



# Le Métis



*Before I provide an update on your Métis government's recent initiatives and activities, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge our Nation's loss at the passing of Robert Gaudry. Robert was part of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Cabinet for many years and fought hard on behalf of our farmers, ranchers, and fishers. Robert also advanced the idea that our Nation's economic development was critical to our long-term stability and success, and we continue to benefit from this wisdom today. On behalf of Citizens, along with the MMF's Cabinet and staff, I want to express our condolences to his family and friends and offer our prayers during this difficult time.*

Even though winter is not yet done working its will on our province, you can begin to feel the sun's heat through the cold, which tells us that the season is starting to make its slow change to spring.

This is the time of year when we start to set our thinking toward the future and putting our plans into action after the cold winter months of planning.

Your Métis government has been hard at work delivering on programs and services needed by Red River Métis Citizens, and there are more activities and initiatives going on than I can possibly share in a single message.

If you're a regular listener of the *Métis Hour* x2 on NCI, you'll know that I always deliver a weekly report on our activities. I encourage you to tune in to the program, along with reading these regular messages, and checking out our website and social media. Together, these communications will give you an ongoing update on the progress we're making towards the goals you've told us are important to you.

## President's Message

For now, I want to share information about two important initiatives that we've been focusing on in recent weeks.

### Planning for our Annual General Assembly

Things are looking very positive for us to be able to return to our roots and gather in person at our Annual General Assembly, scheduled for March 25, 26, and 27 at the Assiniboia Downs.

While we were able to honour the spirit of our democratic processes last year through our first virtual Annual General Assembly, we had to accept the limitations of technology and keep attendance restricted to registered delegates. During this virtual Assembly, we passed only essential motions out of respect for our Citizens and our democratic process. We did not deliberate or vote on constitutional resolutions, choosing to wait until our next full Assembly to make sure our Citizens could meaningfully discuss, debate, and provide feedback on the proposed resolutions.

While we worked hard to stay connected throughout this pandemic, there's nothing in the world that feels better than spending time together at an in-person assembly. It's a tradition that goes all the way back to the very beginning of our culture. It is close to our hearts and a powerful tribute to the people who fought for our Nation in its infancy.

Plans are well underway for this spring, and I'm looking forward to finally being able to see Citizens and friends and hear about everything they've experienced over the last few years. I hope you're all as excited as I am to get together and dance, sing, laugh, and feast, while conducting the important business of advancing our Nation.

This Assembly will give us all a chance to start looking forward again and help us all heal our hearts and strengthen our community after the isolation of the last few years.

Of course, we will continue to respect any public health guidelines that are in place at the time of our Assembly, and all in-person attendees will need to be able to show proof of full vaccination. We will also be offering the option of virtual attendance to any Citizens who cannot come to the Assembly in person.

Keep an eye on our website and social media as we start sharing more details about this great event.

### Reviving the Red River Métis fur trade

In my travels, I have spoken with many individuals who either were trappers or are continuing to run traplines, keeping this traditional economy alive.

Nearly everyone I spoke with has told me that it's become almost impossible to earn a sustainable living from trapping, which is a source of grief for many who love working on the land and practicing our traditional ways.

Your Métis government is here to support trappers, through an investment of one million dollars into the creation of a fur company. This company will buy furs and hides at a good price, to help people working in one of our traditional economies make a living.

This investment will also allow us to support the growing microbusiness sector, which has been evolving at a rapid pace. For our Nation, there has been a significant growth in microbusinesses that focus on practicing our traditional arts like floral beading and moccasin making. We know many of our Red River Métis artists and artisans prefer traditionally harvested and treated hides and furs for their products. While we will explore new markets for the fur harvest, one of the new company's priorities will be providing these artists and artisans with the furs and hides harvested by our trappers.

Of course, as stewards of the land, we will make sure we're purchasing furs and hides from animals with high populations. That's one of the many reasons why it's important that we keep our focus on this company as a Red River Métis initiative for Red River Métis Citizens, as it reinforces our ongoing communication with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, local community members, and trappers and harvesters.

I hope that Red River Métis trappers are as excited as we are to bring back the trade that contributed significantly to our identity as a Nation. In many ways, it's bringing us home to our roots.

### Making time for family on Louis Riel Day

Monday, February 21 is Louis Riel Day in Manitoba. Other provinces refer to this holiday as Family Day, making Manitoba the only province to name this day after Louis Riel. We are proud to have helped ensure that this day truly honours our founding father and first Premier, Louis Riel.

The idea of this holiday – spending time with family and community – resonates with the culture of the Métis, just as it does with many other cultures that share our province. Family and community are essential to us all. On Louis Riel Day, I hope you all get a chance to cherish your loved ones, as the province celebrates the importance of family, province, and country.

