



The Indigenous community of Canada has grappled with many challenges over the years, from the harmful impacts of the residential and day school system to the aftermath of the Sixties Scoop. For the Red River Métis, our most recent challenge has been handling the impacts of COVID-19 without a distinctions-based healthcare strategy to protect our Nation. For these reasons, and so many others, it's vital that our voices be heard and that we show all elected officials that we matter. The only way we can do that is through expressing ourselves when it counts – and right now, that means getting out and voting on September 20.

I am very pleased with the tremendous response we've received from Citizens about our incentive program to encourage the Red River Métis vote. As a reminder, any Red River Métis Nation Citizen, or individual able to demonstrate that they are eligible to become a Citizen, who takes a picture outside of a polling station and tags the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), will have their name put into a draw to win a PS5 console or the grand prize – a brand new Chevy Spark. Those Citizens who help to bring five other individuals to their correct polling station will also be eligible to win one of five 50-inch flat-screen televisions.

On September 10, the first day of advance polls, over 50 Cabinet members and staff, including me, took an hour to head to the polling station and cast our own votes. Not only was it important for us to demonstrate leadership in getting out to vote, we wanted to be sure we were available to offer our support to Citizens in all Regions on September 20. For any Citizen who needs help getting to the polling station or any other support in getting out to vote, I urge you to contact the Home Office or your Regional Office for assistance – your Métis Government has your back.

If you're still considering your vote and informing yourself about the party platforms, we have additional resources to help you. On our website, you will find a list of 15 priorities you identified, along with the verbatim responses to these priorities from the parties. For ease of reference, we are also offering a consolidated view of the party responses in a table format, which is also posted on our website.

What we have found is that most of the major parties contending to lead the federal government are committed to advancing truth and reconciliation, but the details and the degree to which they have incorporated this commitment into their plans can be quite different.

The Bloc Québécois are the only party that did not provide a detailed response to our inquiry.

However, the Liberal Party of Canada (Liberal), the Green Party of Canada (Green), and the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) have all provided details highlighting how their platforms include our Nation's priorities and needs.

Liberal commitments to the Red River Métis

The Liberals clearly committed to nine of our 15 priorities, with two additional partial commitments. The Liberals committed to recognition of our treaty rights, and negotiations for settling our land claim. They also committed to completing the process of transferring full responsibility and jurisdiction to the MMF for Métis child and family services.

The Liberals further committed to co-developing distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation, removing barriers for Indigenous businesses within the federal procurement contract process, and working with the MMF to "improve educational outcomes for Métis students in post-secondary institutions."

Partial commitments include support for "addressing the needs of Manitoba Métis businesses and entrepreneurs, including support for traditional and cultural businesses, and increasing broadband access in rural and remote communities." They further confirmed their commitment to working with the MMF to support greater economic participation of our businesses in Canada and around the world.

Green commitments to the Red River Métis

The Greens clearly committed to five of our priorities, including recognition of our treaty rights, and good faith negotiations for settling our land claim. They also stated that they want "to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Indigenous people as identified in international law,

constitutional law and under the treaties," as per the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

They further committed to supporting education by boosting access to apprentice programs in key trades and investing in Métis students through consultation and collaboration with the MMF, governments, universities, and colleges.

Their final clear commitment was in distinction-based set-asides, which would help Citizens access a proportionate share of contracts with Canada and allow time for individuals to gain the needed skills to successfully compete for contracts in our communities, saying they would work to "ensure First Nations, Inuit and Métis businesses have access to and success in government procurement."

NDP commitments to the Red River Métis

The NDP clearly committed to three of our priorities, including recognition of our treaty rights, concluding negotiations for settling our land claim to our satisfaction, and completing the process of transferring full responsibility and jurisdiction to the MMF for Métis child and family services.

They also provided partial commitments to supporting the growing microbusiness economy and our participation in the international marketplace.

Conservative commitments to the Red River Métis

The Conservative Party of Canada provided a high-level response and committed to providing a more detailed and fulsome plan for a Red River Métis-specific approach. To date, we are still waiting for this plan.

Why should I vote?

