



Le Métis

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Citizens know that I regularly use this message to share updates about what your Red River Métis Government is doing, and how your Cabinet and I are advancing our Nation on your behalf. This time, I've decided to bring some of the perspectives and views of Citizens regarding our AGA, which took place from October 18-20 at the Assiniboia Downs, with a gathering that was well into the thousands.

"Personally, I love attending the AGA. It's a time when we can all gather and connect. Like I always say 'I may not remember your name, but I always remember the familiar faces, the friendly smiles and conversations that we engage in.' I've been attending for over 14 years and it gets better and bigger each year." - **Camille Bertholet, The Pas Local, The Pas Region**

"It was a very good informative meeting, and I love attending each year. Very well organized for the amount of Citizens present. High five to all the dedicated, hard workers. Impressive, informative, well organized three days..." - **Millie Fagnan, Mafeking Local, The Pas**

"The Red River Métis AGA is a great event! It gives everyone an opportunity to see what is happening in our government and helps Citizens find the resources they need to make their lives better. It is a great opportunity for young people to learn their culture and learn who they are." - **Donna Barker, Barrows Local, The Pas Region**

"As a mother of five children and someone who has attended AGA since a very young age, I know my children are fortunate and excited to attend their MMF Mini AGA to learn about their culture, history, and the National Government of Red River Métis, courtesy of the Louis Riel Institute & Early Learning and Child Care Department. Our President and Cabinet leadership works tirelessly for our Nation to have safety and security, and to leave a legacy for all our children. The Red River Métis would be nowhere if it wasn't for their work and efforts for the Nation and the entire collective. Miigwetch to President Chartrand!" - **Clarice Genaille, Treasurer, Duck Bay Local, Northwest Region**

"I'm so grateful that I'm able to attend our Assemblies, as they are a strong reminder of how far we've come, and the leadership that has taken us to where we are today. I feel proud of the persistence, heart, and determination of our people that is always on display. This spirit is how our ancestors survived the dark times, and it's how our Nation has stayed strong through to today. Seeing the ongoing focus on advancing our government and our people helps me remember to be proud every day, and to hold my head high as a Citizen." - **Luke Church, Swan River Local, Northwest Region**

"The Gimli Red River Métis Local was proud to have our new executive and seven delegates, including some first-time attendees, participate in the MMF AGA. We experienced an incredibly informative weekend filled with positive networking. Coming together with other proud Métis Citizens was truly a treasured experience for all. Heartfelt thanks to all the organizers, President Chartrand and the MMF Cabinet for their unwavering dedication, passion, and support for our Red River Métis Citizens." - **Susan Champagne Shapiro, Chair, Gimli Local, Interlake Region**

"As a Beyond Borders Citizen, the AGA is an annual experience of critical importance for myself and my family to be connected and feel a part of the RRM community in a real way. This is not an easy experience to find where I'm from in BC. There simply isn't the legitimate community we would hope to find. I've had the fortunate opportunity to attend several annual assemblies since stepping toward the MMF as my representative government and I have participated in events online at a distance. I applaud each and every MMF staff member who work so hard to provide us with a meaningful and enjoyable experience around the important and informative governance work of the AGA. For those of us beyond the MB borders, those efforts uplift, sustain and enforce our pride in our Métis culture in the best way possible." - **Robyn Lawson, Beyond Borders Citizen**

"It never fails to amaze me how much work goes into this incredible undertaking and how well-organized the AGA is as the weekend unfolds. The hugging, hand-shaking, and pure pleasure of being in the company of so much family and feeling the sense of community and unity is always moving. There is a genuine warmth and a generous, open, welcoming spirit that is expressed wherever you walk. The air is electric, bristling with palpable, positive energy as over 4000 Red River Métis Citizens unite as a collective community. It is an intense, breathtaking, and exhilarating experience. For those of us attending from Beyond Borders, I believe I can safely say that there is a true sense of coming home for all of us." - **Liam Taliesin, Beyond Borders Citizen**

"Being present at our Annual General Assembly always fills me with so many feelings. I feel pride to watch our people, our government, and our democratic institutions via our Assembly, accomplish the work of our people and Nation. Our Assembly is a coming home, every year both geographically but also in our hearts. We come home at our AGA as one people: The Red River Métis. We come alive as we are with our kin and our family. The undeniable energy and heartfelt warmth of being with our people, our government, and our Nation at our AGA can only be compared to coming home to our immediate family after being away."

