



In recent weeks, our communities, our Nation, and our country have been coping with the truth and the tragedy of the residential school system, brought to light most recently by the 215 children whose remains were discovered in Kamloops, British Columbia.

As we know in the Métis Nation, this is far from an isolated incident. In 2018, the remains of more than 50 children who died at the Brandon Residential School were discovered under the Turtle Crossing Campground along the Assiniboine River. With 14 former residential schools in Manitoba, I know there are many more painful stories within the hearts and minds of survivors. I fear that there are more heartbreaking discoveries yet to be made, like the one at Turtle Crossing and the one in Kamloops. We grieve for the families and the communities who must come to terms with these stolen lives.

But Canada must also face the truth of the survivors living with the consequences of a system designed to “kill the Indian in the child.” In my own experience, I remember having my wrists whipped at school for speaking Saulteaux, the language I spoke at home, and the only language my mother spoke.

For many, the consequences of their treatment in the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop have lasted a lifetime and have been handed down to the generations that follow. We know this to be true because we see the evidence where we find broken family and community networks, where we see drug and alcohol abuse, where we see poor or fragile mental health. In the past, seeking help to overcome these hurdles meant parents had to risk the threat of losing their children to the foster care system. As a result, many parents chose to suffer in silence, passing their pain on to their children. This is at the heart of generational trauma.

Preventing this cycle of trauma is one of the key reasons the Manitoba Métis Federation has been advocating for our right to care for our children and families for nearly 30 years.

The importance of Métis child and family services

Our children are near and dear to our hearts as a Nation. I am a proud great-grandfather, grandfather, father, uncle, brother, and son. As you can appreciate, my family means everything to me. I would not be who I am today if it were not for my family, with my mother as the bedrock.

This is why the work of our Métis child and family service providers are critically important to our people.

Through our designated agencies and Authority, we have been working with our Métis families for the past 18 years, with a focus on keeping our children within their communities and extended families, rather than having them placed where there is no Métis presence. Every child taken away from us represents a loss to our communities, and a loss of culture and connection for the child. We will not let this continue.

In January 2020, Bill C-92, formally known as *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, came into effect. The bill is an important step in continuing to make real change for our families and our children in care. It allows us to shift the focus of our child welfare system away from apprehension toward culturally appropriate prevention, early intervention, and family unification, driven by the extended family and community, staying within our Nation.

What this means is that we have a clear pathway to continue the work we were doing before Bill C-92 came into effect. It also makes it clear to other partners – like the provincial government – that the Métis Nation will help shape the future for our own children and families.

This pathway would have been more challenging and much slower without the partnership of the Government of Canada.

Our nation-to-nation relationship with Canada

Bill C-92 is part of Canada's plan to renew the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. It aims to make meaningful reform to child welfare nationwide and recognize the critical importance of self-determination and self-government in our caring for our children.

Throughout the history of the Métis Nation, there has never been a federal government more open

and willing to work with us to better the lives of our Citizens. As a result, there has never been a time since the 1800s where we've made more progress toward self-determination.

A recent example of this nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship is the confirmation of \$27 million in national funding as the beginning of support for Indigenous-led initiatives that help find and identify the remains of children who were victims of the residential school system, including school-specific research and knowledge gathering. We hope it will commemorate these children and return their remains home to their families, where possible.

Know that your Métis Government will continue to work with Canada on the issues that are important to our Citizens, like the aftermath of the residential school system and, through Metis child and family services, protecting our children from the loss of cultural and family connections that were hallmarks of the residential school system.

We'll also keep talking about other issues that you've told us are important, including identity, health care, land claims, and self-government, as we know that the only real pathway forward for our Nation is through partnerships and cooperation.

Resolving these issues is a major focus of your Métis Government, so that our future is secured and safe from the risk of changing political tides. As history has taught us yesterday and even today, and at times other governments teach us, we cannot be confident that all parties or elected officials will partner with us in the same way or to the same degree.

The resilience of the Métis Nation

In the Métis Nation, perhaps we can see the silver lining of our long fight to right the wrongs done to our Nation. Our fight has prepared us to withstand any and all threats to the fabric of our Nation, including the harms done by the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop.

This means that while we mourn the horror of the Kamloops discovery and the continuing pain of our families, our communities, and our fellow Indigenous peoples, we know how to be resilient. We know how to withstand and overcome. We know how to support each other through hard times.

