



MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

ISSUE NO. 115, SPRING 2026

Celebrating a Changemaker

Tammy Webb honoured for decades of dedication to Métis employment and training

Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) Tammy Webb, Education and Training Manager of Labour Market, received a well-earned honour at the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Gathering in Ottawa, where she was presented with the Indigenous Skills and Employment Legend (20+ Years) Award on Saturday, January 24, 2026.

The award recognizes a longstanding leader with more than two decades of dedication to advancing Indigenous skills training and employment across sectors.

In fact, Tammy brings nearly three decades of service to the MNO, where she has played an important role in advancing culturally grounded employment and training services for Métis citizens across Ontario. Since 1996, she has helped deliver frontline supports, manage programs, and support teams that assist Métis job seekers in navigating education, training, and employment pathways.

"Our Métis government runs on the strength, care, and consistency of the people who choose to serve our communities year after year," said Director of Education and Training Bryanna Scott. "The quiet dedication of people like Tammy, who keep our government moving forward every day, reflects the deep commitment we have to our Nation and to future generations."

"Tammy and all of our longtime MNO staff members are the heartbeat of our government," said MNO President Margaret Froh. "Their dedication, relationships, and shared commitment to our communities are why we are able to provide incredible programs and services to our citizens."

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30 Years of MNO EDUCATION AND TRAINING BRANCH

Our front page story highlights one example of the impact of the MNO's Education and Training Branch, as an MNO staff member is recognized by national partners for their contributions to Indigenous employment and training.

This year, the MNO celebrates 30 years of its Education and Training Branch. For three decades, the branch has supported citizens through innovative programming, dedicated service, and a commitment to holistic care.

As we mark this milestone year, we honour the leadership and passionate staff who have shaped its success—many of whom began as program participants themselves.

Watch MNO social channels and *Métis Voyageur* in the months ahead as we celebrate 30 years of Education and Training at the MNO.



Left: MNO Education and Training Manager of Labour Market Tammy Webb and Johnston Research CEO Andrea Johnston at the 2026 National ISET Gathering Awards ceremony in Ottawa.

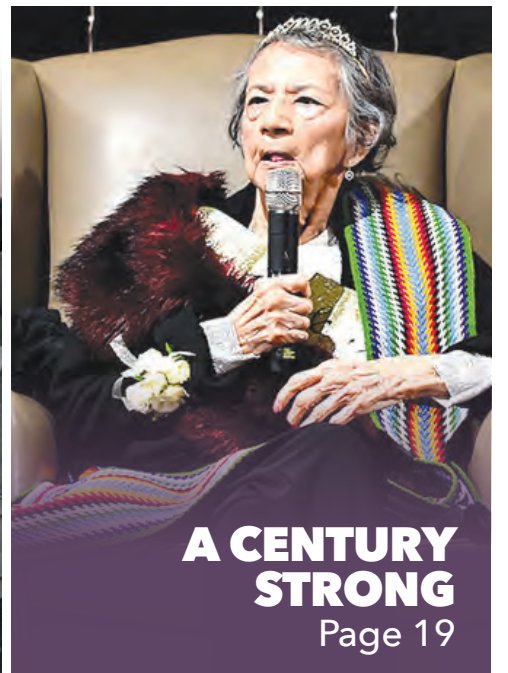
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Registry: **1-855-798-1006**
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Info@mnoregistry.ca**SUBMISSION POLICY:**

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) welcomes contributions from MNO citizens and staff. Community stories, citizen achievements, cultural reflections, youth voices, local council highlights, and tribute or remembrance pieces are all encouraged. If you're unsure whether an idea is a good fit, feel free to reach out first to discuss. All submissions are reviewed and edited for grammar, spelling, clarity, and conciseness. Submissions are also checked for accuracy to ensure that names, titles, and references to individuals, organizations, and agencies are correct.

The MNO does not accept submissions, including editorials and letters to the editor, that contain partisan political statements. References to government programs or policies may be included, provided they remain non-partisan.

Submissions should generally be between 400 and 600 words. Shorter or longer pieces may be considered depending on content and available space. Content must be sent as a Word document or pasted into the body of an email. Any accompanying images should be high resolution (300 dpi) and include a brief caption and photo credit.

Contributors must ensure they have the right to share any submitted content, including text, images, and quotes, and that appropriate permissions are in place where required (including for tribute or remembrance pieces). By submitting material, contributors grant the MNO the right to edit and publish it across MNO communication channels, including print, web, and social media. Submissions are reviewed on a rolling basis. The MNO reserves the right to decline or postpone publication based on content relevance, editorial priorities, regional balance, timeliness, and space availability. Submissions can be sent to **CommOps@metisnation.org**. For any questions or to pitch an idea, please reach out to the same address.