As a Beyond Borders Citizen, the few things I want our Citizens back home to take away from the Beyond Borders report are: we want connection with our people, our kin and our government; many of us bring ideas to the table that provide funding and services for Beyond Borders and all Red River Métis Citizens; and we are all Red River Métis Citizens no matter where we live." - **Christopher Yates, Beyond Borders**

"My life changed when I became involved in my Red River Métis Culture. I firmly believe that this is a safe space for my voice, and I get the opportunity to learn and grow as a person both personally, and professionally. What I've learned through experiencing the National Government of the Red River Métis, is that you get what you put in. When I attend consultations, my opinion is always heard. Consultations are focused and meant to hear my voice, whereas the AGA is the place to create the change on our already shared, researched, and heard voices. I attend a very large amount of events, and I leave each one with provoked thoughts, feeling heard and supported, never unsafe." - **Carrie Friesen, Winnipeg Region**

"This was my first year attending the MMF AGA, so overall there is a lot to take in so I could see anyone feeling a little overwhelmed by everything."



But with that being said, I had a great experience with all the resources in one place. I was able to get my Citizenship renewed, ask questions to the cancer care team, and learn more about all the other programs offered to us Citizens. From my perspective, a lot of those people who spoke up at the AGA were asking things that could have been directed to staff of the department as opposed to the Ministers. Additionally, after attending, I now understand the format of the AGA and how everything is run, and would feel more confident in speaking up if needed/wanted.” – **Jenna Mcleod, Winnipeg Region**

“My experience from the MMF AGA was really good this year, me and my family love going every year! My daughter really loved doing the mini-AGA, she asked everyday to go. I really liked having our Youth booth there to include us, Youth, to spread all the fun activities such as the Winnipeg Blue Bombers game we went to thanks to Minister Genaille and his team, as well as IWS for choosing us to attend. I also really appreciated the career opportunities us Youth were shown at every booth.” – **Kylie Kubas, Northwest Region**

“My experience at the MMF AGA was really good, I really enjoy going every year. I found that most of the booths were targeted at the Youth which was really nice to see. I have had good experiences with the MMF and IWS Youth. I have had so many opportunities with school and learning new things about my culture.” – **Mackenzie Kubas, Northwest Region**

“As a Northwest Youth Advisory Committee member, I believe the language, body language, and communication to the Citizens in attendance of the MMF AGA 2024 regarding the sensitive topic of the Israel-Palestine War. The Citizens were never interrupted or threatened from what I witnessed. Our President or MMF Cabinet waited for the floor and provided the other side of the story to our Citizens, Elders, and especially our Youth at the MMF AGA 2024 with all the facts. The assembly spoke with their votes, as we have always done since the days of the Buffalo Hunts, on how we will continue as the Red River Métis Nation.” – **Alexis Campbell, Northwest Region**

“There were so many Red River Métis people. The AGA was very fun. I enjoy hearing the President speak for his people and fight for them. I also enjoyed the Youth AGA because Minister Genaille is always looking out for the Youth. It’s nice to see how many people go to the AGA to hear from our President. So many people look up to him for the future of the Red River Métis. It’s also nice to know President Chartrand and the Ministers are looking out for us Youth, our future and our children’s futures. I can’t wait until next year’s AGA.” – **Ayden Munro, Interlake Region**

“The weekend of the AGA, on Friday, I had presented myself to the Youth gathering. At this Youth gathering, I felt very welcomed, with more than a dozen people in my age range. There was an amazing poutine bar that was offered to be able to

eat during the activities and meeting of sorts. An activity I personally enjoyed at this event was the Bingo. The Bingo activity allowed several individuals to express their competitive sides. There happened to be a small error in the Bingo arrangements, so we collectively decided to enjoy “Wheel of Names.” I enjoyed the involvement the hosts let us persuade them to include.

