My adventure into northern Ontario began the first weekend after completing my second year in the DDS program at the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Toronto. For months I had been planning this trip with the help of my classmate Marc Yarascavitch and contacts referred from the University of Toronto’s First Nations House; it was now about to begin.

We drove from Toronto to Timmins on Sunday June 4th, and on Monday morning we took a flight from Timmins to Attawapiskat, a “flight-access-only” First Nation on the western banks of James Bay. Our purpose was to give oral hygiene education to the elementary school children of the community. Before departure from Timmins the first glitch had become evident; our luggage was not going to make it onto the plane with us, and we had...
I received my training through the MNOTI office in Hamilton. I began training as an office administrator in 2002, and from there I was offered a contract position as a Youth Project Officer.

I was 17 years of age when I started working for a pet store. I remained working there for approximately six years, and my only other prior work experience was working at a grocery store as a cashier.

My last year working at the pet store came to an abrupt halt when I was in a car accident. I took a year off to recover and during this time off work, I had become pregnant. This lead to another year off for maternity leave.

Two years out of work and a new baby at home, left me confused and questioning where my life was headed. At this point, I decided not to return to the pet store, however, I still did not have any clue as to what I should do next.

Throughout this time, I was volunteering on the MNO Hamilton Wentworth Community Council. Being involved with the council and the staff at the MNOTI office introduced me to some of the opportunities available for Métis youth in the Hamilton area. I had been looking to change direction in my life, and the training programs provided by the MNOTI seemed to be a good opportunity for a new mother (who was now a single mother) to get a fresh start. This is when I began my training as an Office Administrator at the MNOTI Hamilton office.

“Walking in the door with no other experience but working in a grocery store and pet store, left me with little confidence, I didn’t feel I had many employable skills at all.

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**MÉTIS WAGE SUBSIDY**

MWS is intended to assist clients who are having difficulties accessing employment due to factors such as lack of recent work experience or shortage of work. A subsidy is provided to the employer in order to provide valuable on the job work experience.

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**SUMMER CAREER PLACEMENT**

A wage subsidy provided to employers in order to provide work experience for Métis students.
The MNO really helped me develop skills I didn’t even know I had. Before working for the MNO I was so anxious and shy, I wasn’t even able to call the pizza guy to order a pizza! This job really opened doors for me; it alleviated many of my anxieties and built up my confidence.

During my stay at the MNO I encountered many wonderful opportunities which would later assist me in securing my current position as an Aboriginal Youth Advisor for the Native Youth Advancement With Education Hamilton (NYAWEH) at Cathedral High School. I increased my knowledge of traditional teachings and Métis culture.

The skills I developed training as an Office Administrator, impressed my current employers, which lead them to hire me as a Youth Project Officer.

A year later, I saw the second posting for another Aboriginal Youth Advisor for the NYAWEH program. I knew this was the job for me, however, after reading the job description and requirements, I was concerned that I lacked the qualifications. Prior to my experience with the MNO, that concern would have been true. With a lot of encouragement from MNO staff and other community members, I decided to apply for the position; I even enrolled myself into a counseling course at Mohawk College. I may not have had a diploma at any college or university, but I was confident with the skills I acquired through my time at the MNO, that I could do the job and do it well.

I applied for the job and was hired on the spot.

While all this was taking place, I was also nominated for the National Métis Youth Role Model Award for personal achievement. To my surprise, I won. Everything happened so fast, it was such a wonderful experience.

None of this would have ever been possible if I didn’t get my start with the MNO.

I was living on my own trying to support my baby and myself and I didn’t know what I was going to do, and then came along the MNO. They were very supportive, understanding and compassionate people. This encouraged me to work harder and be a better person. It was a very enjoyable and pleasant work atmosphere.

I am truly thankful for all that they have done for me. They helped me discover my roots and find my path in life. I will never forget all that I gained from my experience with the MNO.

My experience with the Métis Nation of Ontario was absolutely fabulous! It was the opportunity and change that I needed in my life to make a difference.
The MNO has focused a great deal of attention on the educational needs of Métis people and removing the barriers that hinder the full participation of Métis in the Canadian economy. In 1998, through the Province of Ontario’s Student Opportunity Trust Fund program, the MNO established a bursary trust fund at 32 colleges and universities across Ontario. Bursaries are awarded each year to Métis students from the interest that accumulates annually. This has been a highly successful program assisting students in all fields of study as they prepare to enter Canada’s economy.

**MÉTIS STUDENT BURSARIES AWARDED**

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<th>YEAR:</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
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**MÉTIS STUDENT BURSARIES** Are Available at these Institutions

**UNIVERSITIES**

- Algoma
- Brock
- Carleton
- Lakehead
- Laurentian
- Ottawa
- Queens

**COLLEGES**

- Algonguin
- Cambrian
- Canadore
- College Boreal
- Conestoga
- Confederation
- Fanshawe
- George Brown
- Georgian
- Humber
- Lambton
- Loyalist
- Mohawk
- Niagara
- Northern
- OCAD
- St. Clair
- St. Lawrence
- Sault College
- Sheridan
- Sir Sandford Fleming

Dental student brings healthy smiles to north

To wait until Tuesday morning for the cargo plane to arrive with our teaching supplies. On Monday afternoon we met our host, Principal Vince Dumond and toured the community.

