

President's Message
July 12, 2017

I really enjoy the summer months. I enjoy seeing kids outside having fun. Isn't it good to hear our children laugh as they play together and explore the great outdoors? But, none of this is fully possible unless a child has a safe, stable home to go back to at the end of the day.

Housing is a social indicator, a social determinate of health. It is proven by many studies that children do better when they have a safe, adequate and stable home. Housing has interrelations with other social aspects such as health, education, poverty reduction, child welfare, senior care, youth outcomes and improved services for women. A change in any one area influences at least one or many of these other areas. When families have the opportunity to have and own their own home, they can set down life giving roots in their towns and villages and have a firm foundation from which to adequately provide for needs in all those identified areas.

When families are denied opportunity for a home, or when housing is inadequate, it leads to negative effects and outcomes. When a person has no home, they have no place to rest or recreate. They become disconnected from family and friends, from the very place and people that can support them. When families cannot afford their homes, when they are simply struggling to survive, they cannot grow and thrive. The lack of safe, affordable housing leads to broken homes, fractured communities and stunted growth within our Nation.

This in turn can lead to an increase of preventable illnesses. If you have no clean or suitable housing, or if you find yourself cramped into tight quarters with large numbers of people, illnesses can easily spread amongst each other. Not being able to afford your housing can also lead to stress and anxiety related illnesses that place an unnecessary burden on our healthcare systems.

The Manitoba Métis Federation believes that every child and every family should have opportunity to receive safe, affordable and sustainable housing. To this end, your Métis government has been working to help provide just that to our Métis Citizens. In Winnipeg, we created a beautiful quad plex near the MMF Home Offices. In Brandon, last year we opened safe and affordable housing units on 12th Street. We are currently in the final stages of approval for building units in Selkirk this year.

As the government of Manitoba's Métis Community, the MMF is committed to providing results that lead to healthy, happy and complete homes. We are investing to help provide a resilient, thriving and safe community for all Métis Citizens. We are investing to create that lasting place that was promised to our ancestors over 140 years ago.

This week key members of our Métis government are meeting with officials in Ottawa to discuss what our housing needs are as Métis Citizens. We are working to develop a Métis specific, Métis designed approach that is focused on obtaining long term solutions that will bring our Citizens to a place of positive economic participation and stability. In our vision, we will not only consider core housing need, but also develop a housing plan for longer term sustainability.

In 2006, we were part of the Kelowna Accord process where priorities were identified and outlined that showed off reserve core housing needs were 76% higher among Aboriginal households than

non-Aboriginal households. In the North, this number nearly doubled to 130%. That agreement remains relevant today and there has been a recommitment by the federal government to fulfill these points in the Accord as it states:

“address the unique housing needs of Métis through investments and maintenance in order to improve Métis delivery and control of affordable social housing; and work towards developing a regionally focused Métis Nation Housing Institute”

Let us continue to work together towards this vision for safe, affordable and sustainable housing for all Métis Citizens. I encourage you to begin that vision right at home, in your towns and villages. Support each other and hold one another up. If you have a little extra, share with someone who has a little less. Get involved in social action initiatives that seek to improve the welfare and outcomes for our people. Support your Métis government – get involved.

Finally, I send my thoughts and prayers to those of you who are hurting, sick or shut in. May you find peace, comfort and hope in your families, friends and community. Be safe this summer. Enjoy the blessings you have around you. Take care and I hope to see you this summer as I travel throughout the regions.

Meeqwetch,

President David Chartrand.