Toward the end of the evening, I was able to call a shuttle back to my room. I enjoy the programming of the shuttles because they open opportunity to the youth that cannot drive, Elders that may have health complications and/or people who’d rather not take space in the parking lot. Overall, I like this system that is in place, and I think it should always be offered at the MMF AGA. On the Saturday of this weekend, I spent the time being educated on the Red River Métis culture and the difference the MMF will make for Métis people. On Saturday, I really got to appreciate the authority and change the MMF provides. Generally, I would for sure recommend this program, specifically coming from a 15-year-old youth.” – **Serena Coutu, Interlake Region**

“This year, I was proud to exercise my democratic right as a Red River Métis Citizen at the Annual General Assembly. It’s essential for both Youth and Citizens alike to engage with our government, listen to their reports, and make informed choices on resolutions that shape our future. I was especially inspired by the involvement of our Youth. Being present every day, I witnessed young people stepping up to support our Elders by preparing meals and offering assistance whenever it was needed. One thing that is important to me as well is that Youth have the same voting rights as any other Citizen, giving them the opportunity to express their own opinions on the issues at hand. Our openness as a Nation is reflected in our respect for the voices and contributions of our younger generations.

The AGA created a welcoming and safe space, surrounded by friends, family, and other Métis who are genuinely invested in the prosperity of our Nation. I don’t have any family who can attend the AGA in person, but I always feel a strong sense of belonging. No matter where I sit or go, I know there will be welcoming people ready to include me. It was empowering to see Citizens freely take the mic to voice their thoughts, challenge ideas, and ask questions. This open exchange allowed everyone to be heard and responded to, embodying the strength of our community’s democratic values. However, I believe that if you’re willing to present an idea or resolution, you should be prepared to engage with differing perspectives. Respecting one another’s opinions, even in disagreement, is crucial. As a Nation, fostering unity rather than division serves our collective growth and resilience. While Youth turnout may not be as strong as we’d like, it’s understandable given the demands of jobs, extracurriculars, and varying interest levels in politics. This highlights the importance of coming together to explore new ways of encouraging Youth engagement.” – **Matthew Carriere, Winnipeg Region**

“Attending the 2024 Annual General Assembly was an incredible experience that left me feeling deeply connected to my Red River Métis identity and instilled a true sense of belonging in my community. The AGA always provides a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where everyone feels like family! It is a great opportunity to engage with fellow Red River Métis Citizens sharing cultural pride – and a few laughs too! As a member of Winnipeg’s Regional Youth Advisory Committee, I am grateful for the opportunity the AGA provides to connect with other Red River Métis Youth who share similar values and visions for our future. The Pre-AGA Youth Gathering held by Minister Genaille was a standout moment as it encouraged Youth to share our ideas and advocate for what we envision for the upcoming Youth Conference, thus creating a powerful platform for us to have our voices heard! The Tradeshaw was another great highlight of the AGA, where we could learn about the various departments and services and how they support our Métis community. It really made me appreciate the range of resources available to our community and how accessible they are!

Overall, the AGA is a fantastic opportunity to learn about current initiatives within the Homeland and encourages Citizens to voice their concerns, allowing everyone to engage in meaningful discussions surrounding issues that are important to us. I guarantee if you attend an AGA, you will feel so much pride for our community! There is nothing quite like celebrating our accomplishments together, reconnecting with old friends, and meeting new ones from all over the Homeland! It is a time where every conversation and handshake remind you that we are all a part of something bigger, lifting each other up and honouring what it means to be Red River Métis! I can’t wait for next year!” – **Kyra Cebula, Winnipeg Region**

“I’ve attended the Annual General Assembly every year for as long as I can remember. I often think about the feeling of walking into the main assembly hall; the atmosphere has always been electric and full of Red River Métis Citizens eager to learn about the new programs being offered and ready to vote on the most important resolutions, which have gotten us to where we are today. We are finally being recognized as our own government. I’ve grown up watching the MMF Cabinet work tirelessly and as a Youth, I will forever be thankful for their hard work and dedication to our Nation.” – **Skyler Thomas, Southeast Region**

