



# Le Métis

∞ EST. 1871 ∞



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope all our Elders and seniors, Youth and families across our Homeland and beyond had a wonderful Christmas, and a joyous New Year, with friends and family, sharing music, laughter, games, and a hearty bowl of traditional boulette soup, moose meat, or goose to usher in 2024.

This is the time of year when we reflect on the year that passed, thinking about the accomplishments of the previous year and considering what needs to be done in 2024. Of course, it's also a time when we reflect on the people who were not at the table for Christmas supper, and mourn the loss of our loved ones.

At times, this can be a very difficult time of year for our Citizens. I hope everyone who is able has reached out to those around them with a message of love, a hug, a plate of food, or even a simple act of service, like shovelling out walkways and driveways. Citizens know our Red River Métis traditions are ones of giving, not receiving, and I'm certain all of you honoured the ways of our Ancestors in your Christmas activities.

While we all experienced losses, and witnessed a rise in global conflict that does great harm to individuals who are caught in the crossfire, we must never lose hope for a brighter tomorrow, and put our energies into doing what we can to make positive contributions to the world.

### Reflections on 2023

Your Red River Métis Government, together with you, our Citizens, accomplished a lot in 2023. Just to name a few, we opened Fre Maachi – New Beginnings, to support our Citizens who need help coming out of homelessness. We opened new child care centres, broke ground on Michif Manor – a Ronald McDonald House for our people – to give a warm and welcoming place to stay for our families who must travel to Winnipeg for medical care. We also broke ground on Mazoun Inifitii Pakoshayimoohk/ Infinity House of Hope, a safe place for children in care with our agencies or those aging out, to come if they need help, a place to stay, or even a cup of

coffee and a sympathetic ear. We are also starting construction on our food security and tree nursery greenhouses, with the tree nurseries' goal to grow 50 million trees in 20 years.

We purchased 200 Main Street and began moving some of our departments and affiliates there to better serve our Citizens. Information about which services for Citizens will be provided from the new office, or by phoning 204-589-8474. We also underwent a significant retrofit and renovation of our Home Office, reducing its carbon footprint and making it more environmentally friendly.

Of course, 2023 was also a year when we travelled to see our Citizens within Manitoba and beyond those borders, to consult with them about our treaty and hear their thoughts and feelings. This excitement culminated in our Extraordinary General Assembly in June, where thousands of Citizens showed their overwhelming support for the treaty, with tears in their eyes and hope in their hearts.

At our Annual General Assembly in October, we heard Premier Wab Kinew – the first First Nations Premier in Canada – make a promise to our people that one of his first acts as Premier would be to recognize Louis Riel as the first Premier of Manitoba. While I know this was a powerful announcement to make, no one could be sure of when this would take place.

When the Premier and his team made it the first Act they had the ability to introduce, we understood that they were intent on delivering on the commitment the Premier made to our Assembly.

I was proud to witness the *Louis Riel Act* proceed through its readings, to speak to the provincial committee that studied it, and to be there in the gallery when it received Royal Assent. This is truly a historic time for our people, and after many decades of leading the charge to see this change take place – step by step, slowly advancing this important cause over the terms of at least five different provincial premiers – I know that Red River Métis children will hear the truth in their classrooms, and all Manitoban or Canadian children will understand the important role that Louis Riel and the Red River Métis played in bringing Canada into the West.

There is always more work to be done on advancing the true history of our people and our contributions to Canada, and I know next year will offer us new challenges and opportunities on this and many other fronts.

### Looking to the future

After all the work, excitement, and consultation about our modern-day treaty, I know Citizens were disappointed that it has not yet been ratified by Canada. Citizens who attended our Annual General Assembly heard Gary Anandasangaree, Canada's Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, issue his personal pledge that the treaty would be signed by his government, and we continue the work to finish the last, small details so that it can be completed early in 2024.

Once the treaty is signed and complete, our focus will turn to settling our land claim. Citizens know that we received a firm commitment from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that he and his government would settle our outstanding land claim this term, which will help address the fact that the 1.4 million acres of land promised to our children as part of bringing Canada into our newly created province were not properly delivered.

The settlement of this land claim will completely transform how your Red River Métis Government operates, giving us freedom from the worries of changing political winds that could stop us from providing the programs and services needed by our Citizens. I also commend those who voted in favour of Resolution 14 in 2013, which ensured that the restitution paid by Canada to the descendants of these children will be kept in investments to help all of our people in the years to come. There is such wisdom in this decision, and an unselfish view that confirms that we remain a collective, as we were in the past, that focuses on the well-being of all.

Along with these important milestones, we must continue to protect our distinct culture and heritage. There can be no doubt that our identity remains under threat from those who would hide themselves behind Louis Riel, our beadwork, our music, and our flag, all in order to create a place for themselves in our advancement to our rights and resources. We will continue to push vigorously against this invasion of our identity, just as our Ancestors stood against the invasion of our Homeland. 2023 demonstrated that our First Nations and Inuit relatives are becoming increasingly aware that these same frauds are not confining themselves to stealing the identity of the Red River Métis – they are using First Nations and Inuit ancestors to distort the meaning of the word Métis, creating communities and cultures that did not historically exist and who have no connection with us.

