Rights-bearing members of Métis communities have an inherent and constitutional right to self-government. Our Métis ancestors and past leaders fought for our right to self-govern and determine our collective path. Our people proudly asserted their rights, practiced their way of life, and established thriving communities deeply rooted along the waterways of Ontario. Now we have an historic opportunity to finish the work of our ancestors and build our Métis Government. Every Métis citizen has something to contribute to this process. Let’s listen and learn from each other. Let’s take this journey together. MORE ON PAGES 12-13
As more and more Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) citizens make the decision to be vaccinated, light is starting to show at the end of our long COVID-19 tunnel and there is real hope and progress toward a post-pandemic life. While we are close, certain precautions must still be observed to keep our most vulnerable safe.

To that effect, this year’s 28th MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA) will again be held virtually on September 18-19, 2021. Our AGA is Métis Self-Government in action and provides an opportunity for MNO citizens to come together, review the achievements of the previous year and chart the direction for the future. There will also be a space for a virtual artisan tradeshows, and of course, our celebrated kitchen party to welcome attendees to the event.

Be sure to keep an eye on our website and social media for future announcements, and I look forward to connecting with and hearing from all of you at the in September!

This year’s AGA coincides with Powley Day. Powley Day, September 19, celebrates the anniversary of the landmark Métis rights victory at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2003. The victory in Powley set the stage for a series of achievements for Métis Nation–Saskatchewan and more recently by the Manitoba Metis Federation. LE–finally securing recognition of Métis as a distinct Indigenous people in Canada, and helping open the path forward toward full Métis self-government.

Residential School Revelations

Across the nation, our communities are still reeling from the horrific discoveries at former residential school sites, and losses sustained and traumatized by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, Cowessess First Nation, and the Lower Kootenay Band and, unfortunately, we know there will be more heartbreak to come. It is normal to grieve these losses. Not just of the lives, but of opportunities and potential stolen too from the survivors. They should have known fulfilling childhoods filled with happiness and joy a pride in their culture, and above all, grown up surrounded by family and loved ones. This was not the reality.

In these times, the MNO is increasing the volume of our collective calls for reconciliation, for action and the immediate implementation of the 94 Calls to Actions identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We also encourage anyone experiencing trauma over these discoveries to reach out to the MNO’s 24-H Mental Health Crisis line at 1-888-767-7572 or use the Indian Residential School hotline at 1-866-925-4419.

Next Métis Voyageur submission deadline: October 1, 2021

Send your stories and photos to: CommOpSt@metisnation.org

The Métis Nation of Ontario President’s Message

Strong together

With our core Self-Government Agreement in hand, the MNO is moving forward together to build a constitution and implement self-government. We are at a critical juncture in our path to self-government and our evolution as a government. MNO is on the cusp of finally realizing a key goal of our ancestors—-to be truly self-determining.

Navigating Self-Government Together

With our core Self-Government Agreement in hand, the MNO is moving forward together to build a constitution and implement self-government. We are at a critical juncture in our path to self-government and our evolution as a government. MNO is on the cusp of finally realizing a key goal of our ancestors—-to be truly self-determining.

PCMNO Update

The MNO continues to share PCMNO recap reports and information bulletins regarding the activity of your elected leadership at the Provincial level—the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO). These can be found here www.metisnation.org/news- pcmno-recaps. The motion minute reports and minutes of all PCMNO meetings dating back to the start of the term of office of this PCMNO have been sent to all council leadership, and we invite you reach out to your local leadership for more information about the minutes or decisions – their contact information can be found here www.metisnation.org/governance-govern- structure/pcmno. If citizens every have questions or comments to send to the entire PCMNO please email PCMNO@metisnation.org.

Over the past few years, PCMNO has looked to expand ways for citizens to observe and participate in PCMNO meetings in a fair and secure way, to ensure greater accountability to citizens and transparency in the decisions taken. The PCMNO invites you, and as your Pres- ident, I want to reassure all citizens that your concerns are heard and more discussions will be held about how your Métis government will be more accountable and transparent.

Métis Nation of Ontario

Margaret Froh, President
Métis Nation of Ontario
The hard work we have done will serve us for generations to come

T he Métis Nation of Ontario ("MNO") has now publicly released the results of its multi-year review of its centralized Métis citizenship registration system. This process is known as the "MNO Registry and Self-Government Readiness Review" ("RSRP" or "Registry Review"). The Registry Review marks an important milestone in the MNO's ongoing self-government journey as a Métis government.

Background on the MNO and the Powley Case

In 1993, after years of Ontario Métis being represented through pan-Aboriginal organizations, the MNO was created to be a Métis-specific, self-government structure for Ontario Métis, including the descendants of historic Métis communities that emerged in Ontario as well as the descendants from other Métis communities from Western Canada who are also a part of the Métis Nation and now live in Ontario.

In the late 1990s, as part of its agenda to advance Métis rights, the MNO advanced the first—and only—Métis harvesting rights case to be considered by the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2003, in R v. Powley ("Powley"), the highest court in Canada unanimously confirmed that the Métis are a full-fledged, rights-bearing people. The Court also confirmed that the Métis are full-fledged, rights-bearing people.

Within Ontario, Powley as well as various collaborative processes have led to the joint recognition of an additional historic Ontario Métis communities by the Ontario Government in August 2017, the completion of an Independent Review of the MNO’s Harvesters Card system in late 2017, and the signing of an MNO-Ontario Harvesting Agreement in April 2018.

The Purpose of the Registry Review and the Process

In October 2017, based on the MNO’s foundational goal to secure the recognition of the MNO’s self-government from Canada, the Registry Review was initiated at the direction of the democratically-elected Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario ("PCMNO") by Resolution PC171022-08. The objectives of the Registry Review included:

- assessing the "completeness" of all citizenship files based on the MNO’s current definition for Métis and the MNO Registry Policy
- "Missing Documentation": These files included an identified Métis Ancestor pursuant to the MNO’s current definition for citizenship and the MNO Registry Policy, but were missing verifying genealogical documents linking the MNO citizen to that Métis Ancestor and/or was missing a signed Oath of Allegiance.
- "Incomplete": These files did not include an identified Métis Ancestor pursuant to the MNO’s current definition for citizenship and the MNO Registry Policy.

Following the completion of the assessment of an MNO citizen's file, the individual was sent a letter informing them of the status of their file. If a file was determined to be "Missing Documentation" or "Incomplete", this letter also included information and potential solutions to help the MNO citizen "Complete" their citizenship file. Individuals with "Complete" files were issued a new MNO citizenship card verifying their status as a Métis rights-holder.

Throughout the course of the Registry Review, the MNO also provided citizens with regular updates and additional information through direct correspondence, the Métis Voyageur newspaper, and other MNO communications.

Additional Results and Successes from the Registry Review

In addition to confirming that the overwhelming majority of MNO citizens have completed citizenship files and are objectively verified as Métis rights-holders, the Registry Review has created a "state-of-the-art" registry known as the Secure Archive Source Historical database (the "SASH database"). The SASH database allows Registry staff to search and process files efficiently and avoids duplicating work for individuals who connect to the same historic Métis family. For example, applicants that link to citizens with "Complete" files need only provide documents to connect to the "Complete" file.
If you have moved, changed your name, or if you are not getting communications from the MNO it is important to update your contact information with the MNO Registry! As a citizen of the MNO your voice is important and you are part of ensuring Métis history, culture and way of life remain strong in Ontario.

Update your contact information by emailing: info@mnoregistry.ca
Or by calling the MNO Registry at 1-855-798-1006
Or by filling out and submitting the Change of Address Form at the MNO website: www.metisnation.org/registry
1. What is the Registry Review?

The Registry Review—also known as the “Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process” or the “RSRP”—marks an important milestone in the MNO’s ongoing self-government negotiations with the Crown. Specifically, it involved an independent review of the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (“MNO”) nearly 24,000 citizenship files by an independent consulting firm, Know History, to determine whether the files meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy. The review, which took over three years to complete, was initiated by the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (“PCMNO”) in October 2017. Initial results of the review were publicly discussed in January 2020, with the final results of the Registry Review being publicly released in June 2021.

Throughout the review, the PCMNO and the MNO administration also provided regular updates on the progress of the Registry Review, including: memos to all citizens, updates at MNO Annual General Assemblies (“AGAs”), articles in the Métis Voyageur newspaper, and maintaining a dedicated website with readily-available materials that all citizens can access.

2. Why did the PCMNO initiate the Registry Review?

The PCMNO launched the Registry Review as part of the work needed to prepare the MNO for formal self-government and Métis rights negotiations with Canada and Ontario. As “aboriginal rights” protected by section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, the Crown would only negotiate self-government and Métis rights in accordance with the Constitution, understanding that Métis leaders, in direct consultation with Canada, would have to exercise their rights in a self-governing manner. Hence, the decision in R. v. Powley ("Powley").

The above criteria align with the National Definition of Métis approved by the MNO governments that form the Métis Nation Council, the Supreme Court of Canada’s direction in Powley as well as the MNO’s assertions with respect to the Métis citizens and communities it represents in Ontario.

5. Hasn’t the credibility of the MNO Registry system already been confirmed through previous independent reviews and audits?

As a result of the Registry Review, the MNO has taken a number of important actions to improve its citizenship registry.

This 2017 audit concluded that:

- “Registry and Self-Government Readiness Process” or the “RSRP” marks an important milestone in the MNO’s ongoing self-government negotiations with the Crown. Specifically, it involved an independent review of the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (“MNO”) nearly 24,000 citizenship files by an independent consulting firm, Know History, to determine whether the files meet the current requirements for MNO citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy. The review, which took over three years to complete, was initiated by the Provincial Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (“PCMNO”) in October 2017. Initial results of the review were publicly discussed in January 2020, with the final results of the Registry Review being publicly released in June 2021.

