



# Le Métis

EST. 1871

**YOUR RED RIVER  
MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S  
BI-WEEKLY NEWS.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In recent years, Manitobans have come to understand the true history of this province, including the pivotal role played by the first Premier of Manitoba, Louis Riel, and the Red River Métis in ushering Manitoba into Canada and bringing Canada to the West. This week, we observed Manitoba Day, on May 12, which commemorates the day that the *Manitoba Act, 1870* received Royal Assent – creating the Province of Manitoba and paving the way for Manitoba to join Canadian Confederation as its fifth province.

Along with defense of language rights, religious freedoms, and democratic representation, our people also demanded that our First Nations relatives receive fair treatment by Canada. This is clearly stated in item 12 of the List of Rights developed by the Red River Métis provisional government, as part of the negotiations to create Manitoba:

*That treaties be concluded and ratified between the Dominion Government and the several tribes of Indians in the territory to ensure peace on the frontier.*

While we celebrate and honour Manitoba Day and have never forgotten our ties with our First Nations relatives, today we are seeing that some First Nations have forgotten our shared history. In recent months, two bands of Dakota people – the

Canupawakpa and Tipi, have filed a total of nine claims of exclusive ownership and/or Aboriginal title over various locations in Manitoba. While these claims clearly challenge the true and accurate histories of the Cree, Assiniboine, and the Chippewa (aka Anishinaabe, Ojibway, Saukteaux) as well as our own, these two bands have only named the Red River Métis in one case, putting our people in the crosshairs with these scattered and disjointed claims.

What's even more strange about these lawsuits is that they are claiming exclusive rights for places where they did not exist, including the Turtle Mountains, The Forks, and Portage La Prairie. Based on extensive historical maps, reports, journals, treaties, and agreements – to say nothing of the Indigenous Nation-to-Nation treaties that the Red River Métis were signatories of – we know that these were not and are not Dakota territory. Quite simply, the Dakota have no exclusive claim to lands north of the present Canada-U.S. border, since they are an American tribe.

The Dakotas have said that they are signatories to the 1817 Selkirk Treaty, though only the Cree and the Chippewa are named in the treaty – there is simply no reference to the Dakotas. Further, this new attempt to claim the Turtle Mountain area ignores the rights and interests of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and others, including the Red River Métis.

Exclusive rights require a people to have been the only ones occupying a particular land since before Canada came to that place, and they must also prove continued use of that land up to and including today. This flies in the face of our very well-known history, to say nothing of the history of the Cree, Saukteaux and others. If the Dakota had been the exclusive users of what is now called The Forks, there would have been no strong Red River Métis presence, and Canada would not have been forced to negotiate with us – they would have been negotiating with the Dakota. The entire history of Manitoba would be completely different if what these lawsuits claimed was even remotely true.

It's unfortunate that these lawsuits are happening, even though the Red River Métis worked so hard to ensure that all legitimate rightsholders were protected by the treaties that followed the *Manitoba Act, 1870* (which we have always seen as our treaty with Canada), starting in 1871 with Treaty 1, and continuing through to Treaty 11 in 1921.

That these two bands have decided to attack us is offensive and insulting, seeking to do us such harm after our Ancestors fought and, in some cases, died

to safeguard these rights. History clearly shows we made treaties with First Nations before Canada ever came knocking on our door, finding us at peace amongst ourselves, sharing the land and the resources of our Homeland. Rather than attacking us, it would be better to work with us, as we worked together in the past. It is hard to imagine what they hope to gain with this action, but their decisions seem to come from a place of false claims and a misunderstanding of history.

There is no doubt in my mind that all Indigenous Nations who have shared this land for so many generations will eventually be forced to contend with these bizarre and unreasonable lawsuits by the Dakota. Together, we can share our knowledge about the facts, both written and spoken. These two bands will learn what all our historic allies and enemies have always known – that it is unwise to pick a fight with our Nation. The Red River Métis never give up. We will once again defend our place as rightsholders in Manitoba, and if necessary, we will continue to support our First Nations relatives as they stand up to defend their places as rightsholders against these Dakota claims. We will win and our truths will stand, and we will seek restitution for these needless claims against us. Our fighting spirit is a big part of who we are – a people who fight for what is right, and a people who have earned the respect of all – our First Nations relatives, our foes, and Canada itself.

