



One of the things I am always thinking about is how to secure the future for our Nation's Youth. Your Métis Government offers a number of programs that are geared toward Youth, including summer camps, employment training, and our \$1-million fund for structured and professional sports development.

Why are our Youth not on the baseball diamonds in our communities? We know they're not on the basketball courts, playing volleyball, badminton, football, or involved in other athletics. That's because there are no structures in place to organize these sports, no equipment, and in some cases, no fields or courts to play on. We need to change this and create opportunities in sports for our Youth. This \$1-million fund is only the beginning and is one of a number of programs and services we're offering for our Nation's Youth.

Support for post-secondary education

It still amazes me how far your Métis Government has come in our ability to support education for our Citizens. We know education is important, not just for our Youth, but also their families. The reality is that some of our Métis families are making just enough money to pay the bills, with no way to help their children plan for their future. That's why we want to share this burden and take the pressure off these families, helping them deliver more for their children and ensuring they have a stronger and brighter future. We know that's what every Métis parent wants for their children. That's why I truly believe some of our most important programs are the ones that support education.

I've often said that a person can be stripped of their job, home, land, and money, but the one thing that no one can ever take away is education. Your education is always yours once you have it.

Your Métis Government established the first-ever Métis-specific post-secondary Scholarship and Bursary Endowment Fund in 1999. The Louis Riel Bursary program continues to support Métis students today, with the endowment fund now worth more than \$25 million.

In the 2020-21 school year, between Metis Employment and Training and the Louis Riel Bursary program, we awarded 633 bursaries to Métis students attending universities in Manitoba, with an amount totalling more than \$3 million. This is a significant increase from the last school year.

Minister Joan Ledoux and I are also working on creating a new endowment fund, which we will announce shortly. I can share that it will provide an additional \$10 million for students, bringing our total endowment fund amount to \$35 million. We'll have more details to share on this soon.

In 2020-21, we had our second intake for our Post-Secondary Education Support Program, which resulted in awarding support for 847 Métis students, to a total of \$4.2 million. The majority of these students are women – 588, to be exact. Most of these students are pursuing undergraduate, professional, master's, and doctoral degrees at one of Manitoba's universities. They come from all parts of our province, from the Thompson Region to the Interlake, from the Northwest to the Southeast.

We expect this program to grow every year, since we have committed to providing \$5,000 to each student for each academic year.

The number of students going into and receiving support for their post-secondary education is one of the things I'm most proud of – that I think Louis Riel would be proud of – is seeing our Nation gain strength, knowledge, and expertise each year these students pursue higher learning. It's our hope that many of these students will graduate with a passion for helping their Nation, coming to work for the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) or contributing to our Nation's prosperity in other ways.

I thank Minister Ledoux and Minister John Fleury for their work on this important funding for students.

Métis Harvesting rights

Between the Desautel case in British Columbia and the Poitras and Boyer case in Saskatchewan, harvesting rights have been in the news lately.

As we know, our traditional lifestyle was a very mobile one. At the time when these traditions were freely practiced, the Homeland of the Métis Nation extended well into what is now called the United States of America, into parts of North Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana.

The Desautel legal victory recognized traditional harvesting territory that includes parts of Canada for a man belonging to the Arrow Lakes Band of Washington state in the United States of America. This victory reflects the changing attitudes of courts, shifting away from colonial thinking as applied to traditional harvesting rights. While a government may believe that the lines now drawn on maps are the only truth when it comes to ownership of territory, they should not forget that Indigenous peoples were here on this land, using its resources, before those lines – whether international or provincial – were ever drawn. The legal system of Canada is finally recognizing and reconciling with that truth.

The MMF sees this as a positive step forward in recognizing Indigenous traditions and rights.

Meanwhile in Saskatchewan, Warren Boyer and Oliver Poitras have been found guilty of hunting unlawfully in the area around Meadow Lake and have argued that they, as modern-day Métis people whose ancestors were part of Métis Nation, should be able to harvest anywhere within the Homeland.

As we did in the Desautel case, the MMF and the Métis National Council asked for intervenor standing on this court case, meaning that we were asking for the right to be heard as parties who will be affected by the outcomes of the court decision. In spite of strong opposition from the Saskatchewan Crown, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal recently granted us this status.

By joining this case in Saskatchewan, we're joining the fight against any laws that require Métis Harvesters to live in the same part of our ancestral territory they are harvesting from.

While we await the decision in the Poitras and Boyer case, know that we will continue to support Citizens practicing traditional harvesting activities in a sustainable, conservation-minded way.

Seeing the struggle of the Métis people in Saskatchewan as they try to achieve their harvesting rights acre by acre, I hope our Citizens take comfort in the fact that we did not have to take on the same battle of acres in Manitoba.