In March of 2024, there will be an emergency summit with key rightsholders and stakeholders to discuss this pressing issue, and find ways to work together to dispel the myths and protect our respective identities. Highly publicized cases of individual identity fraud are well known and well documented, but we have more work to do to ensure that this attempted mass theft of identity is better understood and publicized – we believe this emergency summit will be an important part of that movement.

There is so much to look forward to in 2024, I could keep writing about it well into spring – these are just some of the highlights and important matters that we know are coming. We will also see our kids in care and formerly in care

finally receive justice and restitution for the years Manitoba's government withheld their Children's Special Allowance from them. We will see new child care facilities open. Renovations will continue on our heritage centre. Youth camps for sports and land-based learning will take place. I'm excited about what 2024 will bring our Citizens and our Nation, and I hope you are too.

### Gratitude

Another hallmark of this time of year is feeling and expressing gratitude to our loved ones and our community. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to our Locals and our Citizens, along with the staff and Cabinet of your Red River Métis Government. Our Locals are the grassroots foundation of our government – they are governed by Citizens who work together to ensure that their voices are heard and their will is expressed. Your will is then formalized through our Cabinet, and our staff works very hard to bring this vision to life. I am proud of each and every person who has contributed to the advancement and well-being of our Nation, and hope you all know that your hard work does not go unnoticed.

I want to say a special thank-you to our seniors and Elders, and to our Youth for being strong during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Helping your family and your Red River Métis Government will benefit all your people throughout our Nation and our Homeland.

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.

I look forward to seeing you all in 2024!

Meeqwetch,

*President David Chartrand, LL.D. hon. O.M.* ∞

## MANITOBA MÉTIS FEDERATION 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Today, the National Government of the Red River Métis is harnessing the power of our unique cultural, economic, and democratic traditions to drive success on our own terms. Continuing our tireless efforts toward economic prosperity and self-governance, this past year saw exciting new steps in building the head start our Ancestors fought to secure for their children – a head start that we will be able to leave our children and grandchildren.

Here are some of the most prominent moments from 2023:

### Red River Métis identity

The MMF continues to defend our Red River Métis identity against those who claim to be us and want what we have struggled so hard to protect across centuries.

In June, the MMF publicly expressed support for the Wabun Tribal Council in their request for a federal judge to review the self-government agreement signed by Canada and the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) in February. The MNO argues that historic Métis communities developed in eastern Ontario during the fur trade era and share our identity. But we do not know them, and they are not us. We have nothing in common. We support the First Nations position that there are no historic Métis communities that formed distinct cultural or political collectives of any kind in eastern Ontario.

In September, we supported a First Nations rally on Parliament Hill in Ottawa against Bill C-53, An Act respecting the recognition of certain Métis governments in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan.



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In November, Minister Will Goodon and MMF Chief of Staff Al Benoit spoke to the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Committee in Ottawa to outline Red River Métis concerns and opposition to Treaties developed by Order in Council as proposed by bill C-53.

The MMF also supported the position of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and the First Nations Summit, who passed resolutions denying the Métis in British Columbia have collective and constitutionally protected land rights within B.C. They also deny the assertions that self-determining and self-governing Métis communities historically existed and continue to exist within the interior and coast of B.C.

The Red River Métis have a long tradition of respecting all Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations. The colonization of sovereign First Nations territory that is supported by some Métis within our own Homeland is unacceptable.

Our Nation – Red River Métis – is strong. We must never forget or take for granted our place in history. Our Ancestors sacrificed too much for us to let that happen. We cannot let anyone appropriate our identity to suit their own desperate narrative.

### Red River Self-Government Treaty

In 2023, the Red River Métis added a new chapter to our People's history with the ratification by Citizens of the *Red River Self-Government Treaty* – another step in the historic path to protect our rights to self-determination and self-government. This modern-day treaty will renew the partnership we sought through the *Manitoba Act, 1870*, our treaty with Canada, setting the tone for our nation-to-nation and government-to-government relationships, and righting a wrong that took place 153 years ago. It will allow the National Government of the Red River Métis to make constitutionally protected governance laws, which will help us preserve our culture, our ways of doing, and our identity. The treaty, through its fiscal provisions, will provide the basis for long-term, secure, and stable funding.

From March to May, the MMF held treaty consultations with Citizens to learn details, ask questions, and give feedback about the treaty between Canada and the Red River Métis. As part of this extensive consultation process, 17 consultations took place across the Homeland, including beyond borders.



At the Extraordinary General Assembly in June, 4,000 Citizens gathered to unite in a historic vote to unanimously ratify the *Red River Self-Government Treaty*.