The MMF has been actively engaged in preparing events and activities to help Citizens and all



Manitobans across all our Regions celebrate the day and acknowledge the important contributions of the Red River Métis and Louis Riel to our province. I encourage you to check out our website and social media to find an event near you, that you and your family can enjoy.

Until we can gather again, 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). O.M. ∞

## Métis author Desirée Gillespie reflects on seamless publishing experience

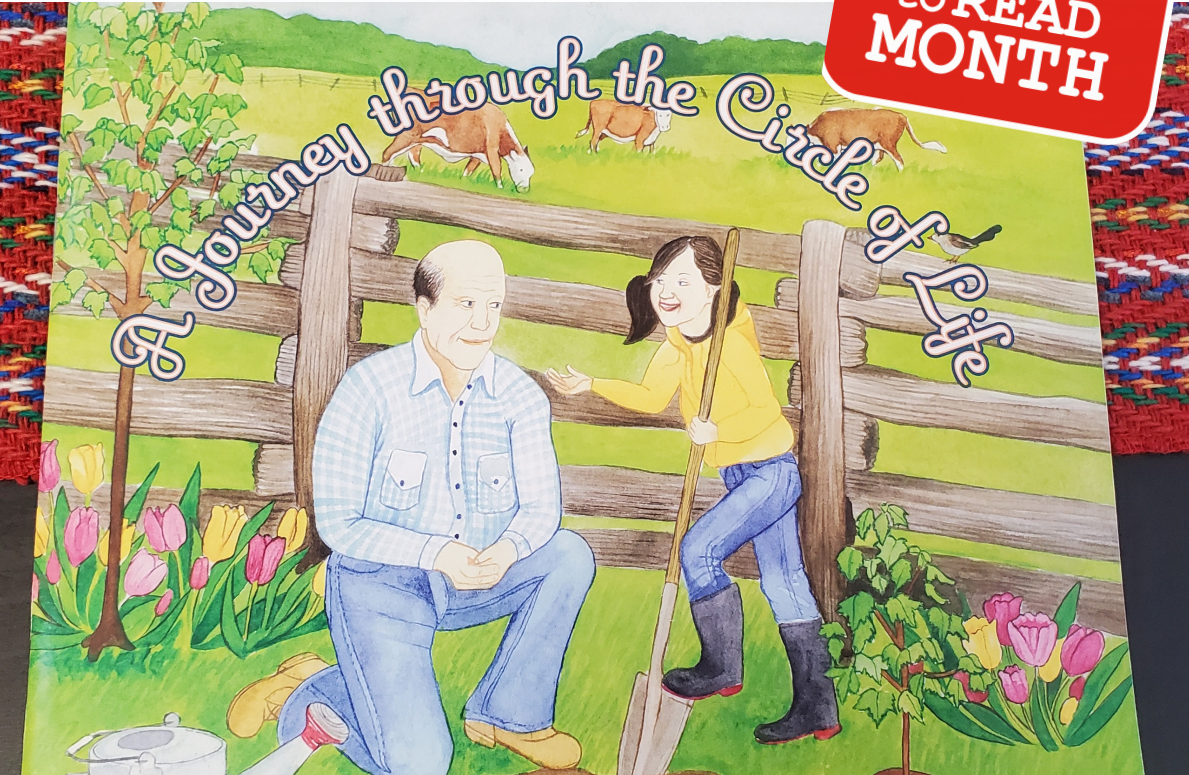


Métis author Desirée Gillespie has worked at the MMF for 22 years, and currently holds the role of Chief Quality Officer for the Metis Child and Family Services Authority.

Desirée Gillespie’s book first materialized as hand-drawn illustrations on paper bookended by cardboard and tied together with string as an assignment for the Métis Child and Family Community Diploma program, offered through Red River College and the Louis Riel Institute. The book assignment centred on helping children through trauma.

“We had to pick some serious themes, and death for children can be quite hard,” said Gillespie, who was already working for the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) at the time. “I did mine on the loss of a grandparent, because within that time I was at school, I had lost some family members.”

Her classmate, Cynthia Genaille, chose the subject of divorce for her book, which rhymed. Gillespie’s mother, Métis Child and Family Services Minister Mona Buors, a teacher at the time, brought both books to read to her class.



Gillespie’s book, *A Journey Through the Circle of Life*, tackles themes of protecting the environment, dealing with grief, and passing on family teachings.

“They actually loved it. They kept asking her, ‘Can you read it, can you read them again?’” Gillespie said.

At the time, Minister Buors sat on the board for Pemmican Publications, an MMF affiliate dedicated to publishing Métis authors and illustrators. Minister Buors recommended both books – *A Journey Through the Circle of Life* by Gillespie and *Boog the Bug* by Cynthia Genaille – to the board, and Gillespie was on her way to becoming a published author.