Until we meet again, I offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve. My heart is with the friends, family, and community of our lost loved ones. I ask my people to send prayers to our families and help those who are grieving. I will keep you all in my prayers, as always.

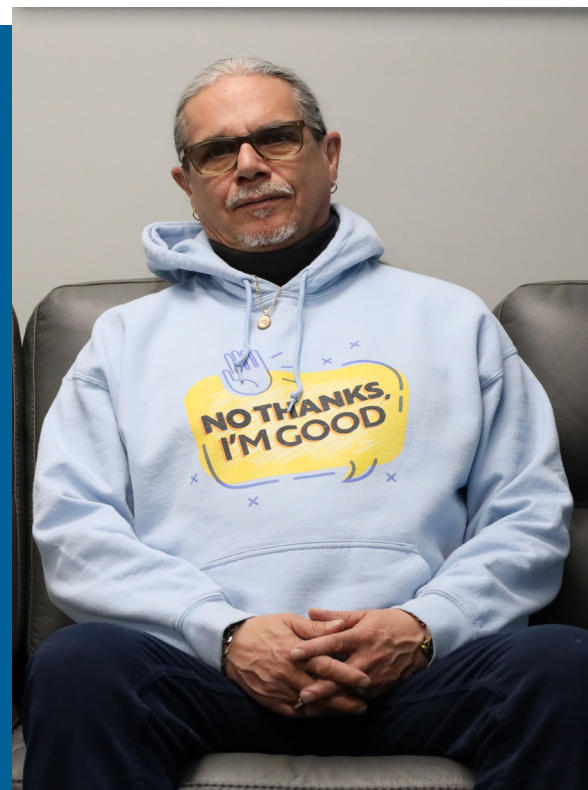
Meeqwetch,

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





## RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZEN ADVOCATES FOR DRUG PREVENTION AFTER LOSING SON TO FENTANYL POISONING



Joseph Foure, founder of the Singing Red Bear Foundation, has created the "No Thanks, I'm Good" campaign in hopes of deterring youth from recreational drug use.

The subject matter in this article contains sensitive topics such as drug use, overdose, and fentanyl poisoning. For access to Red River Métis mental health resources and services, call 1-833-390-1041 ext. 1.

After losing his son Harlan to fentanyl poisoning in 2023, Joseph Foure is hoping to bring the "No Thanks, I'm Good" campaign to the national level and raise drug awareness among first-time users.

Following his son's passing, the MMF Citizen became aware of the vast assumptions made of people whose passing involved substances.

"Harlan's death was quite painful, and what started this all was when we went public with what happened to Harlan... because of the nature of the way that he died – that an opioid was involved – everybody assumed that he had an addiction problem," said the Citizen.

The "No Thanks, I'm Good" campaign was born from his son's own words, who often cited the phrase when offered substances.

"Harlan didn't have a drug problem," he said. "He worked for the same job for 10 years. He was a great kid. When I talked to his boss, his boss couldn't believe it... he said, 'I'll tell you, Joe, when we would finish a roof... we would finish the job. We of course would have some beers, and somebody would pull out something (and) Harlan would always say "no thanks, I'm good."'"

The objective of the campaign is to educate as many youths as possible about the dangers of fentanyl poisoning, with it being found in the majority of street drugs.

After extensive research, Foure recognized the alarming rise of the fentanyl epidemic across the country, making a specific emphasis on youth and children.

"(Since 2023), the number of deaths that occurred between the ages of 10 and 19 have increased by 135 per cent, yet nobody was talking to this (age demographic). Everything was about addiction. Everything was about harm reduction. So, we took a very different approach, we weren't going to deal with addiction," he said. "These young kids need to be warned that their drug supply and their drugs aren't safe anymore. Fentanyl has changed everything."

Now, the Red River Métis Citizen travels to schools across Manitoba to share his personal story and the impact fentanyl poisoning has had on him and his family.

