

## President's Message

May 19, 2016

It was with pride that I watched 17 year old Kayleen McKay arrive at the Alexander Docks in Winnipeg. Kayleen, a young Métis girl, had just completed a 420KM run from Duck Bay to Winnipeg in honour of her cousin who had lost his life in the Red River. Along the way she also raised over \$8000 to support the volunteer searchers *Drag the Red* who help bring closure to families of the missing and murdered by searching for clues along the Red River. When she arrived at the Docks, many staff and friends from the Manitoba Metis Federation were there to welcome her. I am proud to say your Métis Government Ministers and staff of the MMF donated another \$6000 at the Docks pushing the amount she raised over ten days to more than \$14,000! Other community minded people and organizations like Sylvano Poletta, Vickar Chev-Olds, and D'Arcy & Deacon LLP also contributed in strong ways to the success of Kayleen's run.

The energy and tenacity of our Métis youth never ceases to amaze me. It seems whenever they put their minds to a task, not even hell or high water can stop them. It is this ability to dream big and do the hard work to make them come through that will carry the Métis Nation forward. We should take every advantage to encourage and promote this in our youth.

This is also a reason why I believe we need to invest in the future of our Métis youth by helping provide them with access to educational opportunities. A good education will help harness the energy and potential of our youth and convert it to seizing opportunity and wrestling it into strong, vibrant and stable families and communities. One day our youth will become our leaders – many already are! They will set our Nation's course – making decisions that will help us to live beyond what we dream possible today.

The Métis Nation is a vibrant Indigenous Nation within Canada, with our own culture, traditions and language – Michif. Our Nation was born in the Red River Valley of what is now Manitoba. We are called Otipemisiwak: "The people who own themselves; the independent ones." Today we are a nation without borders. This is an important time in our Nation's history. The work we do today will influence our land and its resources for generations – and we need you to add your voice to this great Métis Nation. As a Citizen, you'll have a say in setting our Nation's course for the future.

If you have not yet applied for your Métis Citizenship, I encourage you to begin the process today. This month, our Central Registry Office, with the assistance of our Communications Department, will begin a campaign to share with you the importance of Métis Citizenship and explain the process of how to become a Citizen. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for exciting information on our Citizenship campaign.

In closing, I offer my best wishes for those who are sick or shut-in. May they be blessed with healing, health, and peace. I pray for and share my heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies for all our neighbours, friends, and families who have lost loved ones. May they be comforted during this difficult time.

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Photo caption for President\_and\_Kayleen.jpg: President Chartrand and family with Kayleen McKay at conclusion of her 420 KM run from Duck Bay to Winnipeg.