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2. Why did the PCMNO initiate the Registry Review?

The Registry Review was launched to improve the MNO’s citizenship registry and to ensure that it is an accurate and efficient system that can be trusted by the citizens and communities it represents.

The Registry Review was initiated, that some MNO citizenship files may not meet the MNO’s current citizenship requirements as outlined in the MNO Bylaws and the MNO Registry Policy as a result of certain legacy issues. For example, similar to other Métis governments from Ontario westward, the MNO’s definition of “Métis,” as set out in the MNO Bylaws, has changed over the last 28 years. In addition, in the MNO’s early years, there was little to no funding or capacity to support the MNO’s centralized registry.

Building off of the momentum of several years of previous work to refine and strengthen the MNO registry system, the Registry Review was an effort to identity and address these outstanding legacy issues head on, in a transparent and accountable manner.

3. What criteria did the independent reviewer use in the Registry Review?

In reviewing each citizenship file, the independent reviewer, Know History, applied the following four criteria for MNO citizenship as outlined in the MNO Registry Policy:

i. Self-Identification as Métis (i.e., proof that an individual self-identifies as Métis by way of signing the MNO Oath of Allegiance);
ii. Proof of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry (i.e., establishing an ancestral connection to a Métis Ancestor as described in the MNO Registry Policy);
iii. Distinct from the Aboriginal Peoples (i.e., not registered with another Aboriginal nation or on another Aboriginal list); and
iv. Accepted by the Métis Nation (i.e., completion of the MNO citizenship registration process).

The above criteria align with the National Definition of Métis approved by the MNO governments that form the Métis Nation Council, the Supreme Court of Canada’s direction in Powley as well as the MNO’s assertions with respect to the Métis citizens and communities it represents in Ontario.

4. Why are the results of the Registry Review significant?

As a result of the Registry Review, the MNO has taken a number of important actions to improve its citizenship registry:

- 100% of the randomly-selected 328 Harvester Card files were “verified as being part of Historic Métis Communities, and that 100% of the randomly-selected 328 Harvester Card files were “verified as being part of the MNO-Ontario interim harvesting agreement, and conducted by independent consulting firms.

For further information and questions on the Registry Review and upcoming engagement sessions, please see the MNO’s website and contact 613-798-1488 xt. 116 or email rsrp@metisnation.org.

The MNO Registry—which was created in 1994 to identify and register Métis citizens and harvester who are eligible rights holders in the province of Ontario—has undergone several independent reviews and audits since its creation. For example, the Métis Nation Registry Operations—which are national standards to govern Métis registries co-developed with Canada, the MNO, and other Métis governments in 2015—provide that the MNO Registry will be audited every three years. The MNO understands that it must be critically assessed as they provide third-party confirmation that the MNO Registry is objectively-verifiable and consistent with the SCC’s direction in Powley, allowing the Crown to rely on the MNO Registry for the purposes of identifying Métis 35 rights-holders (e.g., for the purposes of harvesting).

The most recent federal audit of the MNO Registry was conducted in 2017 by an independent auditor selected by Canada (i.e., BDO). This 2017 audit concluded that:

- the current MNO registry application process as it presently operates reflects the Powley decision, demonstrates objective verification for citizenship and is maintained with care.

The MNO Registry—which is the only system that is provincially-recognized (known as the “Independent Review”) around this same time, with the final results being released in 2018. The Independent Review—which was motivated by a commitment made in the MNO-Ontario interim harvesting agreement, and conducted by independent consulting firms, InterGroup Consultants—concluded that:

- 100% of the 88 Métis Family Lines submitted by the MNO were “verified as being part of several independent reviews and audits since its creation. For example, the Métis Nation Registry Operations—which are national standards to govern Métis registries co-developed with Canada, the MNO, and other Métis governments in 2015—provide that the MNO Registry will be audited every three years. The MNO understands that it must be critically assessed as they provide third-party confirmation that the MNO Registry is objectively-verifiable and consistent with the SCC’s direction in Powley, allowing the Crown to rely on the MNO Registry for the purposes of identifying Métis 35 rights-holders (e.g., for the purposes of harvesting).

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All citizens were advised of the status of their resources to assist citizens with any questions. re-assessment, and contact information and continued from page 5

6

Métis Voya youth
Issue no. 106, August 2021

report concluded that:

• A total of 71% of all MNO citizenship files (17,014 MNO citizens) were confirmed as being “Complete” citizenship files (i.e., their file included all the necessary documentation required to meet the MNO’s current definition for citizenship and the MNO Registry Policy).

• Another 1.4%-4% of MNO citizenship files (330 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file if they signed the MNO’s required Oath of Allegiance, and another 4.7% (1,132 MNO citizens) could “Complete” their file simply by providing missing genealogical documents. If these outstanding requirements were met, a total of 77% of MNO citizenship files (18,476 MNO citizens) would be confirmed as “Complete”. A total of 22.9% of current MNO citizen-

ship files (5,402 MNO citizens) were designated “Incomplete” files.

• As a part of the review, 1,061 MNO citizens’ files were determined to be inactive because of death, suspension, or withdrawal and were removed from the MNO Registry. At the end of the review, less than 1% of files reviewed remained “In Process”. Of the MNO citizenship files that are “Complete” (17,014 MNO citizens), based on the primary documents provided to the MNO Registry, these files demonstrate the following:

o A total of 25% of the MNO’s citizenship (3,904 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to Métis communities in western Canada through Métis Scip (2,478 MNO citizens), Métis land grants issued under the Manitoba Act, 1870 (768 MNO citizens), or other historical documentation from 1903 or earlier (666 MNO citizens).

o A total of 9% of the MNO’s citizenship (1,522 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in Northwestern Ontario, with 884 MNO citizens being descendants of the “Halleberds of Rainy Lake and River” who collectively adhered as a Métis community to Treaty 3 in 1875 and another 638 MNO citizens ancestrally connecting to other historic Métis families and settlements in the region.

o A total of 49% of the MNO’s citizenship (8,332 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the Great Lakes Métis community that was recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in Powley. This community includes well-known Métis populations and settlements at Fort William (present day Thunder Bay), Michipicoten, Sauld St. Marie, Kullarney, and Georgian Bay/Peterborough.

o A total of 6% of the MNO’s citizenship (1,945 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region.

• A total of 13% of the MNO’s citizenship (2,211 MNO citizens) ancestrally connect to the historic Métis community in the Mattawa region.

• Collectively, the MNO’s citizens with “Complete” files have Métis Ancestors from two or more Métis communities in Western Canada (23%), Northwestern Ontario (9%), the Upper Great Lakes Region (49%), and Northeastern Ontario (19%).

• In addition, many of the MNO’s citizens with “Complete” files have Métis Ance- tors from two or more Métis communities within Ontario. For example, of the 17,014 MNO citizens with “Complete” citizenship files, 13,110 trace to one Ontario Métis community, with approximately 39% (5,082 MNO citizens) of that number ancestrally connecting to two or more historic Métis communities in Ontario.

• Additional research will be undertaken in the future in order to assess further ances- tral connections between historic Métis communities in Ontario as well as with those in Western Canada.

8. My file was designated as “Missing Documentation” or “Incomplete.” Is it possible for me to complete my file on my own, how, and by when do I need to do this?

As noted above, as part of the review process, citizens with “Missing Documentation” or “Incomplete” files were provided with a letter notifying them of results of their file re- view, the documentation needed to complete their file, contact information on how to submit such documentation for re-assessment, and contact information and resources to assist with any questions. As such, it is possible for citizens to complete their files by providing the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry as outlined in their assessment letter. Re-assessment requests are ongoing. In 2017, when the PCMNO initiated the Registry Review, it directed that citizens be “provided a fair and reasonable amount of time to provide the necessary documentation to the MNO Registry.” The timeline for doing so has yet to be determined, and may be determined during the MNO’s province-wide consultations with all MNO citizens (as discussed below). In the meantime, the MNO continues to en- courage citizens to complete their files as soon as possible.

9. Did citizens with “Missing Documentation” or “Incomplete” files lose their MNO citizenship?

No. All citizens—regardless of whether their MNO citizenship files have been designated as “Complete,” “Missing Documentation,” or “Incomplete”—continue to be MNO citizens. The Registry Review—as an internal, administrative process that assessed the completeness of all MNO citizenship files based on the MNO’s current citizenship requirements—does not and cannot, on its own, change the fact of whether someone is an MNO citizen. This is because citizens (i.e., currently members of the MNO Secretariat) can only be removed in accordance with the MNO Bylaws, which currently do not authorize the removal of MNO citizens by reason of a “Missing Documentation” or “Incomplete” file designation. Future steps, however, may be determined through the MNO’s province-wide consultations with all MNO citizens (as discussed below).

10. What are the next steps?

On May 28, 2021, the PCMNO passed a resolution approving of and directing the MNO administration to implement the following next steps related to the Registry Review:

1. Develop and release a series of communica- tion tools in order to engage with MNO citizens on the outcomes of the Registry Review;

2. Undertake province-wide consultation with MNO citizens through a series of virtual Town Hall meetings open to all MNO citizens during the summer of 2021;

3. Develop a “What We Heard” report based on the province-wide consulta- tions to be publicly released following review and consideration by the PCM- NO; and

4. Based on the “What We Heard” report, look towards a province-wide vote (in Fall/Winter 2021) and/or Special Assembly on MNO citizenship (in Fall/Winter 2021 or early 2022, subject to public health and safety requirements) to guide further de- cision-making on next steps related to the Registry Review final report and/or po- tential amendments needed to the MNO Bylaws and MNO Registry Policy.
The Past is Present

Young descendants of 1850 Métis Petitioners witness historic signing in Sault Ste. Marie

Four young Métis people had the opportunity to witness history during a virtual signing ceremony on May 4, 2021 as local leadership of the Huron-Superior Regional Métis Community signed a Regional Implementation Agreement (RJA) with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO).