“The IWS Youth Department has always made me feel supported and heard. When I first joined the MMF and the IWS, I was apprehensive because I thought I looked “too white.” But it didn’t take long before the other MMF and IWS members made me feel at home. When it comes to addressing feedback from participants, the IWS staff are incredible. After attending the Wellness Weekend back in April, we were instructed to provide feedback to inform future gatherings of IWS members. When the AGA came around, it was clear that the IWS staff heard our concerns and acted on them accordingly. I know that as members of IWS, we felt that our voices



were heard. The Youth of the IWS are valued on a similar level to Elders. Our insight is valued, and we are made to feel that our opinions matter. In many traditional non-Métis settings, youth are told to be silent and to “not speak unless spoken to.” But not in the IWS. The voices of the youth are empowered by those older than us, and we feel that we can speak our minds without fear of backlash. It is a beautiful thing to have a community that loves and supports its youth in this way. I am proud to be an IWS member and I am proud to be a Red River Métis woman.”

- Mandy Swidersky, Southeast Region

I know there is something special that comes from our Assemblies, with Citizens reconnecting with family, friends, and community members while at the event. Affirming and celebrating these ties is one of the fundamental reasons we gather every year. I have such pride in my heart when I see people hugging, smiling and waving at one another. It makes all the effort of the event worthwhile.

I want to say a special thank you to our Youth. We’ve received incredible, insightful and touching comments from across Manitoba and beyond from our young Citizens. While I included some thoughts from Citizens here, I felt it was important to include as many of the words and thoughts of our Youth as possible, which is why you will see so many more on the following. As always, I am moved by the energy, faith, and strength of our Youth, and feel confident about the future of our Nation because of them.

I send my well wishes to Citizens who are honouring our traditions by harvesting from our Homeland to feed family and community. Stay safe and remember – your Red River Métis government has your back. 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 this past

weekend. I will keep you all in my prayers as you go through this difficult time.

It was a pleasure to hear just some of the perspectives and views of our Citizens, and I’m already looking forward to next year’s AGA.

Meeqwetch,

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

**Some comments above have been edited for length and clarity*



REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED: A CELEBRATION OF RED RIVER MÉTIS VETERANS



From the days of the great bison hunt to today, the Red River Métis have not only been patriots, we’ve also been champions of democracy. We have advocated for our rightful place in this country and have made our presence known through the Victory of Frog Plain in 1816, the Battle of Batoche in 1885, our active involvement in World War I in 1914 and World War II in 1939, and the 1869 Red River Resistance leading to the creation of Manitoba in 1870. Thousands of Red River Métis men and women have taken up arms in defense of democracy both in our Homeland and across the globe.

We honour all war Veterans whether they fight for our Nation on our home soil or went elsewhere to fight for principles the Red River Métis still hold dear today: democracy, community, and minority rights. Today, you will often see Red River Métis Citizens wearing beautiful handmade beaded poppies to honour the memory and legacies of our Veterans.

Every year on November 8, the Red River Métis Veterans Department (RRMVD) hosts an Indigenous Veterans Day ceremony to celebrate the remarkable bravery and sacrifice of our Red River Métis Veterans. Citizens can attend the ceremony in-person or online via livestream.

Our Veterans and their families deserve to be recognized for their service to our country year-round, which is why the MMF is committed to educating our Citizens and the Canadian public about the contributions our Veterans made to defend our country. Veterans are our heroes today, tomorrow, and forever.



RED RIVER MÉTIS YOUTH AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS CORONATION MEDAL



Red River Métis Youth Kyra De La Ronde received the King Charles III's Coronation Medal, given to Canadians who have made significant contributions to Canada or a particular province, territory, region or community.

Red River Métis Youth Kyra De La Ronde has added another prestigious award to her impressive collection.

The Citizen received the King Charles III's Coronation Medal, given to Canadians who have made significant contributions to Canada or a particular province, territory, region or community.

