



# Le Métis

EST. 1871



## President's Message



It is important to preserve our Ancestors' traditions, not only because our culture and heritage are precious to us, but also because the wisdom of our Ancestors and Elders help us act as good stewards of the land and water around us. Stewardship of our environment doesn't just mean managing resources, it means making good use of everything we harvest. I'm so proud of the progress we are making in reviving many of our traditional ways, including our beading and hide-working arts and the harvesting and preservation of food from the land.

We are also supporting this stewardship through investments in traditional economies, like trapping, through our Red River Métis Fur Company. The practice of trapping helps keep wildlife populations in balance, while having the added benefit of providing some income for our families, especially in the North.

Citizens who still live close to the land, the way our Ancestors did, are very well aware that climate change is real, and that the effects of it are happening right now. Weather patterns are changing, as are the migration behaviours of the wildlife that inhabits our land. Polar bears are being spotted as far south as Gillam, Manitoba. Bees are disappearing at an alarming rate and it is becoming increasingly challenging for those who rely on harvesting wild game to keep their families fed.

The MMF – the National Government of the Red River Métis – is doing everything it can to support the vital work of protecting this land. This is our Homeland, the place where our Nation was born. If we don't care for it and give back to it, we will lose it. This would not be a loss only for our Nation, it would be a loss for all Canadians. Human activity has already caused the destruction of the vast herds of buffalo that used to blanket our Homeland. We can never allow such destruction to take place again.

### Taking responsibility for our Homeland

Your Red River Métis Government is actively taking steps to address the changes we are seeing in our environment. Not only are we retrofitting our Home Office to reduce its footprint, we are also planting two million trees and engaging in sustainable harvesting as dictated by our *Métis Laws of the Harvest*, which helps keep wildlife populations in balance. We are also engaging in land-based training for our Youth, to ensure that they understand the importance of caring for the land and the wildlife that inhabit it.

We are also working to create two Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). One is the Kettle Hills Blueberry Patch, and the other is a habitat in between Caribou River Provincial Park and Wapusk National Park. The first IPCA is located within The Pas and Northwest Regions, and the second is located in the Thompson Region.

IPCAs are areas of land and water in which Indigenous governments are the primary protectors, achieving conservation through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge systems. They allow for Indigenous peoples to continue to apply traditional values and laws, practice culture and create local Indigenous economies to further benefit future generations.

The principles with which we approach our two IPCAs will be based on Red River Métis traditions, rights, interests, and practices. IPCAs also have an additional purpose, which is to provide the opportunity for reconciliation between our community and settler society, while allowing for the reconnection of all peoples to the lands and waters of our Homeland.

### Working together is the only way forward

Rest assured that your Métis Government will continue to work on these important stewardship activities, as well as finding new ways to protect our environment, including the land, water, and wildlife that rely on it.

However, we cannot stop the tide of climate change impacts alone. Caring for our land is a shared responsibility. It cannot be the work of one government, or one Nation in our Homeland.

It is vital that all stakeholders come to the same table and share a collective vision. In order to address climate change and preserve this land for future generations, we must have partnerships with other Indigenous governments and organizations, along with municipal, provincial, and federal governments. Other levels of government must heed the wisdom of our Elders and our Ancestors, and the wisdom of First Nations Elders and Ancestors. An Indigenous

Advisory Council, with strong representation from key organizations and governments, would be an ideal place to begin this important dialogue. This council is part of our vision for the future and I can assure you, I will continue to advocate strongly for this council to be formed and supported by other levels of government.

This advisory council is one way in which we can ensure our voices are heard. As Citizens may be aware, the upcoming provincial election will see many seats available, where the previous elected official (sometimes called the incumbent) is not running. This gives our Citizens another opportunity to have our voices heard. That's why I encourage Citizens living in these areas to consider running for election.

Regardless of which party you align with, I know that each of you will also bring your perspective as a Red River Métis Citizen – it's in your blood and your heart. This will help ensure that other levels of government do not forget the importance of environmental stewardship, the role our people play in the process, and the need for a shared vision and approach.

Together, we can honour our Ancestors by preserving the land where our Nation was born, and where generations of Red River Métis have lived and benefited from its bounty. Together, we can leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren, ensuring that our traditional ways can be practiced for all the generations to come.

As always, we will continue to gather the wisdom of our Elders through consultation on stewardship, harvesting, and other topics of importance to Citizens. Gathering in person to discuss these matters is also part of our traditions, which is why we always go out to each region to engage our grassroots Locals and Citizens to discuss issues and concerns. This process now includes our Citizens Beyond Borders, who have come home to their Red River Métis Government because they know their voices will be heard.