Rayden Powley-Mortani, Memphis Powley and Morgan and Eizak Jensen acted as “honourary witnesses” to the signing. All four are descendants of Métis signatories to an 1850 Petition that sought to protect Métis lands at Sault Ste. Marie. For the regional Huron-Superior Métis community, the “honourary witnesses” represent an important connection to the past and a commitment to the future.

In 2019, the MNO and the Government of Canada signing a ground-breaking Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement that set out a new government-to-government relationship between Canada and Ontario Métis. The RJA signing on Tuesday is a significant step forward in implementing the hard fought gains secured in that landmark agreement.

“This is a big step forward for us,” said Kim Powley, President of the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council. “When our family and community was put on trial, there was a total denial of our rights — this agreement puts that denial to an end forever. Self-Government has always been the goal, but like they say ‘a goal without a plan is just a wish.’ We are no longer wishing, we are realizing.”

PCMNO Councilor for Region 4 Mitch Case signed on behalf of the Region, MNO President Margaret Froh signed on behalf of the MNO, and Kim Powley and Yvonne Jensen signed on behalf of the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council and the North Channel Métis Council, respectively. The signing was witnessed by Steve Gjos, Todd Showan and Amy Bennett as well as the four “honourary witnesses.”

“Our communities have always been strongest when we are working together,” said Yvonne Jensen, President of the North Channel Métis Council. “The regional approach to self-government in the RJA ensures our whole community is working together to build a strong Métis government. I am excited to see what we will build for my grandchildren, and all the grandchildren in our community.”

In the coming months, the regional Métis community will develop a workplan and begin the process of community consultations with MNO citizens – all part of a process to build a stable, responsible, progressive, culturally grounded Métis Government to protect the rights, claims and interests of the generations yet to come.

Métis Baby Bundle Kits now available!

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to announce a new resource for expectant Métis families, and those with new additions – THE MÉTIS BABY BUNDLE KIT! The Baby Bundle Kit is a 100% FREE resource for any Métis parents or guardians who are expecting, or have a little one 8-months or younger. The Baby Bundle Kit includes an assortment of products for little one(s) that will be sent to families every month. The MNO Early Learning and Childcare Program has secured funds to cover the products and shipping fees so that the Baby Bundle Kit are 100% Free.

In the Baby Bundle Kit:

• ‘Hello Bello’ brand Diapers (32) size 2
• Wipes (quantity 180)
• Diaper rash cream (118ml)
• Baby Shampoo & Wash (296ml)
• Baby Lotion (250ml)
• Baby Blanket (50” x 40”)
• Infant Socks (4 pair, 0-6 months)
• Infant “I Aspire” Onesie (size 6 months)
• A copy of the Métis Baby Bundle Book

Baby Bundle Kit applicants must meet the following requirements:

• Parents/Guardians must be a MNO citizen
• Be pregnant or have a baby 0-8 months
• Reside in Ontario
• Must not be getting support from another Métis Government

Apply once for each child and a replacement box will be sent monthly until the child turns 8 months. Applications are available on the MNO programs portal page. For additional information or if you need help with the application please contact ELCC Operations Coordinator Melinda Konkle at MelindaK@metisnation.org or 289-213-1338.

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HEALTHY CHOICES CANNABIS

Sharing circles for Métis youth

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Healing & Wellness Branch arranged virtual “Sharing Circles” for Métis youth in Ontario earlier this year. These online discussions provided a platform for Métis youth to share their opinions on vital issues, and contribute to the development of future educational resources and tools.

Program facilitators provided background information to attendees and led participants through an open and respectful discussion. Youth participants ranged from ages 16-29 and met via Zoom to take part in the Sharing Circles.

The first two Sharing Circles took place on January 28 and February 24, and included discussions on human trafficking and legalized cannabis, respectively.

“We have found over the past few years that youth-specific perspective has been a gap in our program development and education planning,” says Jason Jamieson, Manager of Program Development. “This year our Anti-Human Trafficking and Healthy Choices Cannabis programs will facilitate youth Sharing Circles as part of their program work plans.”

Youth engagement in these sessions will be critical, as their perspective will inform and shape future program developments, and ensure that available programs and services are holistic, appropriate and culturally sensitive.

“The Métis Youth vision for a healthy future is vital to making sure that we build tools that will stand the test of time and be able to help as many people as possible,” said Jason. “At this point the sky is the limit – we’ll take what we learn and leverage into the future work plans of our programs.”
Statement from Métis Nation of Ontario on recent revelations from the sites of former Residential Schools

Across the nation, our communities are still reeling from the horrific discoveries at former residential school sites, and losses sustained and substantiated by Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, Cowessess First Nation, the Lower Kootenay Band and, unfortunately, we know there will be more heartbreak to come. It is normal to grieve these losses. Not just of the lives, but of the opportunities and potential stolen too from the survivors. They should have known fulfilling childhoods filled with happiness and joy, a pride in their culture, and above all, grown up surrounded by family and loved ones. This was not the reality.

We mourn for the children lost and we support the families eternally hurt by their passing. This news is another example of the unqualified genocide that took place over generations in this country, the ripple effects of which are still felt by Indigenous people across Canada.

Sadly, so many in the Métis Nation have close family members who attended residential and day school institutions and have been affected by the destructive policies that they implemented. The Government of Canada tried to undo and eliminate what made us who we are: our languages, our cultures, our beliefs and the very family and community structures that made our communities what they were. Our very presence here today shows they failed in their ultimate goal. Still, many of our community members were forever hurt and changed, and some never came back to us.

That collective pain did not go away. It continues to resonate today and has manifested itself in many ways. It is compounded by generations of crippling poverty and loss, the 60s scoop, and the ongoing reality of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people. This is but a glimpse into the profound pain that is still felt by Métis, First Nations and Inuit communities.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Project released a full report with over 270 pages of evidence that laid out these facts to all Canadians. It identified 3,200 recorded deaths in the schools. It found that the government and the schools did not record the name of 32% of the students who died. In 23% of the cases, the government and the schools did not record the gender of the student who died. The government and the schools did not record the cause of death of 49% of students. And that doesn’t include the thousands more who are estimated to have died with no records at all.

There cannot be reconciliation for families and communities without closure, and there cannot be closure without governments and faith institutions doing their part to help make that happen. We must all call for more action from our elected leaders and civil society. Thoughts and prayers are not enough to bring true reconciliation.

Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded its work and released its final report. It made 94 Calls to Action – to date it is unclear how many of those have been completed. In December 2020, the Yellowhead Institute reported only eight Calls to Action are complete. Today, we call on Canada to do the following:

• Immediately implement the remaining TRC Calls to Action – with particular attention to Volume 4 of the Final Report;
• Commit to a process to engage Métis governments across Canada to ensure the Métis experience within residential, boarding and day schools is finally told and addressed;
• Fully implement Jordan’s Principle;
• Amend Canada’s laws to allow for the criminal prosecution of those who committed crimes at Residential Schools;
• Acknowledge that the purpose of the Residential School system was the removal of Indigenous peoples from their lands in order to make way for settlement and resource extraction – and reform and implement a timely, effective and efficient Land-Back based policy for settling indigenous land-related issues, including Métis land claim policy.

Together, we must do more.

SUPPORT: For MNO Citizens who are in crisis or require supports, please contact the MNO’s 24-Hr Crisis Line at 1-877-767-7572. A National Residential Schools Crisis Line has been set up to provide support for former students and those affected. Access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the 24-hr national crisis line at 1-866-925-4419
MNO WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP GATHERING 2021
Celebrating Community Ties

Early on Sunday, March 21, 2021, Métis women from across the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) logged on to participate in the virtual Women’s Leadership Gathering: Celebrating Community Ties. Over 60 women participated in the online gathering, hosted by the MNO Women’s Council (MNOWC), engaging in cultural and leadership-oriented workshops, listening to a variety of presentations, and most importantly, connecting with one another in a safe, socially distanced way. “It’s been a little over a year since we all had a chance to gather and it’s been far too long,” said MNOWC President Suzanne Jackson. “I’m so glad that we can meet on this platform and learn from each other and share in one another’s energy and spirit. We have so much planned and I’m thrilled to see so many people attending this virtual Women’s Leadership Gathering.”

“There are many different ways to be a leader, whether it’s a leader in your family, a leader in your community, in your educational institutions, your workplace or your nation,” shared MNO President Froh in her opening remarks. “There are many different ways to lead, but when I think of leadership, I look towards the positive. I focus on how we can work together to accomplish amazing things, and always coming from a place of respect.”

Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Carolyn Bennett echoed those sentiments and emphasized the importance of collaboration in making true progress, particularly in fully restoring the role of women as leaders within communities.

“If your input today will be invaluable, which is the reason why days like today are so important,” commented Minister Bennett. “[Today] you’ll examine what leadership is, and how it may be done in an inclusive way that honours people with expertise and lived experience — which is necessary in order to move forward with the very best policies and practices.”

From the Opening Prayer led by Elder Paul Gabona, to the reading of the Four Agreements by Kelly Camacho and video greetings from Senator Yvonne Boyer, many Métis women leaders contributed to the dialogues and conversations taking place Sunday.

Key note speaker and Le Fémences Michél Otrepensiwak (LFMNO) President Melanie Omenho and Lisa Pigeau presented on Gender Based Analysis (GBA), and, significantly, actions to address and respond to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

“We should all be able to live in a place where we don’t have to worry about our young women or 2SLGBTQ+ being exposed to the level of violence they’ve had to experience,” said President Omenho.

The afternoon sessions began with a presentation on inclusivity and the MNO Two-Spirit Gathering, led by Berni Picco.