I offer my prayers to all our Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve, including the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and all those families who still suffer today.

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

Manitoba Métis Community members honoured with Indspire Awards

Two members of the Manitoba Métis Community have received 2021 Indspire Awards, which honour Indigenous achievers who have made an outstanding contribution to their communities.

Dr. Catherine Cook



An Indigenous health leader and the current Vice-President (Indigenous) at the University of Manitoba (U of M), Dr. Catherine Cook received an Indspire Award for Health.

“This is so amazing. The Indspire Award is really the only award nationally that is given to us by our community,” Dr. Cook said, “not only recognizing us as professionals who have made a contribution, but recognizing us as Métis or First Nations or Inuit people who have made a specific contribution to our community. And it’s an incredible honour.”

Dr. Cook, who is Métis, grew up in the hunting, fishing, and trapping community of Matheson Island. Since completing medical school at the University of Manitoba in 1987, she has accumulated a long list of accolades: the Deputy Minister’s Award for Excellence from Health Canada; the May Cohen Award for Gender Equity & Diversity from the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada; and the Dr. Thomas Dignan Indigenous Health Award from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, among others.

Dr. Cook worked as a family physician for about 10 years before she entered public health, including serving as Vice-President of Population and

Aboriginal Health at the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Most recently, she has worked in health administration and management. Her past titles at the U of M include: Director of the Centre for Aboriginal Health Education; Inaugural Associate Dean of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Health for the Max Rady College of Medicine; and Inaugural Vice-Dean, Indigenous, at the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences.

Quickly noticing the significant inequities in the way Indigenous people were able to access care, Dr. Cook chose to focus on the social determinants of health when she entered the public health field – and her role as Vice-President (Indigenous) at the U of M continues that approach.

“A good, solid education makes probably the biggest difference in how you will live your life. And we know that there are inequities in our communities, and certainly particularly our rural and northern young people don’t always arrive at university with the same advantages that urban or even small-town individuals do. So part of what we’re doing is that community engagement,” she added. “Really looking at making some structural changes at the university that will make a difference in how our young people access the education that they want and need to do well.”

Justin Langan



Justin Langan, a Métis Youth leader and mental health advocate, was honoured with an Indspire Award as a Youth Recipient.

“I have always been so proud of what Indspire does for Indigenous Youth and students, and it certainly had inspired me to become a greater Métis Youth leader. Of course, when I heard the news I was going to receive an Indspire Award, I was elated and incredibly honoured,” Langan said. “It also helped me to reflect on everything I have done, and more importantly, who I have done it with. Through my volunteerism, I have gotten to know so many kind and inspiring Youth leaders doing incredible things in their community, and I hope that this recognition can inspire more Youth to become leaders and create positive change in the world.”

Langan, who recently completed the first year of his Bachelor of Arts degree at the U of M, also has a diploma from Assiniboine Community College in Interactive Media Arts. His accolades are lengthy as well. He was nominated for a Canadian Association of Journalists Award, won a Manitoba Indigenous Youth Achievement Award, and was named one of CBC Manitoba’s Future 40, to name a few.

A Métis Citizen, Langan has been active on Manitoba Metis Federation Youth committees, serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Métis Youth newsletter, *The Cart*, and is currently working on an Elder and Youth interview series for the Northwest Métis Council.

As for his upcoming projects, Langan said he has been focused on creating an Indigenous clothing brand where 10 per cent of each purchase will help fund Youth initiatives, programming, and scholarships.

“I hope to launch my brand later this month, and this could not have been possible without help from the Louis Riel Capital Corporation,” he said.

This summer, Langan will highlight Indigenous talent through short films in his home community of Swan River.

“After summer, I will be back for my second year at the University of Manitoba in the fall where I hope to bring even more Indigenous initiatives to students,” he said. “I encourage all Indigenous Youth to follow their passions and never give up in anything they do.”

The Indspire Awards air on CBC and APTN on June 22 at 7pm. Check your local listings or visit [indspire.ca](https://www.indspire.ca) for details.

Métis ecologists making a splash in the saltwater ecosystem industry



Derrick and Lyndon Jameson, owners of Into the Blue, stand in front of a recently installed 12-by-70-foot mural, which incorporates their Francophone roots, on the side of their St. Vital storefront.

