immersion teacher. She feels she is in the right time in history to work through the ideas of reconciliation as a teacher, to build community.

"Reconciliation right now is ensuring the knowledge and understanding of our past is passed on to today's generation in a way that will bring everyone from every community together, to build strong connections that will prevent past wrongs from reoccurring," said Julie.



Métis Citizen and award recipient Kyle Monkman addressing the crowd during his acceptance speech.

Sharing knowledge is something that Métis youth Kyle Monkman, recipient for the Senior Academic award, said is very important to him. During his remarks, Monkman shared a message of hope for the future with aspiring Aboriginal youth. He explained that when you find something you love and want to excel in, you have to make a choice.

"When I was a teenager, I was not a good student," laughed Monkman. "When I got to university, I just told myself that things were going to change. Now, after six years, I love to study and I study even when I don't have to. I just wanted to tell you that if you're how I was in high school, then things can change. You can go to school, find something you love and excel in it. All you have to do is tell yourself things will change – right now."

The awards ceremony concluded with a passionate round of applause recognizing the outstanding successes of all youth nominees and recipients, knowing that each achievement today is a step on the path to becoming our Aboriginal leaders of the future.

## MMF Hosts 2016 Annual Open House

On December 2, 2016, the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) hosted their Annual Open House at the MMF Home Office located at 150 Henry Avenue in Winnipeg.

Upon arrival, members of the public were given a 'Passport' and encouraged to visit and interact with staff in each of the MMF's departments.

As they toured the Home Office, participants got their passports stamped by Greeters from each department. Completed passports were eligible for a draw to win a prize. Snacks and refreshments were offered to guests at the conclusion of their tour.

The MMF would like to thank everyone who visited for helping make the 2016 Annual Open House a huge success.

To see more photos, please visit our Facebook page at [ManitobaMetisFederationOfficial](#).



## Provincial Cuts Worsen Métis Healthcare Crisis



The funding cut by Manitoba is the equivalent of saving only one cent on one hundred dollars of healthcare spending. We are asking the Province to spend that penny now to save Métis lives and thousands in future tax dollars.

In a shocking and unforeseen announcement on November 29, 2016, the Government of Manitoba cut all funding for Métis-related health programs and services, effective immediately.

Each year the provincial government spends over \$6 billion on healthcare, with the portion previously allotted to the Métis being a mere \$650,000. Statistically, for every hundred dollars spent on healthcare by the province, this equates to a meagre one cent being allotted to the Métis for proactive research and preventative care.

Now, the Government of Manitoba is choosing to pay for their budget cuts with the lives of Manitoba Métis Citizens, who are already widely underserved and undervalued when it comes to government programs and services. The Métis are facing a severe healthcare crisis and it is a fact of which the provincial government is fully aware.

According to the *Profile of Metis Health Status and Healthcare Utilization in Manitoba: A Population-based Study* conducted over a four year period by the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) and the University of Manitoba and published in 2010, Métis are 21% more likely to die prematurely (before age 75) than all other Manitobans, 34% more likely to develop diabetes, 40% more likely to develop heart

disease, and 49% more likely to have a lower limb amputated. These statistics indicate a frightening number of healthcare issues faced by the Manitoba Métis.

After years of no provincial healthcare support, the MMF was able to secure \$650,000 from the Manitoba Government in 2012 to invest in Métis healthcare and preventative care. The \$650,000 funding continued annually for four years – until now.

“That’s four years in a row we’ve been getting that funding. Prior to that, we didn’t get anything,” said President David Chartrand. “We finally had a breakthrough in 2012 because the government could no longer discount the results of this study. They were able to see with their own eyes that Métis were – and still are – in a crisis situation.”

The MMF has spent the last four years working in partnership with the Province to put in place a preventative healthcare plan. By hiring staff across Manitoba to build and deliver programs such as the Housing First program managed by Health & Wellness staff at the MMF’s Southwest Regional Office, the MMF and the provincial government were moving toward decreasing the number of Métis in hospitals, and lessening the long-term effect of poor healthcare on provincial taxpayers. With this sudden

cut in healthcare funding, a critical hole has been left in the lives of Manitoba Métis Citizens who relied on these programs and services for their health. The preventative care plan and shared goals the MMF and the Province had once been working toward have effectively been rendered obsolete.

Despite knowing the Métis in Manitoba are in a dangerous healthcare crisis and already receive among the worst healthcare services province-wide, the provincial government has indicated in this decision the Manitoba Métis Community does not matter. The Government of Manitoba has chosen to allow this health crisis to continue, without any path forward to ensure programs or services will be delivered to address the dire reality of so many Métis Citizens.

“This was our only conduit to ensuring we at least mattered, and they’re taking that completely away from the Métis now. We will be paying the price of this ill-formed decision with more crises, more illnesses, and earlier deaths of our seniors,” stated President Chartrand. “To offset healthcare costs through false austerity measures such as this, they are instead going to be paying for these cuts with the lives of Métis people. We’re going to hold them accountable for this, and we’re going to hold Canada accountable for this, because we do matter – and they know full well that there is a healthcare crisis for the Métis in the province of Manitoba.”

Without the sound planning, policies and knowledge sharing produced by this funding, there will be more illnesses, more deaths, and more hospital visits, resulting in costs that will be paid by not only the lives of Métis Citizens, but also by provincial taxpayers – of which the Métis are a large proportion. The decision to save a penny now will cost thousands more later on. Cutting Métis healthcare funding in the month leading up to Christmas makes this decision decidedly more callous.

“People have mortgages, children, payments, you can’t put them in that situation right before the holidays,” President Chartrand explained. “We’ll figure out how to carry our people through, at least past Christmas. The MMF will not let their Christmas be cut short.”

If the Manitoba Government were to reconsider and spend that penny now, innumerable Métis lives and thousands of taxpayer dollars would be saved in the future.

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