Lots of love went into the creation of Kokum Dolls during a workshop at the 2021 Women’s Leadership Gathering, an event with an enhanced sense of inclusivity, community and sisterhood. Women appreciated having a safe space to share and gain traditional knowledge, promote a sense of wellbeing, and benefit from a network of strong Métis women leaders. “We wanted the community to feel like a community, especially during these challenging times,” shared Brenna Johnson, MNO Project Coordinator. “Even if Citizens are self-isolating or in quarantine, we want them to feel included.”

The MNO extends its gratitude and appreciation to the hard work and valuable insights of all who organized and participated in this year’s Women’s Leadership Gathering.

Métis youth from across the province were immersed, digitally, in their culture learning beading, finger-weaving and even taking a virtual nature walk as part of the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) annual March Break Culture Camp on April 12-14, 2021. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, for the second year, the camp has moved online. Participants of the camp, Métis high school students between Grades 10-12, spent three days learning about their Métis culture and post-secondary education and programs offered by the MNO to help them in their post-secondary journey.

“This was great!” said Andrew (Maurice), a participant in the camp. “I liked learning about post-secondary school. Even if I don’t have an idea of where I’m going quite yet I have an idea of resources the MNO offers that I can go to if I need help.”

On day one of the three-day event the participants had a meet and greet with MNO President Margaret Froh.

“These camps are one of the most important ways we try to help our young citizens learn and experience their culture,” said President Froh.

“One of our main goals has always been to help Métis youth to succeed and the Infinite Reach March Break camp is the perfect avenue for that.”

The camp was also attended by facilitators from the MNO’s Infinite Reach program, current upper year post-secondary students, who introduce the high school students to what post-secondary is all about.

The Infinite Reach Network is designed to ease the transition of Métis high school students to post-secondary by creating a community where Métis students can share experiences and support one another in their academic pursuits.

On day two the students got a bit of culture—learning about traditional Métis beading, winter survival skills, and finger weaving. And, on the academic side, they received instruction in resume and cover letter writing.

On the final day MNO staff walked the participants through the different programs and services offered by the MNO and its various branches.

They also learned how to make bannock and syrup, as well as facts about First Trapping and its importance to Métis culture. The March Break Camp finished strong with a virtual nature walk through the Canadian Ecology Centre and traditional Métis games. It has become tradition at the March Break Camps to present the students with their very own sash. The tradition continued online this year as a Métis sash was included in the package of materials they received in the mail prior to the Camp.

There are several culture camps hosted by the MNO throughout the year, visit metisnation.org for more information on when the next one will be held.

The Métis Nation of Ontario is offering access to Métis culturally specific mental health supports for adults, youth and families in Ontario. Delivered in person where possible or via videoconference or telephone, this program connects Métis people to specialized professionals in French and English:

24hr CRISIS LINE
1-877-767-7572
For non-urgent matters or help navigating mental health and addictions support, please call 1-833-549-1674 x.307 or 1-800-263-4889 (toll free) or via email: video@metisnation.org

Métis Nation of Ontario
Two-Spirit (LGBTQ+) Leadership Symposium

A Place in the Circle

The Métis Nation Child, Youth & Family Services Project

Métis Nation of Ontario
Métis Child, Youth & Family Services Project

Good Governance & Best Practices Training session for MNO Councils

MNO Statement to Citizens regarding litigation

April 1, 2021 – The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) has initiated court proceedings against the actions of the Canadian government. The MNO is seeking to resolve issues arising from the federal government’s failure to consult with the Métis Nation of Ontario. The MNO is seeking damages and other forms of redress for the harm caused by the federal government’s actions.

The MNO has made efforts to resolve these issues through negotiations and discussions with the federal government. However, the MNO has not been able to reach a satisfactory resolution with the federal government.

The MNO is seeking a court order to resolve these issues and to obtain the following relief:

- Permanent injunction against the federal government’s actions
- Full compensation for the harm caused by the federal government’s actions
- An order requiring the federal government to consult with the Métis Nation of Ontario in the future
- An order requiring the federal government to provide financial compensation to the Métis Nation of Ontario

The MNO is confident that the court proceedings will be successful in obtaining the relief sought.

We encourage all Métis citizens to consider these issues and to support the MNO in its efforts to resolve these issues.

We thank you for your support and encourage you to stay informed and engaged in the resolution of these issues.

The MNO looks forward to working with all Métis citizens to resolve these issues and to achieve a fair and just resolution for the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Sincerely,
The Métis Nation of Ontario
MNO shortlisted for Housing Supply Challenge

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) recognizes that we all have a right to affordable housing, and MNO’s Housing & Infrastructure team is working diligently to make this a reality. So, when a unique opportunity to work with Canada on targeted housing strategies presented itself, the MNO’s Housing & Infrastructure branch sprang into action. Earlier this year, MNO’s Housing & Infrastructure branch submitted an application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) Housing Supply Challenge, a competitive, national initiative that aims to remove and reduce barriers to affordable housing. This month MNO was thrilled to learn they had been selected as one of 21 shortlisted organizations.

As a shortlisted applicant, the MNO receives $200,000 in funding for the exploratory stages of the Housing Challenge; and, if selected as a finalist, will share a pool of $22.5 million in additional funding to further develop and implement their proposal.

The MNO’s application recognised that the lack of Métis-specific housing data makes developing targeted strategies for Métis challenging. To address this problem, the MNO will mine and update available data to generate a Métis-specific strategy that will ultimately increase the housing supply for Métis across Ontario.

The Housing Supply Challenge consists of six rounds spanning the next five years, each with a unique focus; such as Northern Housing, Construction Technology, and Public Perception of New Developments. Having made the shortlist for stage one, the MNO now turns its attention to the challenge’s second stage. In this predevelopment stage, MNO Housing & Infrastructure will develop local solutions to remove barriers to the development of affordable housing.

By taking advantage of CMHC resources and engaging in critical new research, the MNO is on a path towards developing a comprehensive, data-driven system to inform Métis housing strategies, policies, and investments. Access to safe, affordable housing benefits us all. By building partnerships and making strategic investments, the MNO is continuing its work to ensure all Métis Citizens have a place to call home. A huge thanks and marquis to all involved in making affordable housing for Métis both accessible and a priority.

Visit our website (metisnation.org) to learn more about MNO Housing & Infrastructure and supports such as the Métis Housing Stabilization Program and Home Improvement Pilot Program.

CANCER SCREENING DURING COVID-19

Cancer Screening Tests are Starting Again

Healthcare providers are gradually resuming routine cancer screening tests. The gradual re-start is to ensure the safety of the public and healthcare staff during COVID-19.

There may be delays in resuming screening due to COVID-19 safety measures that may limit the number of people who can be screened each day and to allow healthcare providers to rebook any appointments that were cancelled while services were on pause.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Breast Screening: Contact your local Ontario Breast Screening Program site
Colon and Cervical Screening: Contact your family doctor or nurse practitioner. If you do not have a family doctor or nurse practitioner, you can contact Health Care Connect by calling 1-800-445-1822 or visiting ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

If you have any questions, you can call Ontario Health (Cancer Care Ontario) toll-free at 1-866-662-9233 from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or email cancerinfo@ontariohealth.ca

For information about COVID-19, please visit Covid-19.ontario.ca

MNO Citizen Matt LeMay named Canadian Geographic filmmaker-in-residence

Congratulations to award-winning filmmaker and MNO citizen Matt LeMay, who was recently selected as Canadian Geographic’s inaugural “Filmmaker-in-Residence!”

Matt has a long-standing history of working alongside the MNO to bring Métis stories to life on screen. His unique talents and story-telling flair will be an asset to this new program, and we wish him luck as he continues his work elevating and amplifying Indigenous voices through film!

Find out more here: lhc.ly/AAu0IP4H

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NAVIGATING MÉTIS SELF-GOVERNMENT

With our core Self-Government Agreement in hand, the MNO is moving forward together to build a constitution and implement self-government. And we want to ensure that all MNO regions and communities are engaged in that process in a way that makes sense for them. Join the journey!

1 GET STARTED
Each of MNO’s 9 Regions draft and sign a Regional Implementation Agreement (RIA). The RIAs are customized to the unique needs and concerns of each Region. They also include common principles that ensure all voices will be heard and all MNO communities are properly supported.

2 GET ORGANIZED
Next, Regional Implementation Committees (RIC) will be formed with representation from each MNO community council in the Region. The RICs will develop work plans to build capacity and engage MNO Citizens within the Region, and address any unique concerns the region has when it comes to self-government.

3 RECOGNIZE OUR SUCCESSES
As MNO communities and citizens work together to build our vision for the future, the Government of Canada will pass a new federal law (‘federal recognition legislation’) that recognizes and cements our Self-Government Agreement in Canadian law.

4 WE BUILD IT TOGETHER
Community by community, all MNO citizens will be engaged to contribute their ideas, ask questions and, importantly, listen to one another. Through collaboration and consensus, we will build a Métis Government that is fair, worthy of respect, and true to our values.

5 CRAFT A MÉTIS CONSTITUTION
With the contributions and ideas of all MNO citizens, and inspired by the values and traditions of our ancestors, a Constitution will be drafted.

6 BUILD OUR CORE MÉTIS LAWS
We will build Métis Laws on citizenship, leadership selection and internal operations to provide a strong foundation for our Métis Government and future generations of Métis in Ontario.

7 RATIFY AND MOVE OUR MÉTIS GOVERNMENT FORWARD!
With our Métis Laws in place and all other Self-Government Agreement requirements met, we will hold a province-wide referendum to approve our Constitution and the Self-Government Agreement. Once ratified by the Métis Citizens, we will move forward with Métis Self-Government in Ontario!

