



Le Métis

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YOUR RED RIVER MÉTIS GOVERNMENT'S BI-WEEKLY NEWS.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Education – a building block of our Nation

I have always said that the one thing that can never be taken away from you is your education. Once you have it, it's yours for life. Every Citizen who gains an education helps strengthen our Nation, safeguarding us against the treatment our Ancestors experienced at the hands of governments and individuals who wanted to erase us.

When we were consulting with Citizens about our modern-day treaty earlier this year, one message I wanted all Citizens to hear is that we want to change the conversation about higher learning at kitchen tables across our Nation.

Your Red River Métis Government is working hard so that the conversation isn't "can we afford to send you for post-secondary education?" Instead, it will be "where do you want to go for your post-secondary education?"

I know this idea is something near and dear to the hearts of Red River Métis parents and grandparents, so it's no surprise that the response at each of the meetings was powerful. I saw tears in many eyes.

Education leads to a lot of other things that contribute to the well-being of our Nation. Even in the earliest years of our children's lives, we now provide culturally-focused education through our Early Learning and Child Care Department. To date,

we have opened eight child care facilities in the cities, towns, and villages our Citizens live in, with a further seven to be built in the next few years. Along with a caring, nurturing environment, we teach our children to take pride in who they are, as they learn our traditional ways, music, and culture. Early learning is where we plant seeds with our youngest Michif speakers, growing knowledge of our critically endangered language in their hearts and minds.

Through education, more of our Citizens can obtain quality housing, food security, and stability in their children's lives. Education also expands the pool of talented, educated Citizens who can come and work for your Red River Métis Government, gaining meaningful careers that allow them to use their education to the benefit of our Nation.

Education is the root of many things for the next generation, including pride, strength, independence, and financial security.

Even though we are better educated than we were in the past, we still have work to do. Too often, I have heard from parents and students that they don't see our history being told as a part of Canadian history, and they don't feel visible as Red River Métis as they interact with the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system.

For your Red River Métis Government to have an impact on this issue, we must build strong partnerships, including partnerships with provincial governments.

Building partnerships in education

As a starting point, one of the priorities we shared with the parties vying to form government in Manitoba during the recent provincial campaign was related to education. While your Red River Métis Government has been actively investing in the future of our Youth through education and training, it was important for us to understand what the province we brought into confederation intends to do in support of our efforts.

I'm happy to share that Premier Kinew and his NDP party agreed to work with the MMF to develop and implement a distinctions-based Red River Métis education strategy for Kindergarten to Grade 12, along with ensuring the availability of culturally relevant education for our Red River Métis students.

They further committed to providing strong bursaries, grants, and student aid for post-secondary students, with a goal of eventually offering matching funding allocations for the expansion of MMF's scholarship and bursary program to help our students succeed.

The implementation of these commitments will give us the ability to have our voice heard on our needs in the education system. We look forward to seeing Premier Kinew and the new Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister, Nello Altomare, bring this commitment to life.

I will always seek full engagement with the leaders of provinces across our Homeland in a renewed government-to-government relationship for matters relating to our rights, citizenship, and, of course, in education.

We are also developing international relationships with organizations and schools across the globe, like the one we recently signed with the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. These partnerships help provide new opportunities for our students to learn from leading experts in the fields of health, the environment, social development, and more. We will continue to expand our efforts in this area in the coming years, so make sure you remain connected to your Red River Métis Government through social media and our regular communications by email.

You can be sure we will continue to invest in the education and training of our Citizens. The power of education is the reason we began offering scholarships and bursaries to Citizens in post-secondary education, even before we had any support from the provincial government.

Your Red River Métis Government is invested in your education

Since the inception of our education support program in 2019, we have funded nearly 3,500 students with a total investment of \$15.2 million. Each student gets up to \$5,000 for each year of their education, so your Red River Métis Government needs to make sure that those who are taking four-year degrees can access the same amount of funding each year of their post-secondary education.

In last year's school year alone, a total of almost 1,200 students were funded for their schooling, at a cost of just under \$5 million. We expect to outpace that number each year, as interest in post-secondary education and demand for support grows. The school year is only two months gone, and we've already received 1,100 applications, and expect those numbers to grow. We expect this will put us on pace to support somewhere between 1,300-1,400 students this year, to a cost of approximately \$6 million, and an estimated \$7 million the following year.

This funding is part of a total MMF commitment to invest \$90 million over 10 years, in support of

Red River Métis post-secondary education. I thank Minister Joan Ledoux and Associate Minister David Beaudin for their work in provincial education.