For those of you who will be at the 76th Annual Trappers Festival, I look forward to seeing you there, as we celebrate and honour our history and our Ancestors while we revive traditional economies like trapping and beadwork. If you are attending this great event, make sure you get your tickets for Métis Family Nite, which takes place on Saturday, February 18 at the MMF Hall in The Pas. This night of musical entertainment is a highlight of the festival, thanks to the energy, effort, and support of our Regional Executive team. Come out and celebrate our great Red River Métis culture and our long association with trapping. You will be treated to a night of fiddle music and dancing, along with a hearty and filling meal, all backed by some incredibly talented performers from



our Nation. The tickets for this event sell out quickly, so get yours while you can – and I'll see you there.



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



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

# Help make Korbin's Wish come true



Korbin Orvis (Halldorsson) passed away in 2021 after a battle with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. One of his last wishes was to help other kids who are in the hospital for extended periods.



An example of an activity cart that Korbin's Wish hopes to provide to hospitals.

A Red River Métis Citizen is seeking your help to carry on his son's legacy and provide gaming consoles to Winnipeg's Children's Hospital.

Joey Halldorsson knows firsthand how unnerving it is for a child to spend time in a hospital, as his son Korbin was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at birth. Those with the genetic disorder suffer muscular degeneration and weakness.

Halldorsson recalled when Korbin was at the hospital, he would always want to have a gaming system to pass the time.

"What I would do is I'd go home, get his PlayStation, and then I would go back and buy a TV because (the hospital) TVs are mounted on the wall. I'd buy a 32-inch TV and put it together on the cart (the hospital) had, so he could play his games," Halldorsson said.

The game console provided Korbin with much-needed distraction and brought relief to his parents. He had trouble understanding why the other kids in the hospital weren't afforded the same privilege.

"I explained to him that's just the way it is, and he didn't like how that's just the way it is," Halldorsson said. "So, I said, 'Maybe me and you can put something together when we get time, and we'll get some systems for them.'"

Unfortunately, Korbin passed away in October 2021. Halldorsson is working to make his last wish to give back to bring game consoles to sick kids come true. He has enlisted the public's help through a GoFundMe page, and provided interviews to outlets

such as the *Winnipeg Free Press*, CBC, CTV, and Hot 100.5 FM. He said it feels good to have Korbin's Wish gain attention.

"It's something where people can give, and 100 per cent of their donation goes towards these kids. Every dollar we bring in goes right towards putting these systems together for them," said Halldorsson. "It's a humbling experience, to put it that way. It's nice to see people coming together and doing different things because we always go through life wondering, 'I wish I could help this person, or I wish I could do this for this person or be there for that.' When is the right time to try and make a difference, right? That's all we can do."

Halldorsson is looking for volunteers to help build the entertainment units, which contain a TV, stand, console, controller, and games, and range from approximately \$2,500 per unit for a PS5 and \$2,000 for an Xbox.

"(If) people are donating (each) month, and we're collecting funds, then we'll buy more (consoles). We'll do it once every 1st of the month; we'll place an order with the money raised, and why do we have to stop there?" he said. "(I'd like to) send units to the Selkirk hospital, Steinbach, Winkler. They have kids that go there for periods of time before they get shipped out to children's hospitals."

So far, Korbin's Wish has raised over \$15,000 through the GoFundMe page and donations that have come through cash and e-transfer via their Facebook page.

"I'm trying to make it easy for them to donate. If they go to GoFundMe, great. I'd hate to turn away a donation because we're dealing with somebody who doesn't do e-transfers or doesn't have a credit card but wants to give \$20, \$50, or whatever they want," said Halldorsson. "Every time I get a donation outside those realms, we post it on Facebook to say 'thank-you for your donation,' whatever it may be, and if they want to stay anonymous, they can. It's so everybody can track to see as we're growing."

As a Red River Métis Citizen himself, Halldorsson knows how generous our Nation can be.

"Our Métis children could be in that hospital. (Korbin) was Métis too. So, it's one thing to look after our Métis Citizens, but as Métis Citizens I think we owe it to our whole communities to help everyone," Halldorsson said. "I think showing that we care for our communities is huge. I live in Selkirk, but as a Métis Citizen, I'm proud to be able to take part in this, and people need to know that we're helping everywhere."

You can stay informed about Korbin's Wish on their Facebook page and donate via the GoFundMe page at [gofundme.com/f/korbins-wish-for-other-sick-kids](https://gofundme.com/f/korbins-wish-for-other-sick-kids).

I ♥ TO READ





# Red River Métis writer creates buzz with “Buzzcut”



Julie Laurendeau is a Red River Métis writer who has received multiple accolades in the last few years.

Queer Red River Métis author Julie Laurendeau has been working hard to make a name for herself in the world of writing.

Laurendeau is originally from Winnipeg but is currently residing in British Columbia. She received the 2021 Ron Norton Prize for writing the best Psychology Honours thesis and made it to the 2022 CBC Nonfiction Prize longlist.

