

President's Message

July 16, 2015

Nelson Mandela once said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." The important value and power of education cannot be overstated.

Just recently I attended the Louis Riel Institute's Adult Learning Centre Graduation and watched our grads cross the stage to receive their diplomas. It was a triumphant time for not only the graduates, but also their families and friends. I was truly filled with joy as I watched Metis grads 'move the tassel' and take the first steps in the next stage of their lives. It was exciting to see the faces of parents, grandparents, children, brothers, sisters and friends shine with pride as their loved ones crossed the graduation stage!

With education comes power and there also comes change. With education a person can change not only their lives and their circumstances, but they have the power to bring positive change to their family, their community and the Metis Nation. I believe in the value of education. The Manitoba Metis Federation helps provide a number of bursaries and scholarships. Many of these are done through partnerships with participating Manitoba Universities, MMF affiliates, community partners and our own Metis Locals.

For example, the Swan River local raises funds that the MMF matches for grade 12 graduates taking higher education in the fall. This year Swan River Local has raised \$2500 and the MMF will match that dollar for dollar. This means this one local is able to provide \$5000 to students looking to improve their education. I want to encourage all our Locals to join this initiative. For every dollar raised, the MMF will match it dollar for dollar.

Another example of how we help students gain an education is the endowment fund we have with Red River College. Last year we supplied 29 bursaries through the Louis Riel Bursary. That is 29 Metis Youth gaining valuable knowledge they can use to change their world.

For anyone sitting on the fence, wondering if they should go to school, learn a trade or upgrade their education I would say 'Yes, do it!' Contact your Local today and see how you can access the scholarships and bursaries available to you. Or if you want to help our Metis Youth, help organize a fundraiser to support their education.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge and congratulate all the Locals who promote Metis Pride and volunteer to keep it alive. All summer long, Metis Locals are taking the time to celebrate our history, culture and traditions. This past weekend was very the Shell River Jamboree at Boggy Creek. I am sure everyone had a fantastic time. Just over a week ago I had a grand time on Canada Day in the small Metis settlement of Duck Bay. Ever since Aboriginal Day Celebrations in Selkirk, I have been enjoying the fine displays of Metis Pride all across our Homeland.

While some of these celebrations may be small, together they are a great expression of Metis tradition and culture. I encourage you to get in touch with your Regional Office and find out about what celebrations are taking place in your area. If you want our Communications staff to help promote your event, drop them a line at communications@mmf.mb.ca, or call them at our Home Office at (204) 586-8474. They can help spread the word through Facebook, Twitter, our website as well as Metis Hour x2. Also, if you have a story to share send that along too, and if we are able, we will share your good news.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to my staff who are helping trappers and their families receive their inheritance. We have two years to distribute these funds to those trappers who were negatively impacted by Manitoba Hydro development in the Summerberry Marsh. It is great to see our trappers reaping the returns of the hard work and efforts put in by our staff and elected representatives as they worked to secure this inheritance.

In closing I offer my hopes for our Metis people who are sick and shut in. I also offer my prayers for those who have departed and my condolences to their family, friends and neighbours. My best wishes to all.

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