From a portable classroom at J.R. Nakogee School, we gave presentations on oral health, including an interactive plaque disclosing exercise and tooth brushing instruction; the youngest students also had a little arts and crafts session where they decorated toothbrush shaped bookmarks and brushing charts.

The next morning we drove four hours to Constance Lake. After meeting Principal Leo Grzela and a volunteer coordinator, we set up shop in the life skills classroom.

On Tuesday morning our coordinator brought in the first group of six children. Over the next few days, groups of six elementary school aged students passed in and out of our classroom every 45 minutes. Our coordinator’s assistance made it feel like a miniature factory producing educated and diligent young toothbrushers!

We ended our visit to Constance Lake with a parent education session at the local health center. We provided booklets for the parents and health centre operators outlining important facts and frequently asked questions (with answers) on infant, toddler, child and adult oral hygiene practices and technique.

In all we provided oral hygiene instruction to over 400 First Nation children over a span of two weeks.

I would like to thank the Métis Nation of Ontario Training Initiatives program for funding this invaluable experience. I am proud to have an active role in educating children and promoting oral health in under-serviced communities in Ontario. •••
The Métis Nation of Ontario played a pivotal role in helping me find the career of my dreams and I cannot even begin to express how grateful I am for your kindness, generosity and assistance through this journey.

The financial support of the Métis Nation of Ontario Student Bursary Program meant a lot to me. As a student who was not eligible to receive any financial government assistance I worked 2 part-time jobs for more than 30 hours a week in order to pay for school. Thanks to the Métis Nation of Ontario I was able to work a little less and focus more on my studies. As a result, I was able to complete 2 college diplomas and maintain position on the Dean’s List for academic achievement.

Following graduation I commenced my search to find employment in my career field. I knew that the job market in Thunder Bay was limited so I looked to the Métis Nation for help. I applied for the Métis Training Initiatives Wage Subsidy Program and successfully received funding to obtain paid employment training at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation as a Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator. At the Foundation I earned invaluable experience in fund development, events planning, graphic design and volunteer management.

I truly believe that without the support of the Métis Nation I would not have my career as Development Coordinator of Team Diabetes & Events at the Canadian Diabetes Association today.

There is nothing more rewarding than watching your dreams come true and being able to give back to the community and those individuals who helped you get there.

TIFFANY Miller
THUNDER BAY • DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, DIABETES ASSC.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:
The 2001 census profiles a Metis population with a median age of 27 years representing significant potential for Ontario’s workforce and economic success. The MNO in response to a growing and ambitious youth population offers a wide range of programs and services to Metis youth. Programs include summer placement opportunities, youth internships, on the job training and innovative community-based youth projects.

MÉTIS STUDENT BURSARY PROGRAM
In 1998, the Métis Nation of Ontario established a bursary program, to assist Métis students in their pursuit of post-secondary education. The initial investments were matched by the Province of Ontario’s Student Opportunity Trust Fund program.
The experience was great, it came in exceptionally handy and enabled me to take the next step with the MNO and start participating as a mentor.

The program helped short term with preparing a business plan and with short term financing; cash is god in small business and that was very helpful.

“[The funding] let me take the next step with my business, which was to secure financing and get financial distribution. [It was a great help to] survival in my third year.

Both Bonny Cann (Provincial Education Coordinator) and Stephanie Cruise (Regional Employment and Training Coordinator) need to be absolutely patted on the back and praised for helping to develop the Urban Centre project, because as a group, [Métis] are not overly represented or recognized in Toronto. They are instrumental in community development and small business development.

The best demonstration you can bring is going into the school with some of my ice cream, and saying, ‘this is what a Métis Businessman made, and you’re eating it.’ I don’t think there is any better way to demonstrate the full effect of how both the Métis Nation of Ontario and Aboriginal Business Canada keep Aboriginal and Métis business alive in Canada.

It’s about keeping dreams alive, because that’s what small business is, someone’s personal dream of autonomy and control in their own life.”

Brad Kurtenbach accessed MNOTI’s Métis Self-Employment program for support for his business Kensington Market Organic Ice Cream in Toronto.

The Métis Self-Employment program helps a client to create a job for themselves through self-employment, by providing clients with various types of support during the period when he or she starts up a business. Assistance can include coaching, ongoing technical advice and financial support. Coaching is tailored to the individual’s needs and can include business plan development, accounting, marketing, use of computer skills, etc.
I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for allowing me to take part in the Summer Employment Program you have offered for the last 3 years. The jobs that I have worked due to the generosity of the Métis Nation of Ontario include working at an independent CD store as well as at Youth Innovations as an employee of the City of Welland. My experience there taught me an immense amount of new skills that I believe will help me in any job situation I encounter in the future.