Laurendeau said they’ve been drawn to writing their whole life.

“I’ve always been a super avid reader. I think books were where I felt connected to myself and others, so I’ve always been drawn to storytelling and story writing. I’ve gotten back into it more in the last couple of years after I graduated from university,” they said. “I’d gone into psychology and found that my heart wasn’t really in it, and then I won an award for my thesis, which was a writing award, so I decided to go out on a limb and take a chance at doing this, because it’s what I’ve always loved, it’s where my passion has always been, so I think it’s been a lifelong thing for me.”

Laurendeau graduated from the University of Manitoba in 2021 with an Honours Psychology degree, where she wrote her thesis on social media use, addiction, and social comparison.

“We all as humans socially compare. But, through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and other platforms, you have thousands and thousands of opportunities to compare yourself to people, and are essentially highlight reels,” they said. “(I was) studying basically, how we (compare) and what that leads to, and if it lowers life satisfaction.”

The graduate first learned they were receiving the 2021 Ron Norton Prize at convocation.

“It was so lovely to be recognized for the part of it that I was so happy with, which was drawing the kind of connections, making it a cohesive picture, and putting a bit more narrative into the thesis, which I enjoyed doing,” she said. “It was nice to be recognized by my faculty and staff for the part of it I was the proudest of. (I was) pleased overall.”

Last year, Laurendeau made the 2022 CBC Nonfiction Prize longlist for her essay, “Buzzcut,” which is described as a piece about identity and coming into one’s self.

“I wrote it about my journey of shaving my head. It was something that I’d done when I was 11, and then I did it again when I was 24 because I was going through a lot of big changes in my life, and it was something that I did to mark all those changes and my personal freedom,” she said. “I connected the dots between the first time that I did it and the second time that I did it, and as an adult, and what that feeling of body autonomy means to me.”

Laurendeau was backpacking through France when she heard she made the longlist.

“I was with a lovely little community of people, and then I got to text my family and friends. It was incredible to be recognized because I left the psychology world and took a big chance and tried to focus more on (writing),” they said. “With (“Buzzcut”) being one of the first things I submitted to anywhere, and to have that be recognized and have it resonate with anyone, was meaningful to me. I also felt like (this was) a good sign that I was headed in the right direction.”

Growing up, Laurendeau learned about her Red River Métis heritage from her dad’s side of the family.

“A few of my ancestors were on Louis Riel’s Council,” they said. “My dad has been super connected to it all his adult life, and he instilled a sense of pride in us about it. For me, it’s been a process because I didn’t learn a lot about it in school. I grew up developing a sense of pride in it. For me, a lot of it has been reading about other people’s experiences and connecting with people who have similar backgrounds.”

Laurendeau hopes to continue writing and expand her readership in 2023.

“Recently, I’ve been focused on writing a bunch of more short form stuff; that’s kind of the main goal right now is to develop a bit of a following/ readership, getting published in a variety of different platforms like magazines, and then eventually move on to longer form stories,” they said. “So, I think for this year, it’ll be more essays, similar to “Buzzcut,” and short stories, which I’ve been loving writing.”

You can keep up to date with Laurendeau’s work on her website at [julielaurendeau.com](http://julielaurendeau.com).

## Community Photo

*Le Metis’* Community Photo section invites Métis Citizens to send in photos to be featured in our newsletter. If you have a photo that celebrates the Red River Métis Nation, send it to [communications@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:communications@mmf.mb.ca) and you may see it in print!



The MMF is sending love and prayers to the family and friends of Red River Métis musician Clint Dutiaume, who recently passed. Clint won the Manitoba Country Music Association’s Manitoba Instrumentalist of the Year Award nine times. He was a longtime contributor to MMF events including *The Beat Goes On*, sharing his talent and his energy with everyone. He will be sadly missed.







Your Red River Métis Government is offering free snow sampling training for Citizens wanting to be involved in our

# CITIZEN SCIENTIST PROGRAM

Interested Citizens should contact our Water Resources Specialist at [phoenix.combe@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:phoenix.combe@mmf.mb.ca) to gain more information on our upcoming snow sampling training coming this February in the Homeland! Stay tuned to our social media for an announcement coming soon on a date and location for the free snow sampling training.

# JOIN



## COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

# OUR

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR THE MMF'S  
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT?**

**WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING APPLICANTS  
TO JOIN OUR AMAZING TEAM:**

**JR. WRITER**

APPLICATION DEADLINE:  
**FEBRUARY 2**

**SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST**

APPLICATION DEADLINE:  
**OPEN UNTIL FILLED**

**JR. DESIGNER**

APPLICATION DEADLINE:  
**FEBRUARY 5**

# TEAM

**VISIT [MMF.MB.CA/JOBS](http://MMF.MB.CA/JOBS) FOR MORE INFORMATION**