As you can see, each party has a different approach and philosophy to addressing the needs of the Red River Métis.

We have gained so much ground in recent years. We can now provide up to \$20,000 in funding over four years for our post-secondary students and offer funding to Citizens to make much-needed repairs to their homes or purchase their first home – we've already helped Citizens purchase over 500 houses. We're opening daycare centres across the province that will employ hundreds of early childcare workers. We're seeing Métis entrepreneurs excel in the emerging microbusiness economy and are finding ways to support these innovative entrepreneurs, along with the farmers, ranchers, and fishers who are dedicated to preserving our traditional economies. We've begun the process of taking over jurisdiction for our children in care, ensuring that the system

moves from apprehension to prevention. We've received a multimillion-dollar stimulus package to generate economic growth and recovery in the post-pandemic era.

These are just some examples of how the federal government can affect our Nation. This is why all Red River Métis Citizens must get out and vote. I urge you to look at each party and decide which will help your Nation continue to gain ground, should they form government. Look at the party platforms and make

the choice that allows you to stand for your friends and family.

I also encourage you to ensure your eligible family, friends, and community members are able to get to the polls and vote in this critical election. I ask our seniors and Elders – the Knowledge Keepers and protectors of our traditions – to spend time speaking with the Youth in their community in the days leading up to September 20, to help them understand how important it is to vote.

While your Métis Government continues to work on these long-term supports for our Nation, I encourage everyone to stay safe and follow the public health guidelines, particularly with the Delta variant causing so much harm in Western Canada. 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. ∞

Brandi Vezina releases debut album



Métis singer-songwriter Brandi Vezina releases her debut album, *#dontsettle*, on September 24.

With a long line of musicians in her Métis family, singer-songwriter Brandi Vezina has had a lot to look up to. Her grandparents, Doc and Elder Marcella Vezina, have been performing country tunes for years, and her mother, Holly Vee, is a recording artist known for the song "Settler's Granddaughter." In addition, her country/rock singer-songwriter brother, Jesse Bandura, was number one on the Indigenous Music Countdown last year.

While Vezina's musical influences include country and rock musicians such as Johnny Cash, the Rolling Stones, and Miranda Lambert, Vezina is also inspired by Métis musicians like Ray St. Germain – as well as her own family.

"Both my grandparents and mom were major influences," she said. "I watched them sing and make moves in the music industry growing up. My mom had a big CD release party, which was a big deal at the time."

Vezina said there was always music in her grandparents' home.

"I remember parties in the kitchen. Those memories make a lasting impression on you. My family always made music – that's what we did," she said. "I come by my music roots honestly. I started singing with the Why Knott Band when I was a teenager, I got my chops with my papa, granny, and her siblings, my uncle Tommy Knott and auntie Beryl Bouvette's band."

Vezina has since performed at the Métis Jig & Jam, a virtual variety show hosted by the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) for National Indigenous Peoples Day last year, as well as at the sākīhiwē festival, and the Recovery Day live event. She has released music videos for singles such as "John Dillinger Type," "Danger," and "Alberta Rose," a song based on her mother's experience as a young single parent. This year, she won the Jim Beam Virtual National Talent Search for Manitoba, and was nominated for Métis Artist of the Year at the Summer Solstice Indigenous Music Awards. She is also nominated for the NCI FM Indigenous Country Music Award at the upcoming Manitoba Country Music Awards.

Vezina – also an educator, author, Infinity Women Secretariat Southeast Board Member, and Treasurer for the MMF Stony Point Local – is just getting started. Her deeply personal debut album, *#dontsettle*, will be released on September 24.

"These are pages from my journal – it's personal and parts of my story. I hope people feel my sincerity and vulnerability. My music is an authentic piece of me," Vezina said. "I create from a place deep within my spirit and allow what's inside of me out. I hope my fans can feel that and have a better connection and understanding of me."

While one of her favourite songs to play live is "Waiting on a Ring," a song about not settling in relationships and in life, Vezina said it is hard for her to say which song is her favourite.

"'Walk Away' reminds me of how far I have come,

and I know it's still helping people," she said.