Derrick and Lyndon Jameson knew that becoming entrepreneurs after completing bachelor's degrees in biological sciences was not a typical career trajectory.

"It is a very odd thing for two people that have their biological sciences degree to open a business," said Derrick Jameson, who co-owns, along with Lyndon, saltwater and freshwater ecosystem supplier Into the Blue. "It's not normal, it's not really one of those paths that they ever talk to you about in school is for you to become an entrepreneur from being a biologist."

But the Jameson twins' passion for aquariums had been brewing for years, and the seeds of the saltwater ecosystem industry had been planted long before. Growing up with a freshwater tank, the brothers graduated to their first saltwater tank at the age of 12, turning their hobby into a small business venture.

"We were breeding geckos when we were 12," Derrick said. "We would sell the babies to pet stores to give us credit so that we could buy stuff for our saltwater tank. That's kind of how we kept going with our hobby at the age that we were."

Derrick and Lyndon started to service tanks on the side, and later began studying marine ecology at the University of Manitoba.

Coming out of school, Derrick said, they had conducted a lot of research across the country, including helping with humpback whale identification

surveys off the East Coast. "We worked for a fishery consultant all over Manitoba and other provinces doing fisheries work in our lakes.

"Lyndon and I loved the idea of field work," Derrick said, "but we didn't like being away all the time."

"But we loved meeting the people along the way," he added. "We really like sales and clients, customer service, and talking to people and educating people on what we're doing.

"Throughout our life, we always made a joke that we'll open a pet store when we retire, and when we graduated, there was kind of an opening in the market where one of the big stores closed," Derrick said.

The marine specialists decided to start their business as Jameson Saltwater Ecosystems at an 800-square-foot storefront on St. Mary's Road in 2014.

Five years in, the duo had almost paid off their loans and were getting comfortable. Left with the decision to plateau or expand, they decided to move to a 4,000-square-foot storefront on St. Anne's Road, completely revamping the space to the tune of \$300,000.

The store, now known as Into the Blue, offers freshwater ecosystems in addition to saltwater, and is more open and interactive, with a shark tank and feeding spaces. It also includes a mock living room to show prospective clients what an aquarium would

look like in their homes. Into the Blue also offers maintenance services, and installation of custom aquariums in residential and commercial spaces.

Amid the innovation, Derrick and Lyndon have had to navigate some murky waters during the pandemic.

Derrick said that the overall foot traffic during the pandemic has significantly decreased, and they spent money on an online system to try to increase sales, which didn't see any returns.

"Most people like to visually see their fish, and when you're spending the amount of money that they spend on a saltwater fish or coral," Derrick said, "they always enjoy the adventure of coming to the store and seeing and interacting, because we strive for the best customer service."

COVID-19 restrictions don't help foster the kind of environment the store is known for – a family-friendly, social atmosphere, with regular clients coming to the St. Vital storefront for weekly visits.

"There's no way to entice them (now) because they're in and out," Derrick said. "It has really affected that dynamic for us."

The servicing side of the business helps balance out the decrease in sales to keep the business afloat, he added.

The brothers credit the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) as a huge support system and community during these challenges, with funding from the Metis Emergency Business Loan program through the Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC), an MMF affiliate.

Derrick referred to it as "this unbelievable guardian feeling of always having somebody there to help you out."

Derrick and Lyndon felt that support from the beginning, with LRCC offering grants and guidance for the young entrepreneurs.

"We have felt a huge support from LRCC from starting this business; we wouldn't have done any of it without the support of LRCC or any of our Métis community, because it's such a scary thing – like we didn't have money from our family. Lyndon and I started with nothing," Derrick said.

"It's been difficult, but MMF has really just made things so much easier, relieved a lot of stress – they're just there for you no matter what, so I think that's kind of the big thing," said Lyndon. "It's just been a blessing to have them, really. We're just so lucky to be part of an amazing community."

For more information on Into the Blue, visit intothetheblueeco.ca.

MMF offering Pfizer vaccine to Métis families



Frances Chartrand, Minister of Health & Wellness, received her second vaccine shot on May 13 as part of the MMF's partnership with Long Plain First Nation.

The Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is taking appointments for first and second doses of the Pfizer vaccine at the MEDOCare Pharmacy at the MMF Home Office in Winnipeg.