De La Ronde, who currently works for the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) as a Beyond Borders Coordinator, was one of 100 Canadians to receive the award in Quebec from Governor General of Canada during a ceremony on September 20, 2024, at the Citadelle of Québec. She said it was very shocking at first.

"I couldn't quite wrap my mind around it. To be recognized at this high level by Mary Simon, the Governor General of Canada. She's the first Indigenous person, let alone an Inuit woman, to be in this role for Canada. So, it's a huge honour to receive (the award) from her and be recognized as a young Red River Métis woman," she said. "I was the only Manitoban that received it from her 100 (nominations), so there was a little bit of added pride being able to bring it back here to Manitoba."

The Coronation Medal marks the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, which took place on May 6, 2023.

There were five categories of award winners: diversity and inclusion, reconciliation, environment and climate change, youth, and education. De La Ronde received the award in the reconciliation category for her work with Red River Métis Youth.

"I feel that she (Mary Simon) put a lot of thought into who she wanted to receive this from herself. There were very notable individuals there. I felt like a small fish in a big pond, but it was truly amazing," she said. "I got to bring my grandmother with me. So, we got to go and do some tourist activities the evening before the event."

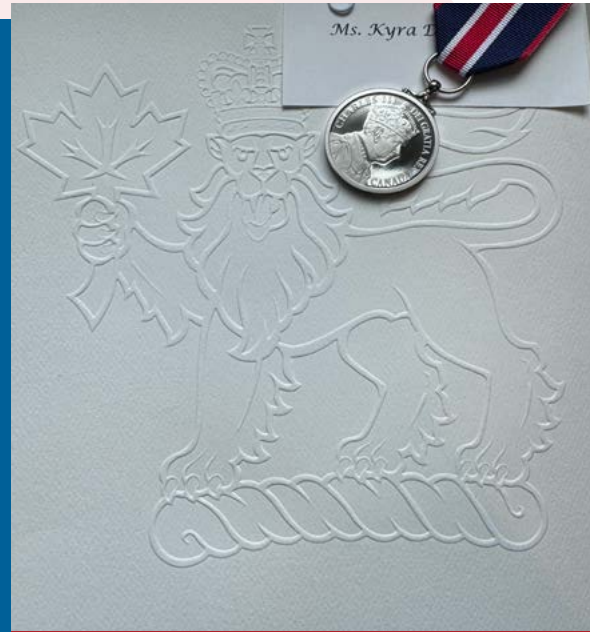
"IT WAS FOR MY FAMILY; IT WAS FOR MY NATION. IT WAS FOR ALL THE YOUTH I PREVIOUSLY REPRESENTED AND JUST REALLY GIVING THIS SPACE TO RECOGNIZE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO GREAT THINGS." - KYRA DE LA RONDE

Although the Red River Metis Youth was one of 100 people to be hand-selected by the Governor General, 30,000 medals will be distributed to Canadians throughout 2024. De La Ronde has been a part of the MMF's Youth movement since she was 18 and has put herself in a place where she started educating herself, spending time in the community, and spending time with Elders.

"I had the most energy and personal satisfaction (working) with the Youth, and the community," she said. "I'm very grateful to be able to have represented Youth at a community level with the Interlake Youth Advisory Committee, on a provincial level, and then further (on a) national and international level with the youth position I previously held."

Throughout her tenure on Youth councils, the award recipient has concluded that there is some amazing Red River Métis talent out there.

"We have doctors, lawyers, and people who are becoming marine biologists. We have a whole market of employable young people. I think sometimes what happens is we still see them as young people. We don't give them the credit they're owed, in terms of the work they've put in and the time they've spent in the community," she said.



De La Ronde is proud to be recognized for this award and said this medal was more than a personal accomplishment.

The Red River Métis Youth has achieved many accolades since joining the MMF. She has served as the Infinity Women Representative for the MMF Regional Youth Advisory Committee within the Interlake Region, as well as Chairperson of the MMF Provincial Youth Advisory Committee. De La Ronde was also part of the delegation that travelled to Rome to meet Pope Francis and was the first Red River Métis Valedictorian from Red River College Polytechnic.