My role at Youth Innovations was to run events for local youth as well as to organize volunteers. My proudest accomplishment at this job was the production of Welland’s first ever city-wide band compilation CD. The disc brought the musical youth of Welland together which was the whole goal of the project.

Thank you for supporting my summer employment for the last 3 years! Without the MNO, these experiences wouldn’t have been possible!

I was awarded a Bursary from the Métis Nation of Ontario Training Initiatives program to conduct research for my Ph.D. thesis on home-based family literacy. The University of Toronto managed the funds through my thesis supervisor. The Métis Nation of Ontario staff were very friendly and supportive.

The support assisted me in completing my Ph.D. degree in Developmental Psychology and Education. It helped me to offer a family literacy program to over 100 families representing a range of cultural diversity in neighborhoods where families are often not well connected to community resources.

I feel that it is important to support Aboriginal Canadians to complete advanced degrees. As a Métis Canadian, I want to be able to give back to my community through support in education.

The MNOTI office in Region 8 (Greater Toronto Area) recently partnered with View College, a local training and placement service, to run an Office Assistant Training Program for Métis. The training was conducted in MNOTI’s Richmond Street office for the comfort of the 5 trainees some of whom had been out of the work force for sometime. Leslie Frost, one of the clients who took the training, secured full-time permanent employment with the View College as a result:

After the training the instructor and Stephanie worked together to get me on a Métis Wage Subsidy Program to manage the office at View College. That was in September and now its summer 2007 and I am still working at View College! I only had good experiences with MNOTI. They were all extremely nice and helpful. If it wasn’t for MNOTI, I wouldn’t have this job right now. I would be at home in Peterborough probably doing nothing.
I was fortunate to be involved with several MNOTI programs within a short period of time. First was a Summer Career Placement (SCP) which allowed me the financial freedom of participating in some continuous education. I attended the Academy of Learning in Sault Ste Marie taking MicroComputer Business Applications of which I completed with honours.

My next MNOTI intervention consisted of a Job Career Placement (JCP) placing me as an office administration personnel for the Historic Sault Ste Marie Métis Council. This position advanced my office skills and confidence enough to enable me to apply for the AHWS Assistant position posted 4 months later. A year later, Michele Dale, the AHWS Coordinator, took maternity leave and I stepped in to successfully fulfill one years’ submission.

Two months after Michele’s return a posting for Diabetes Provincial Coordinator came across my computer. I decided to apply and again was successful in the competition with the stipulation that I would move to Ottawa and work out of head office.

Two years passed with me overseeing the MNO Federal/Provincial Diabetes programs. Because of the relationship between Diabetes, Nutrition and Physical Activity, I became a resource to the MNO as far as proposal writing and have managed to obtain over $500,000 in Provincial Funding that has been administered throughout Ontario to Métis people.

It was in January 2005 that I first became a Supervisor within the MNO Health Branch and as of December 2005 I am now responsible for 4 different MNO Health Programs with 29 staff.

As you can see, the assistance provided to me through the Sault Ste Marie MNOTI office is the foundation for the professional growth within the MNO that I have managed over the past 4 years. The Regional Employment and Training Officer, Tammy Webb, is an incredibly ambitious MNO employee that does everything in her power to see that Métis citizens are given the chance, through MNOTI programming/services, that may not otherwise have been an option in their life.”
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) delivers labour market programming through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada’s Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS). Employment and training programs are client focused and designed to respond to local economic realities and labour market priorities.

The MNO works in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, community agencies, employers, industry, and other key stakeholders across Ontario. These relationships ensure a solid and inclusive delivery network committed to building a diverse and empowered Métis workforce.

Regional offices offer clients one-stop program delivery and provide access to a multitude of services including employment, education, long term care, healing and wellness, youth initiatives, responsible gambling, housing, economic development and community cultural events.

EMPLOYMENT + TRAINING SERVICES:

- Career counselling
- Skills development
- Pre-employment supports
- Resume assistance
- Employment Readiness Training
- Employment referrals
- Training/Mentoring
- Life long learning

EMPLOYMENT + TRAINING PROGRAMS:

Wage Subsidy: Employer subsidy to provide on the job training experience.

Summer Career Placement: Wage subsidy for Métis students.

Culture-based Development Grant: Support for arts & culture related careers and initiatives.

Employability Program: Academic and skills upgrading.

Mobility Assistance: Travel support for securing employment opportunities.

Training Purchases: Funding for specialized training.

Self-Employment: Support for Métis entrepreneurs.

Training Strategies: Labour market strategies for Métis communities.

Apprenticeship Support: Assists Métis people in skilled trades.

Job Creation Partnership: Employment opportunities that provide benefits to clients, community and/or local economy.

Disabilities Support: Employment and/or education assistance for Métis persons with disabilities.

Youth Programs: Assists youth through internships, on the job training and innovative youth projects.

Métis Student Bursary Program: Assistance for students pursuing post-secondary education in Ontario.

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