Vaccines

Our Métis Nation has done so well protecting and looking after each other, our Elders, and vulnerable Citizens. The good news – after months of pushing and advocating – is that we're finally getting more vaccines into our hands, so we can start getting them into your arms. We have our first 100 appointments booked at the MEDOCare Pharmacy for our frontline staff and their families, so your Métis Government can keep working hard for you. We'll be sharing more

information about how you can get the vaccine from us shortly.

Now that Manitoba is allowing all Indigenous peoples 18 and older to get vaccinated against COVID-19, Citizens can also choose to book an appointment at supersites, pop-up clinics, or urban Indigenous clinics by calling the province's toll-free line at **1-844-626-8222 (1-844-MAN-VACC)** to book appointments. Daily hours of operation are from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. You can also book online at <https://protectmb.ca>.

With the recent news that Health Canada has approved use of the Pfizer vaccine for children 12 and up, we're hoping that Manitoba will follow Alberta and start opening up vaccinations for Youth. We look forward to including them in our vaccine rollout at the MMF as soon as possible.

I strongly encourage all Citizens to get the vaccine as soon as they're able. If you have any concerns about the safety of the vaccine or your personal circumstances, you should speak with your doctor first.

I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

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

Taylor Goodon receives 3M National Student Fellowship Award



Last month, Métis Citizen Taylor Goodon was one of 10 recipients of the 3M National Student Fellowship Award, which recognizes post-secondary students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership. Presented by 3M Canada and the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), the fellowship offers recipients a two-year membership in the STLHE, along with participation in a funded project and the STLHE Unconference in June.

Goodon, who is in her third year in Honours Science at Brandon University (BU), said she feels "extremely honoured" to be recognized.

"Brandon University is a smaller school than others in Canada, so it shows that BU students can compete

at an extremely high level in the country," she said. "I am not only the first BU student to get this recognition, but I think I am the first Métis woman to receive this honour. This shows to me that Métis Youth are becoming more confident in forging our own paths and becoming leaders in Canadian society. It really is my hope that this will light a spark under other Métis Youth to set their sights high and work hard to achieve their goals."

Goodon said the fellowship will help take her to the next level in achieving her career aspirations, which include working as a medical doctor.

"The networking and the leadership experience I will get through the program will be phenomenal," she said.

Goodon, the only Manitoban named as a fellow this year, is no stranger to accolades.

Last year, she cracked CBC Manitoba's Future 40 list and was named as BU's Outstanding Female Students. In addition, her Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's Undergraduate Student Research Awards allowed her to work in the lab of Dr. Michael Charette, who has trained under the world's leading researchers in the ribosome assembly and RNA biology field.

The daughter of Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) Minister Will Goodon, she grew up volunteering at Métis cultural events in the Turtle Mountains, Boissevain, and Brandon.

She has volunteered with the Brandon Bear Clan and the MMF. Last year, she was chosen as an MMF Youth representative on the Women of the Métis Nation Implementation Framework engagement session on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.

"I want to thank my mom and dad and my brother for the encouragement and support they have given me my entire life," said Goodon, whose mother is Dr. Kelly Saunders, Chair of BU's Department of Political Science, and whose brother Hunter is now studying medicine at the University of Manitoba after graduating from BU last year.

"I also want to thank my professors, my friends, my grandparents, and the Manitoba Metis Federation who have helped and inspired me on my journey. The social determinants of health and the continuing gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada have been important issues for some time but are only now getting the attention they deserve. I want to contribute in a positive and substantial way to closing these gaps and ensuring that Métis and all Indigenous peoples in this country have access to the quality healthcare we need and deserve."

Katherena Vermette releases final graphic novel in Métis history series



Acclaimed Winnipeg author Katherena Vermette admits she said “no idea” what she was doing when she decided to try her hand at graphic novel writing. But with the fourth and final instalment of her bestselling graphic novel series, *A Girl Called Echo*, released last month, she can justifiably add “cool graphic novel writer” to her resume.

Each volume in *A Girl Called Echo* follows the title character as she travels back in time to significant eras in Métis history – *Pemmican Wars*, *Red River Resistance*, *Northwest Resistance*, and *Road Allowance Era*. In *Road Allowance Era*, Echo travels back in time to find older generations of her own family forced to squat on land they cannot claim.

“I really selfishly wanted a project where I could do a deep dive into Métis history, and just spend a lot of time exploring all those eras,” Vermette said.

Vermette found exploring Métis history to be daunting, but for each book, she dedicated a year of research, “so I could do justice to all the things that have happened,” she said.

Vermette and her publisher worked with fact checkers and academics, including the late Lawrence Barkwell, the former senior historian at the Louis Riel Institute.

“I was so grateful for his knowledge and insight, and I met with him a couple of times just to work with all the details, and all of the resources he gave me were gold,” she said.

“I really learned so much about the history. I thought I knew stuff about the history, but I knew nothing.”

Aimed at a Grade 5-to-8 reading level, *A Girl Called Echo* is an important and succinct history lesson for middle years students, with Echo herself being in junior high.