De La Ronde is proud to be recognized for this award and said this medal was more than a personal accomplishment.

"It was for my family; it was for my Nation. It was for all the Youth I previously represented and just really giving this space to recognize that young people can do great things," said the award winner.



DON'T EVEN MISS OUT ON THIS RED RIVER MÉTIS PERFORMER'S NEW SHOW



Red River Métis actor Victoria Gwendoline co-stars in *Don't Even*, a new comedy series set in Winnipeg.

If Victoria Gwendoline were to leave her mark on this world, it would be through her art.

The multi-faceted creator explores her artistic abilities through various mediums such as acting, singing, metalsmithing, and more.

"That's all I have to offer this world, and that's all I want to do," she said as she discussed her latest projects.

The Red River Métis artist co-stars in *Don't Even*, a comedy series following Indigenous best friends in late '90s Winnipeg as they grapple with their uncertain futures after finishing high school.



ULTIMATELY, IT MAKES ME FEEL SO CONNECTED TO THIS PLACE ON AN EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL LEVEL. I THINK ABOUT THAT ALL THE TIME, I'M RED RIVER MÉTIS...THAT IS ANOTHER REASON I FEEL SO CONNECTED TO THIS SHOW." – VICTORIA GWENDOLINE



"It's just about that time in your life and it's filled with so much pressure and everybody seems like they have it figured out, but nobody actually does. Or they're pressured by their parents or they're just on their own. It's just such an intense time to be a young adult," said Gwendoline.

The coming-of-age story first launched on the streaming service Crave this summer, and will be available on APTN sometime before 2025.

Being on the set of shows like *Don't Even* has allowed the artist to connect with other Indigenous people in the industry, which can be very motivating.

"Anytime I get the opportunity to be in the Indigenous community, it helps me with (reconnecting) and it's healing," she said. "I met so many other Indigenous musicians and actors and we all lift each other up. We're all trying to give each

other more opportunities and it's just nice to be in that space."

She also loves how the city of Winnipeg can be seen as a main character in her new show.

"We never have shows about this place and Winnipeg plays a character. Winnipeg is so vibrant, wacky, strange, and colourful and I love (it)," said Gwendoline.

Being from Winnipeg herself, she has a profound sense of attachment to the Red River Métis Homeland.

"Ultimately, it makes me feel so connected to this place on an emotional and spiritual level. I think about that all the time, I'm Red River Métis..." she said. "That is another reason I feel so connected to this show."



"YOU HAVE TO BE VULNERABLE. YOU CAN'T BE AFRAID OF WHAT PEOPLE SAY AND AT THE END OF THE DAY YOU HAVE TO MAKE YOUR ART FOR YOU AND THAT'S SCARY BUT IT'S WHAT MAKES AN ARTIST." – VICTORIA GWENDOLINE



The artist spoke about her experiences growing up Red River Métis and what inspired her to explore her cultural identity.

"Similar to a lot of people in Manitoba's experiences, (my) family struggled with losing culture over the years, and it was confusing for me growing up knowing I was Métis but not knowing anything about the culture, and just having that information but feeling this disconnect," she said.

As her career grows, Gwendoline does her best to prioritize all her interests beyond acting.

"I feel like my soul came here to sing, but I also have a lot of other art forms that I appreciate, love, and make time for," she said. "Natural art, crystals, rocks, bones, fossils, that sort of thing, and Metalsmithing, (it) kind of intertwines. My love of art goes into not just my singing, but my metalsmithing, my clay, my acting as well."

For anyone hoping to pursue a career in the arts, Gwendoline says you have to get used to hearing "no" a lot.

"The amount of auditions I've had to do to just get to this point, it's been challenging, but you just have to do the scary thing," she said. "You have to keep going. Keep auditioning. Don't take 'no' personally and just believe in yourself."

She used to think being an actor was a faraway dream, but now, she is living proof that if you work hard enough and stay determined, you can achieve whatever you want.

"You have to be vulnerable. You can't be afraid of what people say and at the end of the day you have to make your art for you and that's scary but it's what makes an artist," said Gwendoline.



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