“I don’t want to call it a fluke, because I always believe that things happen for a reason,” Gillespie said, referring to the publishing process as a wonderful experience.

First published in 2007, *A Journey Through the Circle of Life* was well received. It was chosen for the province’s cultural curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12, and Gillespie took part in book signings at Chapters.

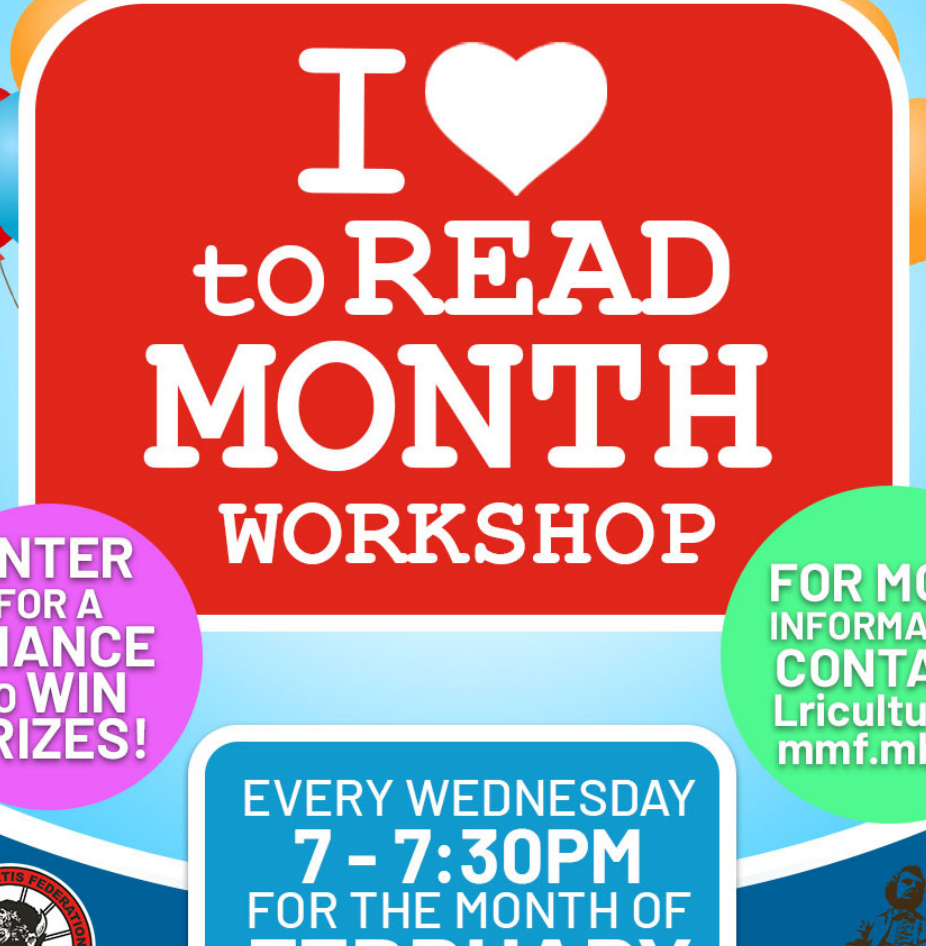
She still participates in I Love to Read Month events and reads the book at schools across the province.

“I find when I go into the schools, I do have a lot of the teachers coming up to me after and saying, ‘This is such a great book, I wish I would have had this for my kids,’ and things like that,” Gillespie said.

In *A Journey Through the Circle of Life*, young Cheyenne’s grandfather teaches her to plant a tree every year to honour Mother Nature and respect the circle of life. After her grandfather passes away, she starts to understand the rhythm of nature, and the impact of his wisdom. Gillespie’s debut tackles themes of protecting the environment, dealing with grief, and passing on traditional teachings.

“To me it’s just such a natural way of life, and how we deal with things, and it’s metaphoric, you know, with nature, and how important it is to plant roots within







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February 18-21, 2022

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## CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE AIDE PROGRAM

**Start Date: March 31, 2022**

This 6-Month Program includes: 4 weeks of Essential Skills Training, First Aid & Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Certification, Thought Patterns, Métis Culture & History, and 6-week Practicum Placement.

Eligible participants include Unemployed or Underemployed Métis individuals from The Pas Region who are:

- 18 years of age or older
- Fully vaccinated and able to provide proof of vaccination
- Able to provide recent & satisfactory criminal record, adult abuse, child abuse and vulnerable person registry checks prior to program start
- Motivated to pursue a career in health care and determined to move forward with an employment & training action plan

For more information and to apply for this opportunity, please contact:

**Bonnie Hatch, Employment & Training Counsellor**

**MET Recruitment: 204-623-5701**

**Email: [bonnie.hatch@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:bonnie.hatch@mmf.mb.ca)**



Metis  
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Application Deadline:  
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