These consultations led up to the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) on June 3-4 at the Assiniboia Downs. In the largest Red River Métis event of all time (later surpassed by the 2023 Annual General Assembly), 4,000 Citizens gathered to unite in a historic vote to unanimously ratify the *Red River Self-Government Treaty*. Our assemblies have always been crucial in Red River Métis collective and democratic decision-making and action-taking, and the EGA was our ultimate decision-making body and authority for acceptance of the treaty. Along with virtual participation, Citizens had the opportunity to vote from satellite locations in Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Thompson, The Pas, Dauphin, and Selkirk.

In addition to the historic ratification vote, Citizens voted to continue Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. into the *Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* and Resulting Constitutional Amendment. Votes also passed to amend the MMF

Constitution to reflect the treaty and enact the *Red River Métis Finance and Administration Act*.

The next step is for the treaty to be ratified in Parliament and become part of Canada's Constitution.

### Government-to-Government Relationship with Canada

The partnership between the National Government of the Red River Métis and the Government of Canada demonstrates that the historic wrongdoings of colonization can – and are – being reckoned with.

The *Red River Self-Government Treaty* includes clarifications and protections for our section 31 Land Settlement negotiations with Canada. These negotiations are to address our win in the Supreme Court of Canada 2013 *MMF v Canada*, which confirmed the federal government's responsibility to correct a wrong of constitutional importance. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has committed to resolve this constitutional issue during this term.

Both the treaty and our Land Settlement are important steps in reconciliation between Canada and Red River Métis. These recognize our historic constitutional partnership, addressing past wrongs and unfulfilled promises.

Our treaty does not represent the finish line or an arbitrary ending to reconciliation – it is just the beginning, and Canada will need to keep pace with us into the future. The treaty is a living document that will continue to grow and evolve to serve Red River Métis Citizens.

We thank the Honourable Marc Miller for his partnership during his tenure as Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations. We look forward to building on this relationship with the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, the new Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations.

### Government-to-Government Relationship with Manitoba

The MMF has seen real advancement in our relationship with Manitoba.

As of July 1, we concluded a longstanding effort to have MMF Citizenship cards recognized as valid pieces of government-issued identification in Manitoba for the purchase of liquor and cannabis, and to participate in gaming activities. We worked with both the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba and the Province of Manitoba to correct the longstanding wrong of rejecting MMF-issued Citizenship cards. This was another step forward in our rights journey as Red River Métis, and our own Citizens were crucial to bringing about this change.

In July, the MMF was pleased to participate in the Council of the Federation Meeting. As the only Indigenous government present, the MMF addressed issues of national concern like harvesting rights, federal Bill C-92, a Canada-wide affordable housing strategy, beyond borders, and how these important matters affect our Citizens and our Nation, along with the economic challenges we face throughout our Homeland. This national table provided the opportunity to have great exchanges with the attending Premiers, with many seeking further dialogue to learn more about our successes as models that can be applied within their provinces.

In August, the MMF reached a long-awaited Revitalization Agreement with Manitoba Hydro for \$120 million over the next 50 years to address the adverse effects of existing Hydro developments and operations on the Section 35 *Constitution Act* rights of Red River Métis. The agreement also established a process for working collaboratively with Manitoba Hydro to address both historic and future hydro projects. This represents a key step with the crown corporation in building a respectful long-term relationship, and we thank the Province of Manitoba for doing the right thing.

Over the last two years, former Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson worked hard to reverse the considerable damage done by her predecessor to the relationship between the Red River Métis Government and the Government of Manitoba. Following the Manitoba provincial election in October, we

congratulated the New Democratic Party of Manitoba, with five Red River Métis MLAs elected, led by Premier Wab Kinew. He is Manitoba's first Indigenous Premier since John Norquay, a Red River Métis who last held office in 1887, and the first First Nations Premier in Canada's history.

In one of his first acts as Premier, Premier Kinew introduced legislation on November 23 recognizing Louis Riel as our province's honorary first Premier. It was a historic day for all of Manitoba, and the culmination of decades of advocating to secure Riel's legacy. The *Louis Riel Act* is not simply a piece of legislation. The truth about Riel and his role as the Founder of Manitoba and a Father of Confederation will become part of the education children receive in this province and in this country. No longer will future generations hear what so many of us heard in school, about Riel as the traitor, or the madman. Now he will be known as the first Premier of Manitoba. People will learn about his contributions to Canada, and how he led Red River Métis to shape the Prairies of Western Canada. This legislation marked the first step in resetting the relationship between the Manitoba government and Indigenous governments as partners and leaders in the province. The *Louis Riel Act* received Royal Assent in December.



In one of his first acts as Premier, Premier Kinew introduced legislation on November 23 recognizing Louis Riel as our province's honorary first Premier. The *Louis Riel Act* received Royal Assent in December.

Premier Kinew also introduced legislation to make Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday, which passed in December as well.

There is still the outstanding matter of the land that held Ste. Madeleine, which Premier Kinew has also committed to working with us on. The MMF continues to push for the return of this land to Red River Métis and anticipates concluding this matter soon.