Along with support for post-secondary education, we also offer training courses for our Citizens. Investing in education through labour market training programs in our Métis Employment and Training (MET) Department is another way we can ensure the long-term well-being of our Nation. These training courses are responsive to labour market trends and needs, which means that we can help bridge the gap between education and employment, building sustainable economic development and prosperity, ultimately benefiting both individuals and our wider community, which in turn benefits all Canadians. The MET Department has served thousands upon thousands of clients since it started in the year 2000, helping nearly

2,500 in the last year alone as they return to the workforce or enter post-secondary education. I thank Minister John Fleury for his hard work making this portfolio such a success.

The investments we've made have been significant, but I believe the long-term, beneficial impacts of our educational supports for Citizens are only starting to be felt. However, we know that more and more of our people are entering the post-secondary education system, with our support. This has been a long-cherished dream for so many in our Nation, including me, your Red River Métis Cabinet, Elders, seniors, parents, and past leaders. I'm so proud to see how many advancements we've made in education supports since I started my work as your President. I hope you can see, as your Cabinet and I can see, that the future has never been brighter

for our children and grandchildren. They can pursue their dreams, receive an education, and achieve excellence, giving us even more reasons to be proud to be Red River Métis.

Until we gather again, I send my well wishes to Citizens who are honouring our traditions by harvesting from our Homeland to feed family and community. Stay safe and remember – your Red River Métis Government has your back.

I also offer my prayers to all our families, Citizens, friends, and neighbours, and my deepest condolences to those who have been caused to grieve.

Meeqwetch,

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

RED RIVER MÉTIS CITIZEN A TRAILBLAZER IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Red River Métis Citizen Jill Fast can add another milestone to her already impressive football career.

The athlete was named head coach for Football Canada's Indigenous Women's National football team, and led the squad in the U18 Football Canada female National Championships.

"They wanted the head coach, as well as the coaching staff, to be predominantly women," Fast said. "We have an amazing group of coaches they've assembled."

The female championships took place in Ottawa over the summer and featured eight teams: Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Ontario (2), Manitoba, Quebec, and the National Indigenous Team.

This was the first time the championships have included a national Indigenous team, so Fast was thrilled to leave her mark.

"(It was great) to go there with the group of women we have. The coaching staff wanted to be role models, mentors, and impart our wisdom and coach these girls up, making them feel valued, part of the team, and empowered," she said.

"These Youth are trailblazing as athletes. They're part of this, the first-ever national Indigenous women's team, so we're all trailblazing together."

While growing up in High Bluff, Manitoba, Fast played hockey and soccer. It wasn't until later in life that the Red River Métis athlete fell in love with football.

"I was playing senior women's hockey as an adult, and I got emails saying the Manitoba Fearless were looking for women to play tackle football," she said. "As soon as I got that email, I said, 'sign me up!'

They had already started the season, so I had three practices before my first game in that first year."

Fast played in the Western Women's Canadian Football League with the Manitoba Fearless for one year during the league's inaugural season before switching to the Winnipeg Wolfpack from 2012 to 2022, with some breaks due to the pandemic. Last year, the Red River Métis athlete returned to her origins, joining the Manitoba Fearless for the 2022 season.

Due to a knee injury, Fast only played one game. The athlete hadn't played since before the pandemic and was ecstatic to get back to the sport.

"It was nice just to be back on the field and to play a full season. I was a part of a new organization, so it was a big learning curve – new playbooks, new coaching staff – but I learned a lot this season," she said. "It was nice playing with a full roster, and so many more young athletes have joined the senior women's league since 2019."

The linebacker has also been selected in the past to represent Team Manitoba and Team Canada.

Fast began her career as a football coach with the Portage Trojans of the Manitoba High School Athletic Association's Winnipeg High School Football League. The Red River Métis athlete initially served as a linebacker coach, rising to the club's head coach position in 2020.

"I learned a lot from the other coaches before I entered that head coach role. It was a great experience coaching in Portage (la Prairie), and I'm grateful and appreciative for the opportunity to be the head coach," she said. "I was sad because I got a job in Winnipeg, and I had to give that up in 2022, but I still value my six years of coaching in Portage."

During the coach's tenure, she helped mentor female students and gave them the confidence to play in a typically male-dominated sport.