Vezina said working on this album and her music has been the highlight of her life so far.

"I love bringing a song to life. Writing a song is always beautiful, as is pre-production and recording. Planning the video concept and photography brings more vision and clarity to the song's meaning. I love creating music – it's such a blessing to do what I love."

A release party will kick off Vezina's debut on September 25 at 7pm at the Royal Albert Hotel, hosted by Jordan Knight.

"I really want people to have a good time," she said. "Riley Dutiaume, Lucien Spence, and my brother Jesse Bandura are going to be guests. It's going to be fun!"

After the release party, Vezina will be touring with the Manitoba Arts Network in October with her band.

"We will be going into the Northwest, Interlake, and Southeast regions," she said. "I can't wait! It's going to be an amazing opportunity. Hopefully lots of our Citizens will come out and watch."

Vezina is already planning for a follow-up single to be released next year.

For more about Vezina and *#dontsettle*, visit brandivezina.com/.

Giving back key to University of Waterloo valedictorian's success



Kyle Rowe, University of Waterloo
faculty of arts valedictorian.

Volunteering has been at the forefront of Kyle Rowe's post-secondary experience.

The University of Waterloo faculty of arts valedictorian began volunteering as a marketing director for a tech event in Waterloo.

"We succeeded in being one of the very first tech events in Ontario with over 1,000 attendees to have over 50 per cent identify as female, which was a huge accomplishment I'm still very proud of today," Rowe said.

He also held the co-president position for the University of Waterloo's Entrepreneurship Society.

"We hosted workshops, panels, and large-scale networking events to create student-employer connections. I was also elected to the board of my program where, as a member of student government, I helped represent my program to the university and aided in allocating funds to improve the student experience," Rowe said.

In addition, he volunteered teaching conversational English to international students.

"My last partner was from Pakistan," he said.

Prior to the post-secondary program, Rowe said he was like most other teenagers.

"I loved playing sports and video games, and my high school grades weren't particularly impressive," he said. "After graduation I'm now working full time, and this year I'll begin to apply for master's degree programs across the world."

Rowe graduated with an honours bachelor of global business and digital arts degree, and a global experience certificate. He now works in North Vancouver as a digital marketing specialist for i-worx, a cloud services provider.

The 22-year-old credits his great experience at the University of Waterloo to all of the extracurricular activities he was involved in.

Three consecutive Indspire Building Brighter Futures scholarships from 2018 to 2020 also gave Rowe the freedom to focus on his schooling instead of working during a full course load.

"This freedom also allowed me to take on more volunteer roles, which gave me the experience, credentials, and connections to one day later become valedictorian," he said. "I have no doubt that without Indspire's support, it would have been much more difficult to accomplish everything I was able to do during my undergrad. I'm very grateful to have received multiple years of support from Indspire."

Rowe was overjoyed to be selected as valedictorian.

"It was an incredible feeling, and I could not have been more proud and honoured to represent my graduating faculty and community," he said. "When I applied to Waterloo in 2017, I considered my acceptance to be a long shot. To be named valedictorian four years later is a pretty incredible feeling I still have trouble articulating."

Because of Rowe's positive academic experience, he's interested in giving back in the form of mentorship. "What I love about mentorship is the ability to pass on what I have learned throughout my four years of university to younger students. A few years ago, I had two mentors who really pushed me to become who I am today. I can safely say that being a mentee helped me a lot," he said.

"Now that I'm graduated and have experience working or volunteering in nearly all parts of university, I feel I can help a lot of students, especially if they don't have anyone with this experience nearby. University can be a very stressful experience, and I love that I might be able to help some students on their academic and professional journey."

Rowe hit the ground running working with Indigenous initiatives, starting with Rivers to Success, an Indspire mentorship initiative for Indigenous high school and post-secondary students, in September.

"I will be providing mentorship and guidance to up to three students on topics such as resume preparation, mock interviews, course selection, and any other academic or career guidance they may need," he said.

Rowe also volunteers with the alumni branch of the

University of Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre to provide mentorship to students and help guide the strategic vision of the university.