We also look forward to settling the Children's Special Allowance case that was withheld from Red River Métis children. Once settled, these funds will go directly to our children so they can plan for their futures. On December 13, the class action lawsuits were certified by consent, drawing the case closer to completion.

### Inter-Nation and International Relations

Our history demonstrates that Citizens understand we live in an interconnected world where the actions of one nation has far-reaching consequences across borders. The relationships we are building with our neighbours also extend to international partners around the world. We are continuing to build close relationships with governments and Indigenous partners. To date, the MMF has developed initiatives in Australia, Peru, Colombia, and the United States.

Clément Chartier, MMF Ambassador of Inter-Nation and International Relations, has met with leaders around the world to foster these relationships, at events including the General Assembly of the Organization of American

States meeting in Guatemala, the United Nations Water Conference in New York City, and the meeting of South American Indigenous Leaders in Popayan, Colombia.

During the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues in New York City in April, Ambassador Chartier met and exchanged greetings with several Indigenous people, including Deb Haaland, a Laguna Pueblo Indian appointed to U.S. President Biden's Cabinet, as well as Ambassador Zalabata Torres, an Arhuaco Indian appointed in 2022 as Colombia's Ambassador to the United Nations.

In September, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Haaland visited Ottawa to foster meaningful discussions with Canadian leadership on the shared commitment of both nations to uplift Indigenous communities. At a reception, Ambassador Chartier proposed the establishment of cross-border partnerships to bolster the Red River Métis, promoting cultural preservation, economic development, and educational opportunities. He also advocated for increased recognition and representation of Red River Métis people within decision-making processes, ensuring their voices resonate on both sides of the border.

Ambassador Chartier provided a keynote address at the Canadian Studies and Languages Conference in Cuba in April, speaking to the international work that the MMF has been doing over the past number of years, including our trade and social and cultural initiatives in Colombia with several Indian communities.

At the General Assembly of the Organization of the American States in Washington, DC in June, Ambassador Chartier advocated for Canada to endorse the American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and become involved in the Working Group to monitor its implementation.

During the sixth Inter-American Week for Indigenous Peoples in August, Ambassador Chartier was asked to speak at a panel about his experience as a former Métis Youth activist and the work the MMF is doing in terms of Youth engagement.

### Beyond Borders

Following a landmark year in 2022 to reclaim our Red River Métis identity and meet with Citizens outside of the colonial provincial boundaries, the MMF continued to hold Beyond Borders meetings across the Homeland in 2023. The purpose of the sessions for this past year concerned consultations for our *Red River Self-Government Treaty*, taking us to Fargo, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Saskatoon, and Vancouver.

To strengthen connections between Citizens in the U.S. and Canada, a Red River Métis delegation visited Lewistown, Montana to take part in their Métis Celebration and Powwow in September. The festivities were a chance for participants to explore both Red River Métis culture and the rich history of the city itself.

The MMF is working to address the unique needs of our Citizens residing outside of Manitoba. Since the Central Registry Office opened up Citizenship beyond borders, allowing applicants in Manitoba, across Canada, and even internationally, to apply, we have welcomed over 3,600 Citizens home to Red River.

### Annual General Assembly

Before gathering at our Annual General Assembly (AGA), Citizens participated in Regional Meetings to discuss their achievements and share the work of each Local.

Our 2023 AGA was another one for the record books. From October 13-15, over 4,000 Citizens packed the Assiniboia Downs, making it the most attended AGA in the MMF's history.

It was standing room only for President David Chartrand's State of the Nation speech, where he announced the funding given to Locals would be doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000. He also celebrated the investments and growth the

Red River Métis National Government has achieved, noting the land mass the MMF owns in Winnipeg is the size of 10 football fields by acreage and square footage. President Chartrand closed his speech by unveiling the artwork that will cascade down the Red River Métis National Heritage Centre. The building will feature chains covered in beadwork flowers created by Red River Métis artist Jennine Krauchi.

During the AGA, the MMF Sixties Scoop Department presented its Every Red River Métis Child Matters sash to the Red River Métis Residential School and Day School Survivors Advisory Committee. The MMF also recognized the hard work and dedication of Anita Campbell, Infinity Women Secretariat Spokeswoman and Minister of Finance and Human Resources. She received a beaded blazer from master bead worker Jennine Krauchi and her mother, one of the last to be created.



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### Support for entrepreneurs

The Red River Métis are known for our entrepreneurial ingenuity. From our earliest days as trappers and traders, our Citizens have been a driving force of economic prosperity in the North-West. The MMF continues this tradition by investing in Red River Métis businesses.

The Louis Riel Capital Corporation (LRCC), an MMF affiliate, has supported the success of Red River Métis entrepreneurs with business loans and grants. Every year on average, LRCC provides grants and loans of more than \$6 million to approximately 100 new Red River Métis-owned business projects, adding to the hundreds already established.

