



Le Métis



"We must seek to preserve the existence of our own people. We must not by our own act allow ourselves to be swamped. If the day comes when that is done, it must be by no act of ours."

"Pray that God may preserve the little Métis Nation and cause it to grow . . . and remain faithful to its mission. During the five years that I must pass in exile, I have only this to say to the Métis: Remain Métis, become more Métis than ever."

— Louis Riel

From the days of Cuthbert Grant and Louis Riel to today, the Red River Métis have fought vigorously to preserve and protect our identity and independence, earning the name Otipemisiwak – the people who own themselves. It's who we are and what we stand for. We have always known we can accomplish anything, as long as we remain united.

When Louis Riel and John Bruce informed MacDougall that he could not enter the Northwest – our Homeland – without permission in October of 1869, they made the declaration as the national government of the Red River Métis.

Today, the Manitoba Métis Federation is the democratic government and national voice of the Red River Métis, also known as the Manitoba Métis, which is the origin, root, and core of the Métis Nation. Our ancestors negotiated Canada's entry into the Northwest, and Manitoba's entry into Confederation. We remain committed to advancing our work to meet the needs of your family and your community, while we advance our Nation.

Last week, we paused to honour our veterans, peacekeepers and champions of democracy and reflect on their accomplishments and sacrifices. We have rapidly moved from having the deeds and

President's Message

valour of our veterans completely unrecognized and our soldiers uncounted, to this time and place where people are becoming increasingly aware of their contributions.

However, there is a sharp contrast between this increased recognition for our veterans and the continued disregard for our distinct heritage and history by those falsely claiming it as their own.

Identity theft in two cases

The most recent high-profile case of identity theft at the University of Saskatchewan has provoked outrage in the public eye. It's good to see that Canadians are starting to understand the challenges faced by the Indigenous community, particularly when people claim our identity without any basis in fact.

However, this case also highlights the fact that many Canadians still do not understand that the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) left the Métis National Council because of the risk of large-scale identity theft.

Let's be clear – there is very little difference between what has happened in Saskatchewan and what the Métis National Council is trying to do to our heritage and history.

We are the originators of the Red River Cart, the Red River Jig, the flower beadwork produced by our mothers and grandmothers and the music of our nation. We have a very clearly outlined and documented history that includes our interactions with the Catholic Church, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian government, as well as the creation of the first treaty of the Northwest with the *Manitoba Act*, predating the numbered treaties with the First Nations.

Has anyone ever heard of a Simcoe Jig? Or a Matawa Cart? Of course not, because they don't exist.

And yet interest groups in these cities and other places in Ontario are calling themselves Métis, wearing our sashes and combining our cultural artifacts with other artifacts from the First Nations in Ontario. They are doing this with the support of the Métis Nation of Ontario and the remaining members of the Métis National Council.

Even our flag, the oldest flag in Canada, is being used by those who don't belong to us. First unfurled at the Victory of Frog Plain/Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816, the flag announced the presence of *la nouvelle nation*. We had become a nation, with a political consciousness and a sharp awareness of our rights – rights we were prepared to defend against any and all who challenged us.

A monument to the Battle of Seven Oaks – called the Seven Oaks Massacre at the time, to ensure the Red River Métis were portrayed as the villains – still stands today on Main Street in downtown Winnipeg.

Now, people in Ontario want to connect themselves to us by proclaiming their mixed ancestry and wrapping themselves and their communities in our flag. This is particularly disturbing coming from a part of Canada that actively fought against our political consciousness and our collective will.

This is identity theft. The fact that it is being done by groups of people does not change the fact that it is identity theft. In both the individual and group cases, they are distorting our identity for their own gain and repurposing our history as their own. They are wearing our sashes and symbols and acting like they have a right to speak on our behalf.

But Canadians need to understand that Métis is not a shorthand for someone with an Indigenous ancestor. The Métis – the Red River Métis – have a distinct culture and history. To use our name as a generic term that applies to anyone in any region with Indigenous heritage violates that culture and identity.