More info and updates at the website: www.metisnation.org/self-government
On June 27, 2019, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) and the Government of Canada (Canada) signed the MNO-Canada Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement (the “Self-Government Agreement”). The signing of the Self-Government Agreement was an historic victory for Métis citizens and communities represented by the MNO. In the Self-Government Agreement, Canada recognizes — for the first time in history—that the Métis communities represented by the MNO hold the inherent right to self-government and self-determination. The Self-Government Agreement also provides a clear path for the MNO to transform into a recognized public Indigenous government. After this transition, the new Métis Government will have recognized law-making powers in the areas of citizenship, leadership selection, and internal operations. The Self-Government Agreement “locks in” these steps, so they cannot be swept away by changing political winds or circumstances. In this way, the Self-Government Agreement “sets the table” for the next steps that the MNO will take to implement the agreement. The very first step in this process will be extensive consultation and engagement with Métis citizens and communities on the Self-Government Agreement and the development of a Constitution. The time is now to be a part of this historic journey and continue the work of our Métis ancestors and leaders. Get ready to join the conversation and help build our future Métis government together!

WHY DOES MÉTIS SELF-GOVERNMENT MATTER?

WHAT MÉTIS VALUES SHOULD GUIDE US IN SELF-GOVERNMENT?

HOW DO WE ALL WORK TOGETHER? WHO DOES WHAT?

MEET OUR MÉTIS GUIDE!

In the shape of the infinity symbol and full of joie de vivre, our guide will be sharing Self-Government information and updates on the journey ahead. Like this tidbit! Did you know that our Métis guide was inspired by artwork created by Métis artist and illustrator Jeff Wilson. Jeff also illustrated The Tiny Voyageur and Story of the Tamarack.

NAME OUR MÉTIS GUIDE!
Help us name our Métis guide by dropping us a line at our email address Self.Government@metisnation.org. Watch our social media for more from our guide!

Alo, I will be your Métis guide on this journey.

THE LOBSTICK

In the days of the fur trade, lobsticks were used as a tool by Métis to navigate the complex waterways of what is now Ontario. The tallest pine, tamarack or spruce trees made the best lobsticks. The lower branches would be stripped to make them into a kind of traffic sign. Lobsticks could mark a portage, harvesting area, food cache, warn of rough water ahead or signal safe harbour. They could also be climbed and used as a lookout, and in certain circumstances would be crafted as gifts to honour important people.

The lobstick is deeply embedded in fur trade culture and symbolizes our rich Métis past. That is why we included a lobstick in the MNO Self-Government logo. The lobstick is a beacon and a guide on our journey to Self-Government…and will remain so well into the future.
Moving Lives
Georgian Bay and Environs Historic Métis Community

As the ice melted on Lake Huron in spring 1829, the Drummond Island Métis packed up their belongings and crowded into bateaus, destined for Penetanguishene.

Michael Labatte, a Métis voyageur, made the two-week journey along the northern shore of Georgian Bay. “Several families started together,” he remembered. “We camped at Thessalon River, Mississauga River, Serpent River, La Cloche, She-bon-aw-ning, Moose Point, and other places along the way.” For the Laramee family, the trip took nearly one month. Rosette Laramee described traveling with her parents and siblings “in a large bateau with two other families and a span of horses.”

When they reached Penetanguishene, travelers were greeted by the sight of the British military post overlooking the harbour. Angelique Longlade, just thirteen years old at the time of the migration, remembered setting up camp beside the post. “We come Gordon’s pinte; mak wigam cedar bark, stay dare leetle tam; wait for land.”

Families began to reknit threads of their community, living and working together as they had on Drummond Island. Men found work in fishing, lumbering, and guiding, while other families farmed. Even as these economic opportunities called later generations to Georgian Bay’s eastern shores, the descendants of the Drummond Island Métis remained connected, living in neighbouring households and acting as godparents and witnesses for important life events.

Port Collier at Drummond Island
Métis and their forebears lived on Drummond Island for 14 years before migrating to Penetanguishene. They had been uprooted several times before as Britain and the United States struggled for dominance in the region, subjecting the Métis who resided there to constant upheaval and dispersal.

Unloading Bateaux
Bateaux (or bateaux, batteaus) were a familiar mode of travel for the Drummond Island Métis, many of whom would have used them for long hauls of goods in the fur trade. The bateau’s stability on rough waters and capacity for heavy loads made them well-suited to carry the uprooted Métis and their belongings to Penetanguishene.

Four Voyageurs, 1895
The descendants of Drummond Islanders such as Lewis Solomon, John Brisette, James Laramee, and François Dosome, pictured here, have remained in Penetanguishene and the Georgian Bay region for generations. Today, 85 percent of Métis in Georgian Bay trace their ancestry to this Historic Métis Community.

Penetanguishene Harbour, 1818
Credit: Simcoe County Archives

Our Métis History, Our Stories
This is one of a series of historical vignettes that highlight Métis history in Ontario. Look for more in upcoming issues.
MNO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

MNO's second annual ELCC Professional Learning Conference

Over 110 educators, professionals, and community leaders gathered for three days of workshops and conversations during the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) second annual Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Professional Learning Conference. Delivered through a distinctly Métis lens, the online conference helped ELCC professionals gain a better understanding of the Métis people in Ontario. “There is a knowledge gap with regard to Métis in the field of Early Learning,” shared Amanda Pont-Shanks, MNO Early Learning and Child Care Manager. “Many educators have said that they do not feel comfortable teaching Métis content as they do not have knowledge on who the Métis are, or they worry about presenting incorrect information. We hope to provide educators working in the field an opportunity to learn more about the Métis people, MNO programs and services and to connect them to resources, Community Councils, MNO staff, Métis artisans and vendors.” The conference agenda featured a blend of information on programs and supports for educators and early learners, Métis cultural activities, and targeted discussions on navigating the virtual learning landscape. Participants were invited to Breakout Room Learning Workshops, “Incorporating Métis Culture in (Virtual) Learning,” with topics ranging from Métis beadwork, to mental health supports, and Métis books, educational resources, and cultural items. “Even given the virtual setting, participants felt they were in a welcome and open space to share experiences and ask questions,” says Alison Tryl, ELCC Program Coordinator. “People really loved the Métis 101 and are looking forward to the resources in development under the MNO ELCC Program.” The MNO ELCC program is continuously working to inform local, provincial and federal initiatives on Early Learning and Child Care so they better reflect the diverse and distinct needs of Métis early years’ youth (0-12 years) in Ontario by: • Addressing existing gaps in services • Assessing the inclusivity of those services for Métis children and youth, • Determining ways to make mainstream programming more culturally appropriate, and • Exploring opportunities for new program involvement and delivery. The ELCC program offers many services for Métis families including: • the Child Care Subsidy Program; • Extra Curricular Support Program; • and Early Learning Educational Support Advocates (coming soon!). ELCC staff can also make referrals to the MNO Mental Health team so children can access assessments or other supports, such as speech or occupational therapy.

To learn more about the MNO ELCC supports and programs, visit the MNO website: bkhv7zUQ5CN

MNO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

MNO helps families navigate the school system

Early Learning Education Support Advocacy Program

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to offer the Early Learning Education Support Advocacy (ESA) Program. This program provides support to Métis children ages one to six (1-6) through advocacy and navigation services for families seeking support within the Early Years system and transitioning from kindergarten to Grade 1. In the childcare setting, the ELCC ESA capitalizes on the opportunity to support the Métis child through collaboration with the child’s early years’ educators. The ELCC ESA brings together parents or guardians of the Métis child to discuss the recommendations for those services for Métis children or guardians or internally through the MNO. The Program is offered to Métis families across Ontario who are experiencing issues or challenges in the following areas:

• Developmental needs
• Social isolation
• Individual Education Planning
• Behavioural Planning
• Specialized placement for children with exceptionalities
• Mental health or learning disabilities
• Communications within early years’ settings

For more information on how to qualify for this new program, visit the MNO website or contact Madison Frias, Supervisor of Early Learning and Child Care by email at: MadisonF@metisnation.org.

MNO launches online Métis Early Learning Family Socials

Earlier this year, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) team was happy to announce a new online initiative for Métis early learners (ages 0-12) and their families. Métis Early Learning Family Socials! The first Métis Early Learning Family Social event took place on Family Day, February 6, 2021, with a focus on family and the importance of spending time connecting with one another. Families learned about Métis culture, history and way-of-life from an early learning perspective; and children took part in hands-on play-based cultural activities in a safe and engaging manner. In addition to the cultural activities and quality time spent with their families, Métis parents also had the opportunity to learn more about the MNO’s available programs and services; including new supports for early learners. The Virtual Family Socials returned again in May 2021 for a special “Parent Appreciation” workshop which focused on healing blankets and their histories. Similar to other ELCC workshops, all materials are provided to Métis families free of charge. Be sure to check the MNO website and social media for announcements on future ELCC Virtual Family Socials! 

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

MNO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is conducting research and engagements to inform the future of early learning and childcare (ELCC) for Métis families across the province. The goal of this initiative is to provide MNO with information to enhance their understanding of MNO Citizens’ needs as they relate to ELCC and of the current trends in childcare across Ontario. As part of this initiative, DPRA Canada has been hired by MNO to support two forms of engagement (virtual town hall sessions and online survey) on ELCC services in MNO communities. From January to March 2021, engagements were held across MNO’s 9 regions. The engagements included MNO Regional and Community Council leadership, Métis parents and families, and MNO Citizens. Information will be collected on the accessibility of services, desired services, and challenges and opportunities for providing services, and will be used to inform future ELCC initiatives within the MNO.