The MMF and LRCC hosted several networking events throughout the year for Red River Métis entrepreneurs, including the sold-out Red River Métis Business Expo and networking reception on December 7 at Fort Garry Place. The event included 270 registered participants representing 122 Red River Métis businesses. Attendees learned about procurement opportunities, heard presentations, participated in panel discussions, and received a professional headshot. It was the largest business conference ever hosted by the MMF, with several key announcements to advance collective economic interests and support over 1,000 Red River Métis business owners and entrepreneurs:

- ∞ Introduced the Red River Métis Business Development Corporation, a proud new affiliate of the MMF, which will offer equity financing, and now holds all the assets of the former Métis Economic Development Fund.
- ∞ Launched the Red River Métis Business Association with a commitment of \$150,000.
- ∞ Established a new Procurement Advisory Service that will support up to 40 Red River Métis businesses with technical procurement-related assistance at no cost.

The continued support of Red River Métis artisans was showcased at St. Norbert Farmers' Market's Red River Métis Day on August 19. Citizens gathered

at the farmers' market to support our talented Red River Métis-owned vendors, participate in various workshops on food security and sustainability, and tour nearby historic landmarks.

The Red River Métis Fur Company continued to travel throughout Manitoba to buy furs and hides from Citizens for 25 per cent over market value. The company launched a new artisan program that provides tanned furs and leathers at no cost to Red River Métis artisans. The products made by the artisans will be bought back with profit and marketed through the MMF as "Traditional Métis made."

### Economic Development

The MMF made many economic advancements this past year along the path to secure a strong legacy for generations to come.

The MMF completed an Economic Impact Study in March of this year that investigated the core operations and programming of the Red River Métis Government. The study covered a four-year period from 2018-2019 to 2021-2022, and showed the MMF generated a total economic impact of 479.1 million, not including the work of our affiliates.

On July 4, the MMF and the Government of Canada announced an investment of over \$14.5 million for Red River Métis economic development, heritage preservation, food security, and agricultural sustainability. The funding went towards Métis Economic and Community Development, the Red River Métis National Heritage Centre, sustainable farming practices, and addressing food security.

This past year saw continued development on Lake Manitoba Resort, located just outside St. Laurent, which includes a nine-hole golf course, a clubhouse restaurant, and 79 seasonal campground sites for lease. The golf course opened this past summer, and in November, we installed a virtual golf simulator in our pro shop. Stay tuned for more updates, including the opening of the clubhouse and RV park.

In September, the MMF continued our investment in downtown Winnipeg with the acquisition of 200 Main Street and the adjacent 165 Fort Street. The building at 200 Main Street, previously owned by Wawanesa Insurance, features seven storeys and 111,778 square feet of space alongside 320 underground parking stalls and 35 electrified surface parking stalls. The building will contain offices for MMF departments and a Red River Métis child care centre.

The past year also saw a rebrand of our Ed Simard General Store at the MMF Home Office to the Red River Métis Marketplace to better serve and sell goods from Red River Métis artisans.

### Housing and Property Management

The MMF Housing Department continued to help Red River Métis Citizens by providing affordable housing, support, and programs.

One of the fastest growing programs for Citizens is our First Time Home Purchase Program, which has helped over 800 Red River Métis families purchase a new home. The program has leveraged \$177 million in mortgages and has provided \$11 million in funding to date. In addition, the program has produced major economic impacts: 381 jobs have been created and over \$43 million in other economic impacts have been made to the Manitoba economy.

Throughout the province, the MMF has been working hard to provide safe, affordable housing to Citizens. As of 2023, the Housing Department manages 85 affordable housing units across the province.

In March, the MMF opened Fre Maachi, a 20-unit transitional housing project at 670 Main Street in Winnipeg. The three-storey building is part of the Housing Department's Rapid Services program, established in 2021 to provide housing supports to Red River Métis Citizens at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The newly built homelessness hub aims to help women fleeing violence, LGBTQ2S+ individuals, Citizens who have migrated to Winnipeg from rural and

remote areas, those exiting the justice system, people leaving health care, and Red River Métis Veterans. Fre Maachi features 16 studio units, six of which are accessible, and four two-bedroom suites for emergencies involving women and children. The MMF plans to create more transitional housing hubs in other parts of the province, including Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, Swan River, and Thompson.

In June, the MMF hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony for a six-unit multi-family complex in the historic Red River Métis community of St. Boniface. The complex features one single-bedroom unit plus a den, two double-bedroom units, two three-bedroom units, and one four-bedroom unit. This building further proved the commitment to providing and developing housing and housing supports that meet the needs of Red River Métis Citizens.

The MMF hosted a ground-breaking ceremony at Cottage Bakery and Café in October for Mazoun Inifitii Pakoshayimoohk/Infinity House of Hope, which will provide culturally secure urban transition residences for Youth aging out of care or who have already completed this transition but need additional support. Mazoun will feature 12 transitional one-bedroom units dedicated to Youth aging out of care, two emergency units for those who may be experiencing homelessness, and two two-bedroom units for family reunion. Mazoun will also feature office spaces, a kitchen to teach Youth how to prepare healthy meals, a multi-purpose area, therapists on-site, and cultural connectors to help the Youth access MMF and community programs and services. Construction is expected to be completed during the summer of 2024 with a fall launch.



