

President's Message
February 26, 2013

Given a chance our Youth can fulfill their dreams of education, career, travel, and family. Sadly it happens all too often that many Youth enter into the child welfare system for a lengthy stay because of the ongoing troubles or a crisis at home. In those cases, imagine if their problems and heartache could have been prevented. That is why we do things differently using the Metis Child Family and Community Services' proactive model of preventative care.

What makes us different from government is the type of proactive and preventative programs such as the Youth Outreach – S.A.S.H. Program, the Metis Spirit Program and the Honouring our Youth celebration. We don't abandon our Youth. We do not kick them out on the street when they turn 18 years old as the government system had done. They still need us. Things don't magically change. They still need options and supports to grow.

Recently MCFCS held an Honouring our Youth celebration for those who this year reached adulthood while in our care. This has been the 19th celebration. Each Youth was called to the podium, healthy, strong, and standing proud amongst friends and family. It was with both a sense of pride and humbleness for me to see how hard they have worked for their success. Despite the challenges life has thrown at them, each and every one is pursuing their dreams with admirable determination. They are all role models.

I saw pride and affection in the eyes of everyone at the celebration. The commitment of the MCFCS workers is awesome and I thank them for their creativity, hard work and dedication in helping our families and community. I also want congratulate the Youth. They may be legally adults, but to many of us they will always be our children and have a special place in our hearts. They will always be able to call us family.

Our Ancestors knew the challenges that their children would someday face with the coming of settlers into our traditional Metis Homeland at the Parishes at Red River and elsewhere. They wanted to secure a future for their children where they could be Canadians with aboriginal and civil rights and security within a province, not a colony, and not be treated like second-class citizens.

The Metis Provisional Government ratified the 1870 Manitoba Act including Section 31 that recorded solemn promises to provide lands for our children. These promises were not kept. Metis lands were in effect stolen from the children by unconstitutional legislation and orders in council.

Protecting our children and their families is always a MMF priority. Since the MMF's creation, and for over 30 years in the courts, we have struggled to right the wrongs done to our Ancestors. We are expecting a judgment by the Supreme Court of Canada to bring justice to the Metis children of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

To our children I ask that you give your parents and grandparents a big hug. To those who have moved away from home, please be sure to give them a phone call or visit. I offer my prayers for all those who have passed away and condolences to friends and parents, spouses, siblings, children and grandchildren.

Believe in Yourself - Believe in Metis
Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand, LL.D