The MMF vaccine clinic had opened its doors back in April, when MEDOCare Pharmacy received 100 doses of AstraZeneca. Since then, the MMF has been able to acquire Pfizer vaccines and has been increasing the number of doses on a weekly basis since May 13, with inoculators supplying 100 first doses to MMF staff and their households that first week. The clinic provided 200 doses for Métis Citizens and their households in the Winnipeg Region the following week, and the next two weeks saw the administration of 300 and 400 Pfizer doses, respectively. At press time, the MMF had dispensed 994 Pfizer doses in all: 469 first doses and 552 second doses. Fifteen per cent of vaccine recipients at the clinic were Youth, while 30 per cent were seniors. The MMF is continuing to book appointments and expects to administer over 2,500 vaccines by the end of the month.

The MMF also partnered with Chief Dennis Meeches of Long Plain First Nation in April to coordinate a vaccine clinic for Elders and seniors in the Southwest Region as well as MMF frontline staff. One hundred frontline MMF staff and Elders in the Region who received their first dose of the Moderna vaccine at the clinic in Long Plain First Nation travelled back to receive their second dose on May 13.

Frances Chartrand, Minister of Health & Wellness, said it was important to vaccinate staff because of the frontline services the MMF provides to Citizens.

"The Métis Government staff has been working continuously: delivering hampers, making sure that they are doing wellness checks, making sure that our support services were all in full force," she said.

The MMF made sure to include frontline workers in its Child and Family Services agencies in the Pfizer rollout, as well as eligible children in care and their households.

"Right now, we are working with Child and Family Services to make sure that all the children in care and

foster parents and their families are all getting their vaccine," Minister Chartrand said.

A high priority for the MMF was for Elders and seniors to receive their vaccines.

"You look at our Elders that had to stand in line at (the RBC Convention Centre), stand in line at all these pop-up clinics. We wanted to make sure that our Elders and seniors were treated respectfully. And they came in, and they trust us, they trust their Métis Government," she said, adding that Citizens come to the MMF for vaccine information and advice.

"We were able to talk with them and explain to them why it was important to take the vaccine."

Additionally, the MMF offers transportation to Citizens in need of help attending their appointment, after which staff follow up with Elders to see how they are doing.

For months, the MMF had been advocating to the provincial government to receive doses for its Citizens, and Minister Chartrand said it has been a relief to finally be able to offer vaccines to Citizens.

"Finally, after all of our struggles with the provincial government, and working to make sure that they recognize the Métis Government to take care of the Métis Citizens, we're able to provide programs and services and the vaccine to our Métis Citizens when we should have been able to do that right from Day 1," Minister Chartrand said.

She added that the province directs vaccines to pharmacies across the province, and because we have the MEDOCare Pharmacy, which is located at the MMF Home Office, the structure was already in place.

"We had the structure to utilize our pharmacy and utilize our Regional Offices, but now, they couldn't say no to us because they're giving it to pharmacies all across the province," Minister Chartrand said.

To put the clinic together, the MMF had to find its own inoculators. The MMF succeeded with this undertaking and was able to employ several Métis and First Nations immunizers, who have an understanding of culturally appropriate health care service delivery.

"We still have the day-to-day operations of our pharmacy, and of course, we are busy," Minister Chartrand said. "So we have staff that are continuously partnering and working with our partners to ensure that we are offering top-quality services."

The University of Manitoba and Louis Riel Vocational College helped provide the MMF with students training in the medical field and in graduate school to

work as clinic support staff, information entry clerks, and coordinators.

"I'm so grateful for our partners," Minister Chartrand said.

The MMF will continue to offer its vaccine clinic each week to meet with demand.

"As long as we continue getting the vaccine, we will make sure that our Citizens are vaccinated, and we are going to make sure that we promote our vaccine campaign. Continue taking care of yourself, protect your healthy lifestyle – this vaccine will continue saving lives, saving your families, making sure you are safe when you go out in the general public. We will continue lobbying the government to be part of the vaccine rollout," Minister Chartrand said.

The MMF is also looking to expand into each Region, starting with the Interlake and Southeast Regions.

"Staff are working to strategize and move across the province; if the need arises, we will go to the Regions all across the province," Minister Chartrand added.

Citizens and their household ages 12 and up can book an appointment at the MMF Home Office by calling **1-833-390-1041**, or emailing megan.szajewski@mmf.mb.ca or rachelleneault@mmf.mb.ca.

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!



Ready for Vanity Fur