Throughout 2023, the MMF's Housing and Property Management Department broke ground on many projects, including the Mazoun Inifitii Pakoshayimoohk/Infinity House of Hope.

In November, the MMF also broke ground on Michif Manor, which will provide temporary lodging for Red River Métis Citizens travelling into Winnipeg for medical treatments. Michif Manor offers 12 private units with private washrooms, two communal kitchens, a dining room, a workout room, a games room for children, indoor and outdoor seating areas, laundry facilities, and a cultural/resource room. Alongside the MMF, funding for this project comes from the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative, which supports innovative Indigenous-led housing ideas. The Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, a federally registered, non-profit society, is also supporting the project.

We also welcomed the federal Budget 2023 investment of \$4 billion over seven years to implement an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy currently under co-development with Indigenous partners. We have been assured by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation that the new Strategy will complement our existing Red River Métis Housing Strategy, which we co-developed with Canada and have been executing since 2018.

### Early Learning and Child Care

Our Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) department offers child care services that allow Red River Métis children to learn in an environment that

both explores and celebrates their heritage. 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.

This past year saw the expansion of child care centres across Manitoba, with a total of 10 currently open, another six under construction, and an additional eight coming in the next few years. The MMF expects to employ 250-300 child care workers in Manitoba when all child care centres are completed.

With the acquisition of 200 Main Street, the MMF announced its plans to create a state-of-the-art child care facility that will be accessible to MMF staff.

In November, we held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the grand opening of Li Pchi Pwayson, a 40-space, culturally focused child care centre in St. Laurent. The centre serves infant and preschool-aged children as a complement to the existing school-aged care centre MMF is already operating in the community, providing a total of 70 culturally focused child care spaces. This represents an economic capital investment of \$2.3 million by the MMF into the historic Red River Métis community, with 21-25 people employed across both centres.

### Red River Métis cultural events and celebrations

The Red River Métis are a festive people with much to celebrate, and 2023 was no different! The MMF continued the celebration of annual traditions and hosted many of your favourite events this past year across the Homeland. Here are some of the highlights:

- ∞ The 76th Annual Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival in The Pas
- ∞ Métis Night with Winnipeg Goldeyes
- ∞ Victory at Frog Plain Commemoration
- ∞ National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebrations
- ∞ Ste. Madeleine Métis Days
- ∞ Youth and Elder Conference
- ∞ Infinity Women Secretariat Annual General Assembly
- ∞ Louis Riel Commemoration Ceremony
- ∞ Lighting up the Heart of the Homeland

Many of our Locals also hosted events, from old-time dances to trivia nights, and everything in between. If you were not able to participate in our events in person, the MMF IT Department made sure you could watch, virtually, through our advanced audiovisual technology. This ensured smooth, seamless events and meetings regardless of geographical location.

Thanks to our Citizens - without your participation these events would not be the successes they turned out to be!

### A helping hand

Whether it is through humanitarian efforts, or continuing to build connections within the community, the MMF takes great pride in giving back to our Red River Métis Citizens and beyond.

The National Red River Métis Government continued our support for Ukrainian refugees. In June 2023, the MMF signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba to work together to support training and employment for Ukrainian refugees at the MMF's child care centres. The MMF pledged \$1.5 million, in partnership with the Province of Manitoba, for a total program cost of \$2.5 million toward the hiring and training of up to 25 Ukrainian refugees across Manitoba in Early Childhood Education. In October, these students began their Early Childhood Educator journeys with Louis Riel Vocational College.

At our 2023 Annual General Assembly, the silent auction raised \$36,250 for the Bereavement Fund, with \$20,000 added by Métis N4 Construction for a total of \$56,250. In addition, Citizens received chickens, potatoes, and honey, courtesy of President Chartrand, Clifford Waldner, and the Bon Homme Hutterite Colony, with hopes of assisting Red River Métis families impacted by the rising costs of food.

The MMF also continued its Métis Cost of Living Supplement and hamper delivery program across our regions to help Red River Métis Citizens in need.

With the wildfires that took place across the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, your National Government of the Red River Métis extended their hand to assist evacuees who had to relocate to Manitoba. The MMF reached out to the government of Manitoba to help by way of food, lodging, and transportation to our Treherne construction camp for evacuees.



The MMF pledged \$1.5 million, in partnership with the Province of Manitoba, for a total program cost of \$2.5 million toward the hiring and training of up to 25 Ukrainian refugees across Manitoba in Early Childhood Education.

In May, at the final game of the Manito Ahbee Cup, President Chartrand showed support for Kayden Buffalo, whose family had lost their home to a fire. He announced a \$1,000 donation, plus the cost of a new tuxedo, which was also lost in the fire, for the athlete's high school graduation.