"I'm just one voice, but I will stand up wherever anybody asks me to go and talk about my son and talk about the dangers of recreational drug use, hoping that our young people, university students, their dreams won't die from one bad mistake, one bad choice, leaving families behind to suffer their loss," he said.

In addition to the "No Thanks, I'm Good" campaign, the MMF Citizen organized the first Fentanyl Awareness Day on September 13, 2024. The date was chosen based on the time of year – with many students going back to school – and to honour Harlan, who was born on the same day.

The Singing Red Bear Foundation, founded by Foure, has launched the two impactful initiatives in hopes of inspiring youth to choose a drug free lifestyle. The Red River Métis Citizen hopes to partner with other organizations to further expand their efforts in promoting their message.

"We're hoping to move on to the national stage and get the funding that we need and to create a real awareness program. It needs a balanced approach of prevention and awareness," he said.

Foure noted the connection between drug use and mental health, speaking to his own personal experiences that contributed to his struggles with sobriety. He hopes children are able to access mental health services and resources rather than experiment with substances.

"When I go to schools, I make sure that there are resources available on site," he said. "So, it really ties into mental health. If you're having issues, drugs aren't the answer. Your feelings won't kill you, but drugs will. So, find somebody to talk to, to avoid the unnecessary tragedy of making a bad choice."

Last October, Foure spoke at the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)'s Annual General Assembly (AGA).

"Our Métis communities need it," he said. "That's why I went to the AGA and put forth the resolution for the MMF to consider supporting us."

Foure had the chance to share Harlan's story and the campaigns overall message with thousands of Red River Métis Citizens.

"I wanted our people to also be able to hear Harlan's message," he said. "So, I went to the AGA, wanting to introduce what we're doing and to look for their support in helping me tell Harlan's story to our Youth and that's what I was hoping to get from that – support. Whether it comes in financial support or whether it comes in any kind of support, just opening that door (was important)."

In 2024, the MMF published extensive research on the opioid crisis and the impact it has on Red River Métis Citizens. To learn more, visit [mmf.mb.ca/publications](https://mmf.mb.ca/publications).

## CAMERON BOUCHARD IS PUTTING THE "MÉTIS" IN "RED RIVER MÉTIS HEALTH RESEARCH"

Cameron Bouchard is bringing awareness to Red River Métis heart health across the Homeland.

The MMF Citizen is currently working with his academic advisor regarding the improvement of care for congenital heart disease patients across Canada.

"There's a really big disconnect because (when) you're born with congenital heart disease, a birth defect, you see the same doctor from birth until you're 18 and then all of a sudden you leave pediatric care, and you're put into adult care," he said.

Bouchard acknowledged how the personal responsibilities of care change over time,

noting the shift from having guardians manage appointments and receiving consistent follow-up care from your doctors, to handling things independently – a change that can significantly impact quality of care.

"You are suddenly placed with this burden of your own healthcare when you turn 18 after being with





one doctor your whole life,” he said. “Because of that, 30 to 40 per cent of (Canadian) congenital heart disease patients never seek follow up adult care. They don’t get the care they need throughout their lives, and it’s a lifelong disease.”

The Red River Métis researcher is expanding his area of focus to include Red River Métis congenital heart disease patients.

“My research specifically is looking at Métis patients and how their intersectionality being Métis and having this heart defect affects how they experience healthcare and how they get through the healthcare system,” he said. “And it’s not just the transition part of going from pediatric to adult, but it’s the whole aspect.”

While researching this topic, Bouchard noticed a lack of research that was inclusive of Indigenous viewpoints.



**The Red River Métis Citizen advocates for individualized research that is inclusive of distinct cultures, like the Red River Métis, and believes their perspectives should be included in all aspects of academic research.**

“There’s actually no specific Métis research on heart health in general. I found maybe a couple coming from Ontario about cardiovascular disease and it was just the prevalence of it, it wasn’t exploring better care or better experiences, how to improve the care; it was just how many Métis people in Ontario have cardiovascular disease, that was it,” he said.

With great pride in his Red River Métis culture, Bouchard looks forward to contributing to Métis-centric health care research and the differences Red River Métis folks may experience while navigating the health care system.