"My goal over the next few years is to complete a master's degree in international marketing and brand management while continuing to volunteer and mentor," he said.

While he is from North Vancouver, the Manitoba Métis Federation Citizen feels connected to his Red River Métis roots.

"When I was growing up, my mom would tell my brother and (me) stories and explain our heritage and background. With the recent, horrible, and recurring news surrounding residential schools, I felt increasingly connected to my heritage and an intense desire to showcase Métis resiliency and successes not only in Canada but across the world," he said.

Anyone interested in academic advice can contact Rowe at kylorowe604@gmail.com.

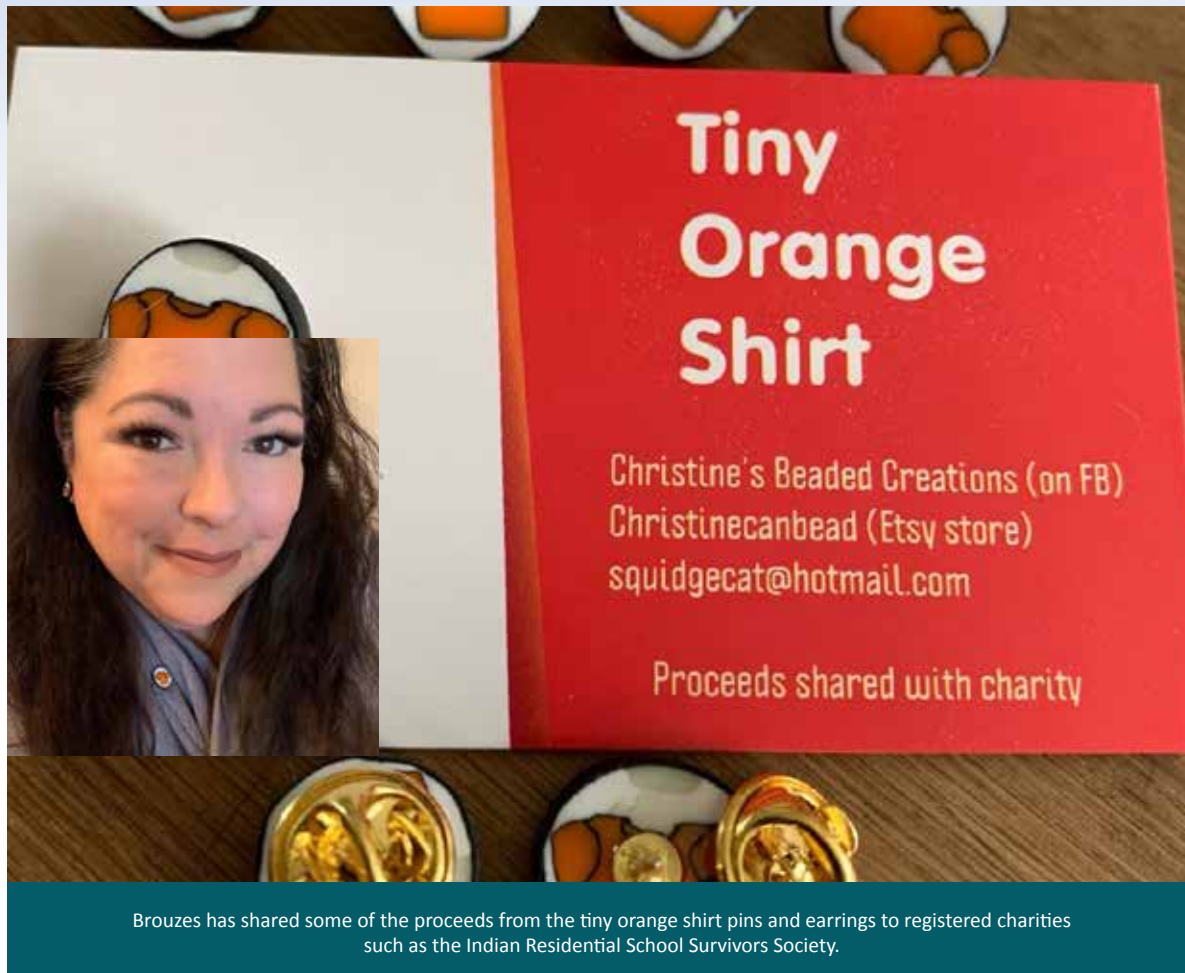
Community Photo

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@mmbf.mb.ca and you may see it in print!