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

Issue no. 106, August 2021
COVID-19 RELIEF PROGRAMS & HOTLINE

Find out more or apply: www.metisnation.org/covid-19

*NEW*

COVID-19 RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

Due to new funding from the Social Service Relief Fund (SSRF), the MNO through the COVID-19 Rent Supplement Program is able to provide short-term rent supplement support to help cover 3 months of rent up to $1500 as a one-time payment. This service is available to any Indigenous person in need of support as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information please contact adrienneb@metisnation.org or phone at 1-807-355-9062

COVID-19 PROGRAM

COVID-19 HOUSING STABILIZATION PROGRAM

The MNO has launched a housing stabilization program to provide aid to those facing eviction and have received an eviction notice from their landlord; who are precariously housed and need short term shelter support (e.g. motel stay); who are homeless. Contact housingstabilization@metisnation.org or phone at 1-800-263-4889 xxt. 350

COVID-19 PROGRAM

EMERGENCY INCOME RELIEF BENEFIT

MNO Citizens who have lost income due to COVID-19 can receive $2,000 or $2,750 per Métis family to assist in paying for expenses (mortgage payments, utilities, etc.). To learn more: covid.metisnation.org

COVID-19 PROGRAM

TABLET SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

To support our Senior Citizens during these unprecedented times of isolation the MNO is pleased to announce electronic device support services for seniors who are experiencing isolation from family and friends. Contact: (705) 722-5022 Ext. 302 or by email at housingprograms@metisnation.org

COVID-19 PROGRAM

CHILD CARE SUPPORT

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to offer the COVID-19 Child Care Support Program to help Métis families access safe high-quality child care during the COVID-19 pandemic. All Métis families who meet the qualifications are encouraged to apply. To apply: covid.metisnation.org

COVID-19 PROGRAM

COVID-19 CARE KITS

In an effort to manage and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus in our communities, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is offering COVID-19 Care Kits to Citizens and their families who are currently caring for a sick family member, or are considered a high risk household.

COVID-19 PROGRAM

SPECIAL NEEDS SUPPORT

Through the Special Needs Support Program, MNO Citizens with children aged 0-21 years with special needs can receive a one-time benefit of $500 per child up to a maximum of $2,000 per family to provide assistance during this time of physical distancing. To learn more: covid.metisnation.org

COVID-19 PROGRAM

BENEVOLENT FUND

The Métis Nation of Ontario is pleased to announce the establishment of a Benevolent Fund. This fund is intended to provide financial support to Métis families who have experienced a loss in their family as of March 15, 2020 or later.

For more information please contact: benevolentfund@metisnation.org or phone at 1-800-263-4889 Ext. 277

COVID-19 PROGRAM

EMERGENCY FAMILY SUPPORTS

For MNO Citizens with children aged 0-12:

MNO Emergency Family Fund. Families may be eligible to receive a one-time benefit of $500 per child, to a maximum of $2,000.

MNO Food Security Fund for Children. Families can receive up to $600 ($200 monthly for three months) to purchase food to support child nutrition.

MNO Technology Fund for Children. A one-time benefit of $500 to assist in purchasing technology for children to support learning at home.

To learn more: covid.metisnation.org

We are still here to help! MNO COVID-19 Hotline

If you have COVID-19 related concerns, need help accessing supports, or have questions regarding the MNO’s response to the pandemic contact:

Email: covidhelp@metisnation.org Phone (Toll Free): 1-800-263-4889
The North Bay Métis Council is setting out to do just that with a Legacy Preservation Project. The Council is inviting submissions of items to be included in a Métis Nation of Ontario time capsule. MNO Community Councils and Citizens from all Regions are invited to participate in a movement that will help protect and preserve our heritage.

Submissions of items to be included:

- letters;
- books;
- artwork;
- crafts;
- photographs;
- recordings; and
- whatever else you would like to share.

Write about our accomplishments, current events or give well wishes to future Métis generations.

The time capsule will be set in place on Louis Riel Day—November 16th, 2021—and will be opened on the 200th anniversary of the tragic execution of Riel that the 16th marks—in the year 2085.

We are living through an unprecedented time that will make its way into history books. Let’s add an inspiring chapter to our history by coming together to build a gift of hope and inspiration—a gift that demonstrates the resilience of the Métis Nation of Ontario!

To help us protect and preserve our Métis culture, mail in your submission with submission form to:

Legacy Preservation Project
P.O. Box 1410
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 8K6

Submitted by
Greg Garrett, President
Georgian Bay Métis Council

Mothers day 2021 GBMC organized a dual event of conservation and remembrance. The harvesting committee ordered trees from Severn Sound Environmental agency. Fish was sourced from Manitoulin trout farms who donated so much to our Christmas hampers last year as well as a generous donation from Bernie and Sandi of B LePage fishery, potatoes again from Cim Maurice and Fer-Mar farms and calendars produced by the council with past events and program contacts and much more.

Citizens were lined up in a safe manner to pick up a DIY Métis fish fry and chips for mom as well as a tree to plant in her honour on mother’s day. It was a gift seen every day for appreciation for all she means in your heart and a great conservation effort as well. Over 120 citizens showed up and a few unable to get out, were surprised with gifts delivered to them.

We also had an unexpected visit from the OPP doing their job. Hats off to them, as well as it was a most pleasant encounter and comments afterwards were “what a great job we were doing for the community.” GBMC wishes to thank the MNO for the calendar help, Cim and Fer-Mar farms as well as Bernie and Sandi LePage.

Left to Right: Councillor Cheryl Hooker; President Kathleen Anderson; Chair Steve Shales; Senator Gloria Thomson; and Treasurer Carol Gemme.
MNO Citizen appointed to Minister’s Impact Assessment Advisory Council

President of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Peterborough & District Wapiti Métis Council (PDWMC) Christa Lemelin was among those appointed to the Impact Assessment Advisory Council on December 14, 2020.

The newly established Advisory Council consists of 13 members who will provide non-partisan advice and recommendations on the Impact Assessment Act (IAA), its implementation, and regional and strategic impact assessments to the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

The IAA was enacted in 2019 as a means to strengthen environmental protection in Canada, promote cooperation with other jurisdictions, foster sustainability, restore trust in how decisions are made, and grow the economy. It also aims to investigate broader impacts of potential projects (such as environmental, economic, social, and health considerations), while ensuring a spirit of reconciliation and respect for Indigenous communities.

Christa Lemelin, President of the PDWMC, will serve as one of several Indigenous appointments.

“My role, along with the Council, will be to provide advice to the Minister on whether Canada is achieving the purposes set out for it in the Act, including increasing transparency and predictability for proponents and the public, helping to identify issues early, and creating efficiencies to best support decision-making in the public interest,” stated the PDWMC President Lemelin.

“I am very excited to be part of this dynamic team and look forward to contributing and sharing the knowledge that I have gained throughout my career, as well as throughout my time as an elected member of our local Métis Council.”

Additionally, the Advisory Council will be responsible for:
• Engaging in thoughtful and deliberate study of IAA implementation
• Examining the governance of the impact assessment regime, including the early planning phase for impact assessment and regional and strategic assessments
• Advising the Minister on the efficacy of the impact assessment regime; and its efficiency, transparency, identification and resolution of potential issues, and support of public interest
• Submitting biennial reports to the Minister (beginning June 2021)

The MNO extends its congratulations to PDWMC President Christa Lemelin on her recent appointment to the Impact Assessment Advisory Council.

MNO Citizen receives Guthrie Award for community work

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Citizen and Senator, Verna Porter-Burnelle has been honoured as a recipient of the Law Foundation of Ontario’s 2020 Guthrie Award.

The Guthrie Award is an annual recognition that showcases exceptional access to justice champions and contributions to the community. This year the award was given to the Elders’ Council, an all-Indigenous panel made up of 13 Elders and knowledge-keepers, including MNO Citizen and Honourary Senator Verna Porter-Burnelle.

Like her fellow Council peers, Verna Porter-Burnelle was selected to serve on the Elders Council due to her well-established personal leadership strengths, specialized knowledge, and her ability to lend a Métis perspective to the discussions and deliberations.

The Elders Council engages Indigenous approaches to support the work of the Indigenous Justice Division (IJD) of the Ministry of the Attorney General; with a long term goal of repairing the relationship between the Ministry and Indigenous communities.

“The Elders bring a compelling truth and integrity to their work,” said Linda Rothstein, the Law Foundation of Ontario’s Board Chair. “By sharing their knowledge and lived experiences directly with those within the justice sector, the Elders Council is helping to transform not just opinions but policies and laws that could bring about meaningful change and improve access to justice for Indigenous people across the province.”

Senator Porter-Burnelle was one of the founding members of the MNO Moon River Community Council, where she served as Chair, Women’s Representative and Senator. She also served as Senator to the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) and spent three years as an Elders at the Aboriginal Education Center at Georgian College in Midland, Ontario.

Her efforts on the Elders’ Council help to guide Ontario in its mission to reclaim Indigenous legal systems, strengthen supports, and provide better access to justice services for Ontario’s Indigenous peoples.

The MNO extends its congratulations and sincere gratitude to Verna Porter-Burnelle, and all of her Council colleagues, for their continued efforts to create a more just system for Métis, and for Ontario.

No Small Potatoes: GBMC provides popular starch to the local community

Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Citizens from the Georgian Bay community had their eyes peeled this year for an exciting roll out featuring everyone’s favourite starch, potatoes!

The MNO Georgian Bay Métis Council (GBMC), in partnership with MNO Citizen Cim Maurice and Fer-Mar Farms, distributed 1500 ten-pound bags of potatoes to the community over the last few months. These nutritious and versatile pantry staples serve as a welcome addition to anyone’s kitchen and were available to the community until the supply was exhausted.

“This initiative will be on-going until all 1500 bags are gone, or until the spring-summer as we are able,” said Greg Garratt GBMC President last winter. “It is open to all of GBMC Citizens and we hope they take advantage of this service.”

Interested Citizens were able to call and arrange a curbside pick-up at 22 Peel Street in Penetanguishene. Additionally, an offer was made to MNO Citizens and communities to request multiple bags of potatoes. While the potatoes were being distributed all necessary Covid-19 precautions were followed to ensure the safety of all.

Many 1,000s of pounds of potatoes have been donated and distributed to the community.