Once again, in November, the MMF became a matching hour sponsor, joined by Métis N4 Construction, for the St. Boniface Hospital Foundation Radiothon of Hope and Healing. The MMF is always proud to help raise funds for the Foundation, supporting patient care, medical research, and health literacy at the hospital.

In December, the MMF kicked off the holiday season with the lighting of our newly acquired 200 Main building. The ceremony featured a magical installation of a merry Red River Métis Santa in his Red River Cart, laden with gifts, pulled by three mighty bison. We presented \$50,000 to the Christmas Cheer Board, the largest public donation of the year for the organization, which has offered food and toys to families in need for over 100 years. The MMF takes pride in our over 20 years of continued support to help ensure everyone gets to celebrate Christmas.

### Red River Métis Veterans

The Red River Métis Veteran Department has continued to develop and improve its assistance to our Veterans, their families, and caregivers by identifying their needs to help them access necessary support.

In July, the MMF raised the Red River Métis Homeland flag at Juno Beach to honour the memory and legacy of our Red River Métis Veterans who were among the 14,000 brave Canadians who landed on Juno Beach and all Veterans.

On November 8, the MMF hosted a ceremony at St. Laurent Legion Métis Branch #250 to respect and honour Red River Métis Veterans on Indigenous Veterans Day. The event featured speeches, a wreath-laying ceremony, poems, a colour party march, prayer, music, and refreshments. This marks the second year the Red River Métis Veterans Department has hosted a service.

### Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management

Many Red River Métis Citizens work closely within, and rely heavily on, our environment to provide a livelihood, sustenance, and the ability to practice traditional Métis culture. Your Red River Métis Government understands the importance of protecting and conserving our traditional territory and beyond.

In an exciting move to further support Red River Métis farmers, the MMF launched the Red River Métis On-Farm Climate Action Program. The \$4.8 million program is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Climate Solutions – On-Farm Climate Action Fund. The program provides Red River Métis agriculture producers across our National Homeland with non-repayable cost-shared funding of up to \$75,000.

The MMF has also taken action to help Citizens to garner access to healthy, cost-effective food by constructing eight greenhouses, one in each MMF region, along with a greenhouse for the Infinity Women Secretariat. This will yield 100,000 pounds of vegetables each year for Citizens, along with plans to build 1,000 garden boxes for Citizens this winter. In July, \$500,000 was allocated through the Local Food Infrastructure Fund to support the enhanced distribution of healthy food across MMF Regions, including investing in a refrigerated trailer, grow domes, edible forests, and pollinator gardens.

To further promote food security, Red River Métis Youth cared for the vegetable garden at Riel House, distributing a large quantity of produce to Citizens in need. In addition, the MMF's Energy, Infrastructure, and Resource Management Department received funding through the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund, and a total of 3,000 lbs of ground bison meat was purchased from Métis bison ranchers and distributed equitably to Métis Elders and Citizens in need throughout each MMF Region.

Continuing our commitment to plant two million trees across the National Homeland of the Red River Métis, we have provided and planted a total of 18,499 trees and shrubs throughout the 2023 planting season, including the seedling handouts at the EGA and AGA. As part of our Make Our Homeland Green Again campaign, the MMF also hosted horticultural educational workshops and training programs this past year, covering plant care, plant propagation, biodiversity, and forest stewardship.

In March, Red River Métis Youth had the opportunity to learn from Elders and land users about the changes they have seen to the land and how it affects their experiences using it. The Métis Youth Climate Symposium in Winnipeg offered presentations, workshops, and roundtable discussions on climate change in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis, everyday actions for climate change, as well as opportunities for climate change employment and volunteering.

Métis N4 Construction, an affiliate of the MMF, announced a strategic partnership with GFL Environmental in March to work together to increase Indigenous participation in the delivery of diversified environmental services across Canada.

In August, the MMF and Canadian Nuclear Laboratories signed a five-year contribution agreement – the culmination of two years of discussions between the parties regarding the effects of decommissioning activities at the Whiteshell Laboratories site on the Red River Métis, including the Whiteshell Reactor #1 Decommissioning Project.

### Harvesting

The MMF continues to work to protect our Citizens' inherent right to harvest and adhere to *Métis Laws of the Harvest*. Harvesters must hold a validated MMF Harvester Card with the current year's Conservation Trust Fund sticker.

In June, we were pleased with the advancement of Red River Métis harvesting rights after the Supreme Court of Canada's dismissal of the Government of Saskatchewan's application to appeal the decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal in *R. v. Boyer; R. v. Poitras, 2022 SKCA 62*. The MMF, led by President David Chartrand, had taken intervenor status in support of Warren Boyer and Oliver Poitras, who were seeking a declaration that their rights to fish and hunt for food as Indigenous people, as protected by s. 35 of the Constitution, would be honoured by the Province of Saskatchewan.