Whether or not these individuals or communities have Indigenous ancestry, or if that ancestry makes them part of the nations their ancestors originated from, is not for us, as the Red River Métis, to decide. But it is up to us to be very clear that these groups and individuals are not us, and do not have a right to take our name.

We are finally regaining what was taken from our ancestors, and we cannot allow others to once again steal the opportunities that rightfully belong to our Citizens.

While we continue to do what we must to draw clear lines with the pan-Indigenous body calling itself the Métis National Council, we will also put greater rigour around ensuring that the only individuals who can claim to be Red River Métis are legitimately part of our nation.

The single source of truth for our identity

The fact is, the MMF is the modern-day successor of the 1869 *National Committee of the Red River Métis*, led by President John Bruce and President Louis Riel's 1869-70 Provisional Government. In July 2021, we affirmed our role when the MMF and Canada signed the *Manitoba Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement*.

That agreement means your Métis government is recognized and understood to be the exclusive voice and representative of the Red River Métis across

provincial and international boundaries. We are the government and representation of our nation, no matter where our Citizens, and those eligible to be Citizens, live. We are also the only body that can affirm the identity of our own Citizens.

Only through the MMF’s objective, transparent, and verifiable process, using the individual’s self-identification, genealogy, and supporting evidence, and our acceptance of this information, can a person be confirmed as Red River Métis and a part of our nation. No one else can make this representation or claim.

We will be communicating with all levels of government and post-secondary academic institutions to make it clear they can’t affirm any claims to our identity by themselves. We will collaborate and cooperate with these organizations to ensure that when they employ someone who says they are Red River Métis, we are all confident that the individual is part of our nation.

It is only through this work that we will be able to continue growing recognition for the heroism of our veterans and celebrating the deeds and

accomplishments of our Citizens, without having to contend with individuals and groups who want to grow their own recognition at our expense.

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. ∞

MMF helping Métis Youth start successful businesses during the pandemic



Métis entrepreneur Lexi Trudel started her business, Furniture Flips by Lex, with support from the MMF’s Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

Lexi Trudel had just graduated from university, had been laid off from her part-time work at a restaurant in 2020, and needed a hobby. Dusting off a dresser her grandmother had gifted her years before that was sitting in her garage, she quickly became interested in redoing furniture.

“Finally last summer I decided, I want to use this, let me paint it, make it cute. I posted it on social media and got so much feedback,” Trudel said. “Ever since then I’ve just become obsessed with it, and now it’s my life. And it was kind of just a fluke. I was bored one day, and now it’s become my career.”

The Métis Citizen now offers furniture revamps through Furniture Flips by Lex, operated out of her Winnipeg garage.

“People either bring me their old furniture – say they have something in their home, and it’s not the nicest, they want it fixed up to whatever they want,” she said. “They bring it to me, and I’ll fix it into whatever custom dream piece they want, and that’s been great. And if say I don’t have a client who comes to me, then I will scope – I thrift, I marketplace, I cruise back alleys and I look for free, cheap furniture. And I’ll fix it up and I’ll just sell it on my off time.”

Youth Entrepreneurship Program

Even though she minored in business management, the psychology major didn’t know much about starting a business.

“I kind of went in blind. My minor was business management, but I didn’t learn a whole lot, there’s a lot that I didn’t know, so when it came time to creating my business plan,” she said, “I reached out to so many people.”

One of those people was Shaun Hampton, Manager of Entrepreneurship Initiatives at the Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC), a Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) affiliate that provides loans and other assistance to Métis entrepreneurs looking to start or expand their small businesses. Through the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, part of an entrepreneurship initiative launched by the MMF in 2020, Trudel was provided a loan allowing her to jumpstart her career, buying supplies such as paint, stains, and sanding tools, as well as marketing expenses.

“Everything that I just needed to kind of jump off, and start myself up, so that was great,” she said.

In addition to the loan support, the Youth Entrepreneurship Program – a joint partnership between the LRCC and the MMF’s Métis Employment and Training department – offers business coaching, mentorship, and business plan assistance. “Shaun helped me a lot, even now,” Trudel said.