"I love that we had girls play on the team. Not just the year I was head coach, but the other years too, we had girls here and there play on the team," she said. "I was happy I could be a role model for those girls and maybe make them feel more comfortable playing a sport predominantly boys play. I hope it helped make them feel more comfortable and confident in trying the sport."

Fast's efforts with the Trojans led her to a Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council Female Coach of the Year Award in 2021.

She said the sport of football is growing with women.

"I think it's awesome when women can embrace the sport and become empowered and think about sport in general and what it does for people," she said. "Why limit ourselves to conventional sports that women have played? Why not branch out? There are so many awesome sports and movements out there. So, I think it's just empowering women."

When Fast is not busy coaching the national team or making defensive plays on the gridiron, she can be found guiding students as an Indigenous Student Success teacher for the Pembina Trails School Division. The Red River Métis educator said she has a passion for teaching Indigenous education.

"I love what I do for my work," she said. "I strongly believe in the importance of it and reconciliation for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students."

KINGSTON COPELAND EMBRACES RED RIVER MÉTIS HERITAGE ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Kingston Copeland may have just wrapped up his second year of playing football, but the Red River Métis Youth's passion and dedication to the sport shows a lot of promise for the coming years.

"I started to play football last year. And I wanted to try a new sport, and I previously played fastball," he said.

The football player won the offensive lineman rookie of the year award in his youth league last year.

"It came from the (Transcona) Nationals last year. I didn't expect to get anything," he said. "It was a good feeling to get the award."

The offensive left tackle and his team made it into the playoffs this season.

"We played very well, and we made it to the finals," he said. "We won every game except for the last one."



The football player played offensive lineman for the Transcona Nationals Bantam Team during the 2023 season.

He said the 2023 Elder and Youth Conference was one of his favourite events because he experienced his Red River Métis culture.

"I learned that Elders can teach me a lot more, and I thought that was a good thing to learn," he said. "I also learned how to shoot a bow."

Copeland appreciates attending MMF events to learn more about his Red River Métis heritage. He credited his grandmother, Bev Lee, for inspiring him and his brother to learn about and take pride in their roots.

"She keeps me connected to my culture," said the Youth. "During the pandemic, my grandma took the role of teaching my brother and me when school was closed. She incorporated a lot of Métis heritage into our classes."

Lee takes pride in teaching her grandchildren Red River Métis culture and took her grandsons to events much like the Elder and Youth Conference, which took place in Selkirk on August 29 and 30, 2023.

"Our Elders are getting older, and they want to learn their culture," she said. "I know deep inside of them, my grandsons want to learn a lot. I'm happy they attended."

Copeland hopes to continue playing football for a long time, with goals of playing at the college or university level.

The Red River Métis Youth said he owes it to his family for always sticking by his side.

"I would like to thank my mother and father for always supporting me," he said, "And a special thanks to my grandma for always being my number one fan."

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MY MOTHER AND FATHER FOR ALWAYS SUPPORTING ME. AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO MY GRANDMA FOR ALWAYS BEING MY NUMBER ONE FAN.
- KINGSTON COPELAND

Last year, the 14-year-old also tried out for the Team Manitoba U16 Football Team.

"I didn't make it, but I received positive feedback," said the Youth, adding it was a great experience. "It felt pretty good to be out on the field with them. It was weird at the start because I thought everyone would be bigger than me because they were older, but I was roughly the same size as them."

This year, the football player was a part of the Transcona Nationals Bantam Team, which finished the season 3-3, including a 30-0 victory over the U16 Coyotes.

Copeland thanked the MMF's Believe Athletic and Artistic Support Program for helping him play throughout his season. The Red River Métis Youth often gets out to Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) events such as Regional Meetings, Treaty Consultations, and Annual General Assemblies with his grandmother.

MMF UNVEILS

billboard/reward to help locate
Marcus McKay, missing 20 years

MISSING

PEY KEY WAY TA HIN/BRING ME HOME

MARCUS MCKAY

\$10,000 REWARD

If you have any information on his whereabouts, please contact
Manitoba Crime Stoppers at
1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

On October 20, the MMF unveiled a sign near Mallard, Manitoba, offering a \$10,000 reward for information that leads to finding Marcus McKay, who has been missing for 20 years. MMF elected officials along with friends and family of Marcus McKay gathered near the wooded and marshy area where Marcus McKay was last seen, off Bison Road, for the unveiling. Marcus was eight at the time of his disappearance and has not been seen since. The reward is part of the MMF's Pey Key Way Ta Hin/Bring Me Home program, a \$1 million fund to help families find missing and murdered loved ones.

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