The character of Echo was inspired by Vermette’s nieces and daughters – “those powerful, quiet teenagers that I’ve known in my life,” she said. “So I would really love Echo to connect with more powerful, shy, quiet teenagers.”

In the series, Echo starts off feeling alone and isolated, separated from her mother and at a new school. But she finds a sense of community once she travels back in time, accompanying a new friend on the bison hunt.

“She literally goes from being alone and being isolated to being surrounded by family and community,” said Vermette.

Echo’s journeys through time often mirror the history lesson taught in her classroom in the present-day sections of each book.

“I wanted her set in contemporary times, and dealing with contemporary issues, but also really just harken back and time travel back to this very different time, with a very different community, and just that sense of belonging that she gets and has received by her community, I really wanted that for Echo,” said Vermette.

Vermette said she wanted Echo to magically integrate into the time she has travelled to, rather than having to explain her presence in the past.

“I think she did that, and kind of found that sense of family and community that she didn’t yet find in the present day.”

Vermette found Echo’s learning of her family’s and Métis history to be reminiscent of the process Vermette herself undertook when obtaining her Métis Citizenship and exploring her genealogy.

“I have great-great uncles who fought and died at Batoche – one great uncle who fought and died at Batoche and another one who was recorded as being there,” she said. “That just connects me directly to Batoche, you know, the feeling that you’re not far removed from these things. These things, as much as they seem like they’re in the past, we’re still very much affected by them, and we’re connected through our ancestors to them.”

Vermette added, “Our history, the history of Métis people, is fascinating. And we’re really, really lucky to have it and be able to learn about it.”

While this series was Vermette’s first go at historical fiction – and graphic novel writing – the theme of community and resilience in the face of intergenerational trauma is familiar, in addition to the examination of contemporary issues facing Indigenous families.

Her other celebrated works include a diverse selection of fictional formats, from poetry and picture book to novel, and even a documentary – with an equally varied target audience, from children, to middle and young adult, to adult readers. While varying in form and audience, her stories are set on the Homeland of the Métis Nation, from the Saskatchewan prairie to Winnipeg’s North End.

Her first poetry collection, *North End Love Songs*, won the 2013 Governor General’s Literary Award for poetry, and her debut novel, *The Break*, won awards including the Amazon.ca First Novel Award in 2017. Her other works include a second poetry collection, *river woman*, the picture book, *The Girl and the Wolf*, and the Canadian Screen Award-winning short documentary, *this river*, which she co-wrote and co-directed.

Vermette is currently finishing her second novel, *The Strangers*, which will be released in September 2021 and set in the world of *The Break*.

For up-to-date information, visit her website at katherenavermette.com.

MMF's Metis Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow program launches with logo contest

Metis Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow (MELT), a new program within the Manitoba Metis Federation's (MMF) Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department, has launched its first annual logo contest for Youth in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Youth are being invited to design the MELT logo with Métis and environmental elements, with an option to include a Manitoba element.

The idea for MELT, which is partially funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, came in 2020, when the Department began to look at how to further engage Youth on the land.

Metis Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow Coordinator Amber Chambers said that a key message the Department received during 2019 climate change consultations with Métis Citizens across the province was that Youth weren't connecting with the land the same way previous generations had.

In response, MELT will provide land-based educational workshops for interested Métis Youth across the province on climate change, environmental management, Métis culture and history, and how Métis traditional knowledge and Community initiatives can have a positive contribution to climate action.

"A big aspect of this is promoting climate awareness in Youth and giving them the information they need

to take it back to their communities and turn it into climate action," Chambers said.

She said this will involve traditional activities such as canoeing and berry picking, and will start by June.

"It's a good opportunity for Youth to engage with Elders and traditional knowledge holders within the Métis community, and just get a better understanding of how the environment plays into those traditional livelihoods, and how important it is for them going forward – how important it is for everyone, but specifically for the Métis with that reliance on the land and the ecosystems and that connection with them."

Metis Environmental Leaders of Tomorrow is also planning an annual Youth and Climate Symposium starting in 2022.

Along with the prize of a gift basket, the contest winner will have their logo on all digital MELT campaigns for a year, including on printed materials such as T-shirts and hats.

High-resolution logo entries can be submitted to amber.chambers@mmf.mb.ca by May 13 at midnight, after which the MELT team will select the top five entries. Citizens will be able to participate in an email survey for the winner, which will be announced on May 17. Please visit mmf.mb.ca for more information.

Community Photo

Le Metis' new Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Métis Nation, send it to communications@mmf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Find someone who looks at you the way Huey looks at lunch

Pulse of Metis Youth Conference



- 🕒 Saturday, May 29, 2021
- 📍 Virtual
- 📅 AGES 16-29
- 👤 Kelly Forgala, Event Manager
- ✉ kelly@plannersplus.ca

