

Our Story, Our Voice

There's a quiet strength in knowing who you are. That strength lives in every story we carry, in the laughter around our dinner table, in the drums, in the beadwork, and in the firelight of our culture. Being Metis has always been about resilience. But more than that, it's about connection to our ancestors, to our community, and to our right to shape our own future. When I think about Self-Government, I think about that strength finally being recognized. I think about the generations before me who kept our ways alive even when it wasn't safe or easy. And now, I think about how it's our turn to lead, not just for ourselves, but for those who come next.

To me, Self-Government is freedom. It's the ability to make decisions that reflect who we are as a person. It means having our voices heard, our rights respected, and our ways honoured, not just in words, but in action. For so long, other people tried to define us. They put us in boxes, pushed us out of conversations, and denied our history. Self-government is our way of saying: "We're still here, and we know who we are." It's important because it allows us to govern based on our values, things like community, kinship, and balance. It means programs that actually meet our needs. It means protecting our culture, our languages, and our stories from being lost. It's also about healing the damage that was done. When we govern ourselves, we can build systems that uplift, instead of systems that harm. And more than anything, self-government is about the future. It's about giving our youth a world where being Metis is celebrated, respectful, and powerful.

The work the Metis Nation of Ontario has done to protect and promote our identity means everything. One of the biggest accomplishments has been gaining recognition as a rights-bearing Metis government. That wasn't just a legal achievement, it was personal. It meant that our history was valid, and that our Nation has the right to stand on its own feet. The MNO has also made education more accessible, and that's deeply meaningful to me as we can apply for college funding, grants, etc. support for students, youth programming, and cultural learning spaces have helped so many young Metis, including me, see ourselves reflected in our learning. Access to health services, healing programs, and community gatherings are also important. These aren't just services, they're ways of rebuilding the bonds that colonialism tried to break. All these accomplishments remind me that we're not alone in this, we have a Nation behind us. And that Nation is growing stronger every day.

Over the next 30 years, I hope to see the MNO continue to grow as a vibrant, self-sustaining government rooted in Metis values. I dream of more land being protected and returned, of cultural centres in every region where people can gather, share, and celebrate who we are. I hope to see more Metis-led schools, more language revitalization, and more traditional knowledge being passed down. I want us to keep investing in youth, to help them build confidence in their identity and to prepare them as future leaders. I dream of a MNO that is bold, united, and unshakable in its mission. I also hope our Nation continues to lead the way in areas like climate justice, reconciliation, and education, not just for ourselves, but as an example to others. I believe we have the tools, the heart, and the history to create a future that is rich in culture, justice, and joy.

In my family, generosity, honesty, and respect are core values. We've been raised to help when we can, to speak from the heart, and to treat others with kindness. Those aren't just family rules, they're teachings rooted in our Metis heritage. Hard work and pride in what we create is another big one. Whether it's cooking a family meal, crafting with our hands, or telling stories around the table, we're always been taught that creating with care is a form of honouring who we are. Connection to community is also deeply important. We check in on each other. We share food, we show up when someone needs support. Those small, everyday things are how our values live and breathe.

When it comes to relationships, I believe we need to lead with openness, honesty, and strength. With other indigenous Nations, it's about respect. We all carry our own histories, and the path forward is one of unity, not competition. We can share stories, stand in solidarity, and support each other's goals while honouring our unique identities. With settler governments, we must be assertive about our rights, but also rooted in our own values. We can speak up without becoming what we're fighting against. We can push for justice without forgetting the importance of compassion, truth, and diplomacy. Above all, we should act in ways that honor our ancestors and inspire our youth. That means keeping promises, staying accountable, and always remembering who we represent when we sit at the table.

To be successful, I believe our government must lead by integrity, transparency, and cultural pride. Leaders must listen to their people and make decisions that benefit everyone, not just a few. Our Nation should build structures that reflect who we are, not systems copied from colonial governments. That means decisions are made with input from communities, Elders, youth and families. It means we care for the land, not exploit it. It means we measure success not only in money, but in healing, happiness, and belonging. Staying true to our roots will keep us strong. We are a Nation of storytellers, builders, survivors, and dreamers. That's what should guide us.

We should teach our children that being Metis is a gift, something to be proud of and something worth protecting. We should show them how to honor their identity through kindness, courage, and curiosity. They should know the importance of standing up for what's right, even when it's hard. They should be encouraged to ask questions, learn the old ways, and dream up new ones. We should teach them balance: between work and rest, giving and receiving, tradition and innovation. Above all, we should teach them love, love for their culture and background, their community, and themselves. Because when our children grow up knowing they belong, they will carry that strength into everything they do. And with that, the future of the Metis Nation will shine, and be brighter than ever. Our children will grow up with these traditions, and always have a part of their culture with them, and their teachings, and what they learn for the next generation. They will go on and keep going with the Metis and teach their children our findings, learnings, stories and much more.