“The accounting part of the business side is the most difficult part for me. The easiest is doing the furniture. I love creating and painting, and doing all that – that’s the fun stuff for me. The difficult stuff is full details on the back of the business.”

While other programs in the initiative offer support to small and home-based businesses as well as Métis commercial fishers, the Youth Entrepreneurship Program is exclusive to Métis entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 29.

“The goal of the program is to get more Métis Youth involved and engaged in self-employment through the favourable interest rate (4 per cent), 25 per cent forgivable portion, and the mentorship support that is available through the program,” said Hampton.

Keanna Liske is another Métis entrepreneur who reached out to the MMF midway through the pandemic. A brow artist for over three years now, Liske was studying esthetics at MC College in Winnipeg when a speaker at her graduation sparked inspiration.

“I just fell in love with the drive for what she did, how she opened up her business at such a young age, and so I had gotten in contact with her after, and asked if I could work for her. I kind of just jumped right in and I was like, ‘I would love to work for you and learn from you.’ She gave me an opportunity to come in for a week trial, and then they ended up hiring me on the spot. That’s when I decided that I just fell in love with doing what I do,” Liske said.

Her employer was forced to close her business at the beginning of this year due to the pandemic, leaving Liske the opportunity to rent space on her own. As of this spring, the cosmetic tattoo artist offers microblading and micropigmentation services through her business, Brows by Keanna, in her own room at Bloom Esthetics on Portage Avenue.



Brow artist Keanna Liske offers microblading and micropigmentation services through Brows by Keanna – the business she started earlier this year with help from the MMF.

“I’d say the biggest challenge would be starting in the middle of a pandemic. I don’t think anybody really prepares you for that,” she said, adding that learning how to develop a viable online page and social media platform was key.

Liske was also provided a loan through the Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

“Financially just having support through MMF, it really kind of helped push me to make everything happen on such a small timeframe,” she said.

Hampton said that both Liske and Trudel inquired about the program in the same week.

“They were both eager to start a business but were coming at it from different perspectives,” he said.

While Liske was already working in the esthetics industry, Trudel had been pursuing furniture refinishing as a hobby before it became her career.

“They both showed a tremendous amount of courage in pushing forward to realize their goals of becoming business owners, which is a challenge at the best of times, but even more so during a pandemic,” said Hampton. “They were always open to taking advice and they were never hesitant to ask questions about the business planning process.”

The biggest takeaway Liske gets from working as a brow artist is the relationships she builds with her clients.

“I’m not just a brow artist. I’m people’s therapist, I’m their friend, all of that, so I always want my clients to come in and they’re not just going to be there getting their brows done. It’s kind of an opportunity for them to build that relationship with me and make sure that

they know I’m a safe place for them to come to,” she said. “I always want to make sure that I’m promoting how inclusive I am to everybody. I don’t ever want somebody to feel that they can’t come into my space.”

From dream to reality

Liske said her future goals would be to open up her own space.

“I would love to just have like a tiny little salon, have a couple girls working with me. I’m a very creative person, and I’m very artistic, so on my spare time I create little pieces and artwork, and I would love to be able to make that and sell it in my shop,” she said. “I also would love to support other small artists, especially Indigenous women who create pieces or sell pieces.”

Trudel has grown her business from working on one piece at a time in a living room shared with four roommates, to using her garage to work on eight pieces at once. She also recently purchased her first home, which will move her work space from a single-car, uninsulated garage, to a double-car garage offering much-needed insulation to work during the colder months, and allowing her the space to work on even more projects at a time.

“The difficulty has been space and room, and cleanliness. Woodworking is really messy, so that’s been a struggle, but like I said, (I’m) moving into a new space, and my social media has been growing. I’m working on many more projects now than I was before,” she said.

In addition to the thriving Furniture Flips by Lex, Trudel has been commissioned to refinish the tabletops at JOEY Kenaston – the same restaurant chain she previously worked for, for six years.