The MNO GBMC thanks Cim Maurice, Fer-Mar Farms, Heather Garratt and the GBMC Council members for their efforts in coordinating this nutritious initiative!
Gran River Métis Council hosts Feast Bundle Workshops

Submitted by Senator Leslie Anne Muma and President Jennifer Parkinson

Earlier this year, the Grand River Métis Council partnered with Kitchener Family and Child Services (FACS) for a two-day Métis cultural training. President Jennifer Parkinson and Senator Leslie-Anne Muma were joined by 45 participants from FACS. Both days began with a greating circle and prayer by Senator Muma, followed by a lot of learning and fun. MNO Regional Employment & Training Coordinator, Daniel Woods, did a presentation on more programs and services available. President Parkinson and Senator Muma then got everyone up to do a little bit of Métis jigging. President Parkinson showed everyone some basic steps then on came the music. We then broke the groups in half and showed them the Rabbit Dance which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. By the time we were done everyone had worked up an appetite. So, we broke for lunch. After lunch President Parkinson did a presentation on Métis 101 and Governance. There were lots of questions which led to great discussions. We then ended the afternoon with a presentation on Métis 101 and Governance. There were lots of questions which led to great discussions.

Summer & winter youth Goody Bags

Submitted by Diane Kilby
GRMC Treasurer

ike many other MNO Councils, Grand River Métis Council had decided to use the ELCC funds to provide our Métis families with on-the-land cultural activities. Instead... Covid-19. Fortunately, the MNO supported our need to change plans quickly. A Family Survey allowed us to identify youth in our area and to learn what activities interested families. Council provided additional funding for families with children who were 13-15 years of age.

During the summer, Council distributed “Summer Fun Goody Bags” to 35 families and 70 children. These bags contained books, bug catchers, nets, magnifying glasses, a compass, Christi Belcourt’s book “Medicines to Help Us: Traditional Métis Plant Use”, crayons, pencil crayons, Birch bark paper, colouring book and sidewalk chalk which gave families the opportunity to enjoy activities on the land, learn about Métis traditional plants, track animal prints and scat and to use a compass; along with other fun activities for families to enjoy. Families (and children) have told us they welcomed the packages with emphasis on Métis pride.

In December, Council distributed “Winter Youth Goody Bags” to 42 families and 74 children. The Winter Youth Goody Bags gave families the opportunity to make ‘healing’ blankets with/for their children, read English/Michif stories from books given to the children, learn about trees and how to do knots, or learn finger weaving for the older youth. Sharing an excellent idea from other Councils, we have provided snowshoes and Ontario Park Winter passes letting youth and their families enjoy being on the land together.

We heard many stories from families on how much they appreciated activities to do with their children.

GRMC hosts Kitchener Family and Child Services for Métis Cultural Training

Submitted by Leslie-Anne Muma, Senator

CELEBRATING MÉTIS CULTURE

Snowshoes & Park Passes

Submitted by Diane Kilby
GRMC Treasurer

borrowing an excellent idea from other Councils, Grand River Métis Council (GRMC) decided to use the last of their ELCC funds to provide 71 pairs of snowshoes and 37 Ontario Park Winter passes allowing Métis youth and their families to enjoy being on the land together. Not wanting to leave the 13-15 year old youth “out in the cold”, GRMC provided the funds to support this age group as well.

Even though part of the winter was in lockdown, many families told us how much the youth enjoyed their snowshoes.
Recognizing a need for culturally appropriate, early childhood educational products for Indigenous youth and early learners, Métis business owner and MNO Citizen Pandora Wilhelm launched her unique laser cutting company, Mulberry Design & Engravings, in July 2020.

This expedition in entrepreneurship began when Pandora was accepted to the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) as an Early Childhood Education student. While in the program, she was challenged to research culturally-appropriate early childhood education. To her surprise, there was almost nothing available. Pandora began thinking about how she could help close this gap by creating fun and culturally-appropriate activities — and Mulberry Design & Engravings was born.

Pandora got started out of a small home office with a used laser she purchased from Kijiji. She focussed in on creating laser cut products, puzzles, Red River carts, and custom engravings featuring Indigenous languages, reintroducing our languages into homes, child care centres and schools.

Pandora says she receives many custom requests, from MNO Community Councils as well as school boards and other Indigenous communities across North America. She has recently decided expand her growing business to include a retail storefront which is opening soon.

With the demand she’s seen, Pandora has been able to invest in a new state-of-the-art laser. And, as one of only 10 business owners recently accepted into the Communitech Fierce Founders Uplift program, Pandora is receiving one-to-one business mentorship as well as a grant of $10,000 to continue building her business and her products. She is now developing an iOS language app to accompany her learning puzzles and games.

Along the way, Pandora has benefitted from various MNO supports, including Covid-19 funding from the Métis Voyageur Development Fund (MVDF), the MNO Child Care Subsidy Program, and financial aid as she pursues and earns her early childhood education diploma. She has also forged strong relationships with the MNO Early Learning and Child Care team, and has produced high quality products for a variety of MNO Community Councils for their use and workshops.

This September, MNO Citizens will have the opportunity to view and interact with Mulberry Design & Engravings at the 2021 Annual General Assembly, where Pandora will return to showcase her wares in the virtual tradeshow.

Métis Voyageur
Issue no. 106, August 2021

MÉTIS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Métis small business laser focused on awareness, education & design

Get help navigating the K-12 school setting!

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to offer the Education Support Advocacy Program. The MNO’s Education Support Advocates (ESA) are available to help families with youth in the K-12 school environment. The program helps identify and provide supports for Métis students and their families as they progress along in their learning journeys with the aim of helping to improve their learning outcomes.

The program is offered Ontario-wide for Métis children/youth and their families who are experiencing issues/challenges in the following areas:

- Attendance
- Suspensions
- Behavioural Planning
- Mental health or learning disabilities
- Social isolation
-Individual Education Planning
- Behavioural Planning
- Specialized placement for children with exceptionalities
- Communications with the school
- Reaching academic potential

What to Expect When Working with an MNO EDUCATION SUPPORT ADVOCATE

Information Gathering

- Provides consent for ESA support
- Requests relevant documents and reports from school to provide to ESA
- Regular meetings with ESA

Planning

- Available to offer feedback on plan development
- Is available for and includes ESA in meetings with school
- Provides relevant updates and new documents in a timely manner

Implementation

- Assesses what is already in place
- Identifies strengths and areas of need
- Develops support plan
- Ensures plans are in place
- ESA & Parent meet with school to discuss goals and supports
- ESA follows up with school and family to ensure things are working

File Closure

- Student goals are achieved
- Awareness of student profile
- The client/family are now equipped to advocate and negotiate
- ESA closes the file (files can be re-opened by client or family as needed)

To access the program’s services or if you’d like to know more information please contact us by email at educationadvocacy@metisnation.org
END VIOLENCE AGAINST INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS & 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

National Action Plan released

The Métis Nation Working Group, led by the LFMO and its President Melanie Oménihio, included Métis representatives MNOWC President Suzanne Jackson, MNO Chief Strategy Officer Jennifer St. Germain and MNO Project Coordinator Breana Johnson. The group was tasked with collaborating with community Elders, knowledge-keepers and other Métis Nation governing body representatives, to co-develop a distinct Métis Nation specific action plan.

“The Métis action plan is called Weaving Miskitohkak, which means change,” explained LFMO President Oménihio in her remarks at the ceremony. “This plan will lay out actionable changes that are required to specifically address the realities faced by Métis women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples. This plan reflects the ongoing contributions of our Métis Nation Working Group over the past 18 months of collaboration, engagement and co-development.”

Métis leadership announced that the Weaving Miskitohkak plan will be a living “evergreen” document; developed, adjusted and ultimately released in a timeline that works best for the Métis Nation. A summarization of the action plan, titled Li Shmayn, or “the trail,” can be found on the NAP website.

“The journey to get here today to the release of the NAP to end MMIWGW AND 2S has been a long one,” shared President Oménihio. “The development of this plan and continued release is an outcome of perseverance, commitment, and collaboration a pathway has been defined. Our work has only just begun.”

If you were unable to attend the launch, the 2021 National Action Plan and Métis contributions are available online: mning2slhuma- tionalactionplan.ca.

SUPPORT FOR MÉTIS-OWNED SMALL & MICRO BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

The Métis Nation of Ontario & the Métis Voyageur Development Fund are committed to supporting Métis-owned small, home-based and family businesses negatively impacted by Covid-19.

For more information including documentation requirements and how to apply, visit: microgrant.metisnation.org
FAMILY & MILESTONES

Remembering Bridget
North Bay Métis Council establishes scholarship award with Canadore College

Submitted by
Susan van der Rassel
President, North Bay Métis Council

In October 2020, the North Bay Métis Council’s Women’s Representative Bridget Brown, succumbed to Stage 4 cancer (see page 23). In honour of Bridget’s life and work — Bridget was a Board Member at the Near North Palliative Care Network in North Bay — a student scholarship was set up at Canadore College.

The “Bridget Jocelyn Brown Métis Wellness Memorial Award” will be presented annually to a Métis student enrolled in any year of a full-time healthcare diploma program or the Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention program at the college. Applicants must submit a written response indicating how they demonstrate the following qualities: determination and strength of spirit; honesty and truth in their heart and their words; strength in adversity; compassion; and service to others.

The Award’s first recipient is MNO Citizen, Alexandra Boyer, a first-year Registered Practical Nursing Student. Alexandra presented her essay demonstrating her compassion for people while being sure that she promotes her own self-care. She also presented her determination to meet adverse situations that come her way.

Congratulations Alexandra! ☞

MNO Citizen Alexandra Boyer from North Bay is the first recipient of the Bridget Jocelyn Brown Métis Wellness Memorial Award.