“Métis people are a distinct culture with distinct needs and values that need to be reflected in how they receive health care,” he said. “I think being able to provide research that shows the importance of this and highlight that Métis congenital heart disease patients have distinct values that they’re

not receiving will really bring that (concept) forward and bring it to light. And then, maybe, that in turn will promote other research for other diseases that affect many people and how their care needs to be specialized.”

Bouchard first connected with his Red River Métis culture during the COVID-19 pandemic when his cousin started looking into their ancestry, tracing back their family’s lineage to the Red River. “The pandemic kick started my family discovering that we had Métis ancestry and then kind of led to me really exploring what that meant in terms of my life going forward and how I was Métis but never knew, and then why didn’t I know and exploring the reasons and history behind that,” said Bouchard.

The more the Citizen builds a relationship with his culture, the more he has recognized what it means to carry himself as a Red River Métis Citizen and the impact his cultural pride has on the world around him.

“It led me to just really engaging with the history of what it meant to be Métis, what it means for me now to be Métis and it led me to realize myself that, ‘oh, I am a Métis man living in this world and I need to carry myself with the values of my Métis culture and (bring) the values of being a strong Métis man in my interactions,’” he said.

This deeper understanding of his identity has also shaped how he thinks about broader issues concerning Indigenous groups in health-related research.

“You need specific First Nations, specific Inuit, (and) specific Métis research, rather than just a pan-Indigenous approach,” he said. “I think that needs to be at the minds of other researchers that study Indigenous populations, (to) be specific about it and be intentional with it, and get more Indigenous researchers (and) more Métis researchers in academia promoting our knowledge and our ways of knowing (in order to) promote Métis health.”

The Citizen also recognizes that more inclusive research centred around Red River Métis people can open the health field to a world of different possibilities and insights.

“I hope it benefits Métis people by recognizing that they’ll read this (research and) they might see themselves in the research and relate to it and realize ‘you know what, I do have specialized requirements for my (health)’ and they recognize, ‘I need to advocate for myself or become active in health research’ and promote Métis health research and in turn, they’ll be more willing to become participants in future studies.”

The Red River Métis academic was recently accepted into the University of Manitoba’s College of Medicine.

“I always grew up wanting to be an anesthesiologist, but because of what I’m doing now, I’m really

interested in cardiology, cardiac heart health,” said Bouchard. “I’d love to be a pediatric cardiologist working with congenital heart disease patients and their families and bring that knowledge to Northern Manitoba, where there is a severe lack of cardiologist care. (From) taking my research, what I’m learning now, and then applying that to what I hope to be my future career and using it to benefit my community is something that I am looking forward to doing.”



Bouchard continues to explore his Red River Métis values through his academic pursuits and hopes to see more Red River Métis perspectives integrated into academia.

“Promoting Indigenous and Métis (specific) research and (implementing) how you could use Métis knowledge and Indigenous knowledge in western academic institutions is really important and something that I wish became our mainstream. I’m hoping that this could showcase that you (can) go outside the western ideals of what research is and integrate our ways of knowing within our research,” he said.

The Manitoba Métis Federation’s Health and Wellness Department (MMF-HWD) was established in 2005 to advance the vision of “a well Red River Métis Community in Manitoba.” MMF-HWD is rooted in cultural wisdom and committed to enriching the lives of Red River Métis through research, healthcare services, and innovation. If you are interested in Red River Métis-centred health research, visit our website at [mmf.mb.ca/publications](http://mmf.mb.ca/publications).

## A PLACE TO CALL HOME: NEW RED RIVER MÉTIS HOUSING OPENS IN SELKIRK



On April 30, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) proudly opened a brand-new six-storey mixed-use residential complex in Selkirk, Manitoba – providing 49 accessible homes to Red River Métis Elders and seniors. With more than half of the units dedicated to affordable housing, the building reflects a multi-million-dollar investment in the community.

The property also features common areas and commercial space for services such as a Red River Métis-owned pharmacy and more. Overlooking the Red River, the complex is designed to provide Elders and seniors with a safe, comfortable, and beautiful space.

Learn more about how the MMF is building safe, welcoming homes for Citizens across the Red River Métis Homeland by visiting our website.







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