Vet?! I thought you said vax!

Tiny little pins and earrings spreading awareness about residential schools



Brouzes has shared some of the proceeds from the tiny orange shirt pins and earrings to registered charities such as the Indian Residential School Survivors Society.

Métis maker Christine Brouzes was beading medallions for customers on her Etsy page when orders dried up from the pandemic.

"Nobody was able to purchase or order artwork when the pandemic started, so I began exploring clay, and working with clay, and making smaller, more intricate images," she said.

One of those images was a little red dress, the symbol honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). The tiny red dress earrings and pins became really popular during the pandemic.

"They are smaller – much, much less expensive than putting in 10, 12 hours of beading into one medallion, so people could afford to buy a small symbol that they wanted to help support a cause with," said Brouzes.

The Manitoba Métis Federation Citizen sold the pins through her Etsy store and social media. She even made TikToks about them. Some of the proceeds went to the Native Women's Association of Canada, as well as a Winnipeg MLA who puts on events that support families affected by the MMIWG crisis.

"Then those sales and interests started to slow down,

and that's when the revelation of unmarked graves began to surface in Canada. A lot of people were wanting to put on and wear orange t-shirts, and there was a shortage of orange t-shirts across Canada, I noticed on social media," Brouzes said.

"I thought, 'I could make that image out of clay, and then people could wear a tiny pin or tiny earrings to show their support and spread awareness of the truth regarding residential schools. And I could share those profits with charities that directly support that need.'"

She mused that some people might not be able to wear an orange shirt to work because they may be wearing a uniform, scrubs, or a suit, but they could still wear a pin to show their support.

"I made these tiny clay images and put them on my Etsy store and social media and made a couple of TikToks, and they really took off," Brouzes said.

She has now shipped these pins and earrings to every province and territory in Canada, and beyond.

"These tiny little pins and earrings that I've been making and selling, I have shipped them all around the world now. It's just so inspiring for me to imagine this tiny little important image going off into the

mail to New Zealand, to Ireland, to all of the United States," Brouzes said.

"I hope that when somebody's wearing one of these pins or earrings, that a friend of theirs or a stranger will say, 'Oh, that's cute, what does that mean?' and then that person, if they choose, (will) share a little bit about the cause. It's just a way of spreading the truth and spreading information about such important topics."

Brouzes has shared some of the proceeds from the tiny orange shirt pins and earrings to registered charities such as the Indian Residential School Survivors Society.

The tiny clay pins and earrings take a couple of days intermittently. In one evening, Brouzes will sit down and work with the clay and the various colours.

"In the tiny orange shirt pins, there's three colours of clay: orange, of course, white as a background, and black that outlines the shirt and surrounds the outside of the pin," she said.

"In one evening, in a few hours, I make the clay images and I cook them, because they have to be baked in my oven at home. So, I'll bake a couple of rounds of that."

That night, they will sit and cure.

"Then the next evening, I'll sit down for a few hours and painstakingly glue with a special glue, attach the backs onto them, and I use a magnifying glass so that I can see what I'm doing. So that takes a few hours. And then that special glue has to cure for at least 48 hours before they can be packaged and shipped and mailed off," Brouzes said.

"So, it's a few days of a process, and several hours of work, but I don't feel like it's work. I enjoy the process. And similar to beading, when I'm beading and doing beadwork, it has to be done with a clear, calm, peaceful state, because I don't want negative energy from my heart to be going into my work. So, in the evenings that I sit down to do beading or to make these pins, it's always a lovely process. I listen to nice music and put aside all of my own worries and stresses, and put positive energy into my work."

Her next set of pins and earrings involve the Water is Life image. To purchase Brouzes' tiny clay pins and earrings, as well as her beadwork, visit her Etsy page at <https://www.etsy.com/ca/shop/Christinecanbead>.