“I had to quit JOEY to still work at JOEY – in a different way – but they honestly really helped me out and their support has been great,” Trudel said.

She hopes to eventually expand to a storefront location in Winnipeg to showcase all of her pieces, perhaps with a studio in the back.

Trudel’s advice to Métis Youth looking to start a business is to pursue a passion.

“You have to find what you like, which took me 25 years to find,” she said. “Stick to what you’re good at, stick to your niche, and just go for it, you know? I believe in manifesting.”

Liske agrees.

“You just have to go for it. It’s always going to be scary. I don’t think that anybody is ever 100 per cent prepared to do something like this. I always would tell myself that if I don’t just jump into it and do it,

I’m never going to know if I’ll succeed or fail unless I try,” she said.

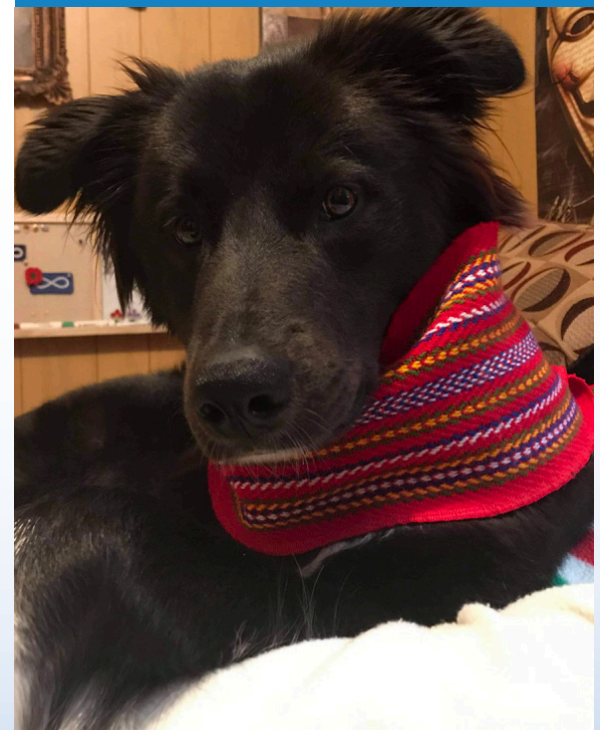
Hampton said the most rewarding aspect of managing entrepreneurship initiatives is the opportunity to work with clients and help them build a solid foundation anchored in planning and knowledge of their industry and marketplace.

“Based on the age of the clients in the Youth Entrepreneurship Program, they may have less life and work experience than the clients in the other programs, but that doesn’t mean they are more challenging to work with or their business ideas are any less viable,” he said. “As the province continues to open up, we are looking forward to being able to get out to the Regions across the province so that we can deliver workshops and presentations related to entrepreneurship and business development so that we can contribute to the building of the Métis culture of entrepreneurship all over Manitoba.”

For more information on MMF entrepreneurship initiatives, visit lrcc.mb.ca. Check out Brows by Keanna on Instagram at [@browsbykeanna](https://www.instagram.com/browsbykeanna), and Furniture Flips by Lex at furnitureflipsbylex.com and [@furnitureflipsbylex](https://www.instagram.com/furnitureflipsbylex).

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



Sash-ey away



REGIONAL YOUTH WORKER

The MMF seeks to fill one full-time Regional Youth Worker position within our Metis Employment & Training Department located within our MMF Southwest Regional Office at 656 6th Street in Brandon, MB.

The Regional Youth Worker is responsible for consulting with Metis Youth to implement Youth programming related to areas of employment and training, entrepreneurship, education, culture and heritage, and recreation. This position will aid our Metis Youth population reach their life, work, and educational goals, and the ideal candidate will have an energetic and positive attitude.

For more information, visit
mmf.mb.ca



**Metis
Employment
& Training**



Happy Holidays

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS FAST APPROACHING AND WE WANT TO HIGHLIGHT MÉTIS TRADITIONS AND FAMILY GATHERINGS.

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TO BE FEATURED IN UPCOMING LE METIS PUBLICATIONS AS
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