As with the *Boyer/Poitras* case, your Red River Métis Government took intervenor status on the *Desautel* case in British Columbia. Both cases clearly

reflect the changing tides in the courts, including growing awareness that colonial thinking cannot be easily applied to traditional Indigenous harvesting rights.

The MMF continued its fourth annual Moose Conservation Harvesting Initiative in the Duck and Porcupine Mountains. Citizens entered a lottery to harvest as a Harvesting Party using one Conservation Moose Tag, allowing for the shared harvest of one bull moose.

We are increasingly seeing a loss of the Crown Land where our harvesting rights are protected. While this is a concern, we are securing our future by buying land across our Homeland for Citizen use in sustainable harvesting practices. It is important for us to act now to preserve the land and to protect our traditional practices for the next generation of Red River Métis Citizens.

### Youth

The MMF's Métis Employment and Training Department offered a wide range of opportunities for Youth to participate in cultural programs like fiddle and jigging lessons, beading circles, moccasin making, land-based learning, and sports and summer camps. The Individual Youth Support Program provides an annual reimbursement to Youth for participation in sports, recreation, and cultural activities. This program has already helped more than 1,400 Youth, with more applications each year.

As part of a targeted investment into professional and structured sports development for Red River Métis Youth, the MMF supports Red River Métis Youth elite athletes through the Believe Elite Athletic and Artistic Support Program.

This past year, we had the pleasure of supporting our Youth in major sporting events, including 25 Red River Métis athletes at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships in Winnipeg in May. We supported 130 Red River Métis athletes participating in the North American Indigenous Games by distributing \$195,000 under the Believe Program. Our athletes competed in a variety of sports for the Halifax event in July, including softball, baseball, volleyball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, track and field, and swimming.

### Education

The MMF has been working for years to address the gap in education for the Red River Métis, and 2023 built on progress toward advancing education outcomes for Red River Métis students.

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, we wanted 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 is not, "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?"

Through our education support program, each student gets up to \$5,000 for each year of their education. In 2023, the MMF supported over 1,300 post-secondary students, to a cost of approximately \$6 million. 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.

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 the MMF's scholarship and bursary program to help our students succeed.

In May, the MMF, Vickar Automotive Group, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev signed a Donor Pledge Agreement to establish a partnership for research, education, and culture exchange. The goal of the partnership is to promote cooperation and mutual understanding between the Red River Métis community and the academic community in Israel.

### Language revitalization

The Louis Riel Institute (LRI), an affiliate of the MMF, continued to support the preservation and revitalization of the Michif language. This past year saw the debut of the Michif Talking Dictionary, an audio extension of the original dictionary belonging to the Turtle Mountain Community College. The audio was made available for free online through LRI's website.

LRI continued their development of the Group Immersion Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP), which trains adults to become proficient speakers to create language teachers. Participants, including mentors and apprentices, were enrolled in a University of Winnipeg program, Teaching Indigenous Languages for Vitality, so they could expand on their skills and help improve the MAP program.

LRI also worked to develop an Archival Content Management System called *Mukurtu*. The system was designed for Indigenous archiving, specifically to protect and share all existing and newly digitized language video and audio files.

### Residential and Day Schools

The National Government of the Red River Métis continues to seek reparation for harm done to Red River Métis residential and day school Survivors who were forced to abandon their language, culture, and way of life.

In February, the Red River Métis Residential and Day School Survivor Advisory Committee began meeting to begin discussions associated with issues, expertise, and perspectives related to Red River Métis Residential and Day School Survivors who attended schools in Manitoba and across the Red River Métis Homeland. The advice from this committee ensures that survivors' views are considered in the initiatives pursued by the MMF. Members regularly consult with the Survivor community, particularly those Red River Métis Citizens directly impacted by the Residential and Day School systems.

To honour Residential School Survivors and all the lost children to their families and communities, a Residential Schools National Monument will be installed in a highly visible location in Ottawa. The Federal Government announced the newly formed Survivor-led Steering Committee, which will guide the Residential Schools National Monument work. The Survivor-led Steering Committee will oversee the monument project through its completion, ensuring it remains grounded in Indigenous values. They will advise and guide on-site selection, the design competition process, educational content development, and on-site programming. The MMF attended a ground-breaking ceremony on June 20, 2023, for the monument commemorating survivors and victims of residential schools that will be built on the west side of Parliament Hill.

This past year saw research consultations on the Pekeywaytahihnan *nutr zanfaan leur zisprii* (We are Bringing Our Children's Spirit Home) research project. The project aims to determine where our missing children are so we can honour them, their families, and their communities.

### The path forward

As proud Red River Métis, we are advancing our agenda and making enormous strides, building our rightful place in Canada's Confederation, on our own terms. These are exciting times as we continue to move forward and strengthen our responsible and accountable governance for Red River Métis Citizens. The MMF vows to keep this tremendous momentum going in 2024 and into the future in a way that will sustain the well-being of generations of Red River Métis Citizens.