Below is a letter from two personal friends, Jennifer Parkinson and Leslie Anne Muma paying homage to their dear friend Bridget Brown:

Bridget Brown was a strong, courageous Métis woman. No matter what life threw her way, she met it head on, with her head held high and a smile on her face. Bridget never let circumstances defeat her determination and spirit. She was always honest in her words and true to her heart. No matter what challenges she was facing, Bridget looked for ways to serve others. She loved Mother Earth and all it had to offer. She loved people and was always open and kind. Bridget freely offered insight and advice when asked and was always willing to listen to others. Bridget left us with many gifts. She showed us: how to handle adversity through her own actions, how to stay the course, no matter the obstacles in your path, and how to love and appreciate life itself.

Integrity, honour and respect

Submitted by
Tony and Anne Huguenin
Penetanguishene

During these unprecedented times our community as a whole has relied on the multitude of essential workers whose selfless dedication, every single day, keeps us healthy and safe.

To express our deep gratitude and to fully recognize these devoted front line workers, we spent several days in our yard this winter building two inspirational snow sculptures. One of these sculptures is a cheery polar bear that stands five and a half feet tall. The owl symbolizes wisdom, good judgement, and endurance. The owl also has sharp vision and keen observation, great insight and intuition. The huge bear represents strength, courage and symbolizes the time for healing.

The attributes of both the bear and the owl are demonstrated by the countless men and women who serve all of us as essential workers. They deserve our whole-hearted support and thanks.

Our snow sculptures were created in representation of our own integrity, honour and respect for all front line workers. The sculptures made people smile, lifted their spirits and gave them hope during these challenging times.

We wish to thank all those who supported us and cheered us on in our efforts to build our bear and owl. Our sculpting endeavours certainly provided us with lots of fun, exercise, fresh air and rosy cheeks.

Most importantly it was an accomplishment in showing tremendous support to all our essential workers, and in their honour we have made a charitable donation to the Cancer Society. We would also like to thank our friends, who we consider family, who matched our donation to the Cancer Society with a gift of their own.

Thank you and Miigwech everyone! ☞

Happy 50th Rudy and Maxine!

Rudy and Maxine Miron marked their 50th wedding anniversary on April 3, 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic put a damper on the celebrations so Rudy and Maxine asked to be included in the Métis voyageur. Rudy is a member of Blind River North Channel Métis Council.

Congrats Connor Cozens!!!

Broad parents Chris and Denise Cozens, grandparents Ed (past GRMC Senator)and Lisa Hass, would like to announce Connor’s graduation with an Honours Bachelor of Science Degree from Western University.

Connor graduated with an Honours Specialization in Computer Science with a minor in Software Engineering. Connor also graduated his final year on the Dean’s honour roll and has accepted a position at Royal Bank of Canada’s Indigenous People’s Development Program in Technology and Operations.

The family would like to thank the Métis Nation of Ontario for awarding Connor with a full scholarship for his last year of study. ☞

Submitter by
Rudy and Maxine Miron

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Métis Nation of Ontario mourns loss of Senator Elmer Ross

**Métis Nation of Ontario**

Métis Nation of Ontario deeply saddened by passing of Danielle Choquette

**Métis Lament**

Take kindly to the council of years and experience of our elders, gracefully surrendering our youth and many things of the past. We would not be here without them. We will continue to build our strength and spirit to protect and shield us when grief arises as we encounter any sudden misfortunes throughout our lives. A clear, strong and nurtured mind will overcome and conquer many of our fears, which are often the origin of our unhappiness, fatigue and loneliness. We will discipline ourselves to be outstanding and proud people who will leave our mark of excellence in today's society, to carve a path to guide our siblings and the next generation of Métis. We must stand together as a nation and be proud of our heritage and be kind and gentle to our brothers and sisters. We are a family of Métis in this great universe who stand equal to all others on this earth. We give thanks to our great creator for all the great gifts and wisdom he has given us. We will continue to follow our guiding light and carry forth our sign of infinity into the future because we have a God-given right to stand tall as proud Métis.

**Métis Lament is a poem written by Elmer Ross**

**MNO deeply saddened by passing of Danielle Choquette**

**Passed on to the Spirit World**

Danielle was born on June 27, 1941, in Montreal. Danielle had a lifelong passion for languages and studied in Montreal, QC. Her father, author and diplomat Robert Choquette, and his partner, Erika Eriksson Ciment (Montreal, QC), and by the latter's daughter, Ilanit Michele Woods, and her family (London, GB). Danielle was preceded in death by her father, author and diplomat Robert Choquette, and by her mother, Marguerite Choquette (née Canac-Marquis), of Montreal, QC.

Danielle worked as a professional interpreter for 45 years in French, English and Spanish. Danielle was employed by the Canadian House of Commons for 10 years, then became a partner in Conference Interpreters of Canada and retired from the firm in 2015. For the past 25 years she participated actively in the work of a private foundation she had created with her brother to keep their father’s literary legacy alive.

Danielle will always be remembered as a remarkable person of incredible beauty, grace and intelligence. She was endlessly loving, tender and generous. Danielle was constantly enlivened through her inquisitiveness and fervour for music, animals and plant life. She was devoted to the dignity of all Peoples and for the expansion and recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples of the Americas. The magic she left us in her smile is a blessing to all who knew her. The presence of Danielle will forever remain in the hearts of her loving husband, brother, family and friends. Danielle will be eternally missed. May her journey to the Spirit World be peaceful as she is welcomed into the arms of her ancestors. A celebration of life will be held this summer.

**August 14, 1948 – May 14, 2021**

Randolph Joseph Whalen passes

**With great sadness, the family announces the unexpected passing of Randy Whalen at the age of 72. Loving husband and best friend of Phyllis Eleanor Whalen (nee Garson) for 51 years, Phyllis was his purpose and truly the love of his life.**

Now reunited with his parents Victor Peter Whalen & Delphine Whalen (nee Griddle), Randy was the loving and devoted father of Randolph Allan Whalen (Terry) and Kevin Michael Whalen (Ann), loving and fantastic Grandpa of Collin Kevin Whalen, Brandon Alexander Whalen, Cameron James Whalen, Paige Zoe Whalen and Steff Grandpa to Dustin Scott, Jo-An Nicole, and Ethan Matthew Graham. He was the brother of Francis (Bernice), Dorothy Loubert (Florian), Terry (Marylin), Nancie Willis, Joseph (Suzanne), Cindy Maki (Donny) and Joan Taranto (Frank); brother-in-law of Helen St. John (late Charlette), late Marg Mac- Donald (late Jack), late Jack Garson (Penny), Lois Oliver (Robert), Bob Gar- son (late Anne), Jim Garson (Wendy), Gladys Cameron (late George), Glen Garson (late Wilma) and Harold Garson (Theresa). Randy will be sadly missed by many nieces, nephews and great nieces and neph- ews.

Randy retired from The Algoma District School Board after 25 years as a Custodian. He was known as the Custodian with the toothpick. He was an avid hunter and angler and enjoyed sharing his love of the outdoors with his boys and grandkids. You could al- ways find Randy working in his yard or on small projects, this of course was after he found his many treasures in the garage sales around the neigh- bourhood.

**Those who love Randy will fondly remember his quick wit, wisdom, sense of humour and infectious laugh.**

Randy and Phyllis had the once in a lifetime opportu- nity to take a trip for their 50th Anniversary across the Canadian Rockies. Other memorable vacations included a fantastic, scenic trip through the Smokey Mountains and to Hollywood, a visit to Nashville and the Grand Ole Opry and to the East Coast of Canada. Phyllis will cherish these memories forever. The family would like to thank the First Responders for their sensitivity and kind attention during this diffi- cult time.

The family requests, in memory of Randy, take a day and spend it hunting or fishing with someone you love.

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The Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) is pleased to announce that the 28th MNO Annual General Assembly (AGA) will take place September 18-19, 2021.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of MNO citizens, families and communities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s AGA will once again be held virtually.

Our AGA is Métis Self-Government in action! The AGA provides an opportunity for MNO citizens to gather together, review the achievements of the previous year and chart the direction for the future.

Together, we have accomplished so much over the last 28 years. Through our shared values and collective interests, we have made incredible advances on behalf of Métis citizens and communities in Ontario with more to come. The AGA is the perfect time to gather and celebrate these successes. We cannot wait to see you this September.

Welcoming delegates and attendees with live music and performances is a celebrated AGA tradition. Like last year, the 2021 AGA will open with a Virtual Kitchen Party and President’s Welcome to welcome guests, friends and family to the event.

Now known as “Powley Day”, September 19 celebrates the anniversary of the landmark Métis rights victory at the Supreme Court of Canada in R v Powley.

As Métis, we are nation builders; we stand up and stand strong for the rights, respect and recognition of our families and communities. It has been 18 years since the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) celebrated Canada’s highest court’s unanimous decision alongside the Métis Governments in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, ending a ten-year legal battle and ushering in a new era recognizing Métis rights in Canada.

In Powley, the courts recognized and affirmed what the MNO had been saying all along—that there were distinct Métis people and communities on the land before Canada became Canada, before Ontario became Ontario, with a culture and identity all their own, and that their rights were entrenched within Section 35 of Canada’s Constitution.

While other Métis rights cases had been fought in the courts before, Powley was the first to be appealed all the way up to the Supreme Court. It was lead by the MNO, the Powley family and the Métis community around Sault Ste. Marie, but all Métis communities across Canada have greatly benefited from it.

The victory in Powley set the stage for a series of achievements for Métis people, not just in Ontario but across the Métis Nation Homeland, including the ground-breaking Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreements signed in June, 2019 by the MNO, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and more recently by the Manitoba Metis Federation.

Today, we remember the sacrifices made by Steve, Roddy and the entire Powley family, and reflect on how the Powley decision forever changed the world for Métis in Canada—finally securing recognition of Métis as a distinct Indigenous peoples within Canada, and helping open the path forward toward full Métis self-government.