A Message from

MARGARET FROH

Métis Nation of Ontario, President



As the Light Returns

Advancing housing, child welfare, and self-government

Dear Citizens,

The snow is still with us in many places, but the light has shifted. The days stretch longer. In some of our communities, maple sap has already begun to run, and families will be tapping maple trees. Maple syrup season work might be hard, requiring attention and patience, but the reward is sweet.

This is the work of Métis families in the spring as we prepare for the growing and harvesting seasons ahead. Throughout our Métis communities in Ontario, that same kind of work is underway.

Housing projects continue to move forward. In Midland, construction is taking shape, with foundations in place and framing underway. In Kenora, planning and early design work are advancing, including consideration of subsidized units to ensure homes remain accessible to the families who need them most. This spring, the Emergency Repair Program will reopen with a renewed focus on energy efficiency, helping citizens reduce costs while keeping their homes safe and strong.

We are also taking important steps to better support Métis children and families. PCMNO has approved the next steps to move forward with a Métis Family Centred Program and to formally request that the MNO be listed as an Indigenous Community under Ontario's child welfare law. For years, citizens have told us that the child welfare system does not always understand Métis culture or connect families to Métis supports. This new program would allow the MNO to play a stronger role when Métis children and youth are involved with child welfare services.

What makes steps like this possible is the foundation we have built through self-government. In February, we marked the third anniversary of the 2023 Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Implementation Agreement with Canada. That milestone affirmed what our citizens have always known: that the Métis Nation of Ontario is the Indigenous government representing Métis communities in Ontario, with



recognized jurisdiction over our internal governance matters, including child welfare.

Self-government shows up in practical decisions that strengthen families, protect children, and build stability for future generations.

As we look ahead, we are also preparing for our Annual General Assembly in Thunder Bay. The AGA is always a meaningful opportunity to gather and shape the path forward together. Registration will be opening soon, so I encourage you to keep an eye on the MNO website and social media for details.

Spring reminds us that good things

take time and that preparation matters. The work underway right now at MNO is about building stability for Métis families, strengthening our communities, and making sure our children and youth grow up supported and connected.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the months ahead. I wish you and your families a safe, healthy, and hope-filled spring. ∞

Margaret Froh

President, Métis Nation of Ontario



This is the Spring 2026 issue of **Métis Voyageur**. Our next issue is already in progress and is set to be mailed out in July 2026. The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2026.

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

NEWS



Above: MNO Employment and Training staff at the 2026 National Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) gathering in Ottawa this January.

MNO staff join national ISET gathering in Ottawa

MNO staff joined Indigenous employment and training leaders from across the country at the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Gathering in Ottawa in January to share knowledge and strengthen approaches to Indigenous workforce development.

The gathering was a celebration of the strength and impact of Indigenous-led, distinctions-based services supporting families and communities across Canada. Through keynote addresses and workshops, participants explored ways to strengthen workforce development, improve service delivery through shared tools and best practices, and centre culture and well-being within employment and training programs.

Attendees also gathered for the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Champion Awards Lunch, where MNO's Tammy Webb, Education and Training Manager of Labour Market, was honoured with the Indigenous Skills and Employment Legend (20+ Years) Award. This award recognizes leaders who have dedicated more than two decades to advancing Indigenous skills training and employment across sectors.

The MNO has delivered employment and training supports in Ontario since 1996, building a province-wide system that has evolved and thrived alongside changing labour markets and federal frameworks. When Métis, First Nations, and Inuit governments and organizations have the authority to design and deliver programs rooted in their communities, the results are stronger, more responsive, and more sustainable.

Within this national network, the MNO's employment and training system has been built by and for Métis citizens. It focuses on clear pathways to skills, cer-



Top: Canadian Union of Skilled Workers Recruiter and Indigenous Skills, Employment, Apprenticeship, and Development Board Member Owen Johnston with MNO Education and Training Employment Resource Specialist Patricia Graham.



Left: Métis Jiggers, The Lyons Sisters, show their skills on stage.

tification, and meaningful employment, supported through community-based services that combine assessment, wrap-around supports, and career development to help citizens move from training into lasting work.

In the 2024–2025 fiscal year, MNO programs supported more than 1,400 clients and helped hundreds of Métis citizens enter the workforce—contributing to over 20,000 people supported across Ontario over the past three decades.

As a partner in advancing the Métis Nation Skills and Employment Training Accord within the broader ISET framework, the MNO continues to strengthen

government-to-government relationships that recognize Indigenous governments as leaders in employment and training. This work supports long-term stability, Indigenous self-determination, and a future where communities shape their own pathways to success.

The MNO is proud to stand alongside partners to share what works and continue strengthening Indigenous-led employment and training. As we move forward, collaboration, stability, and Métis leadership remain key to supporting strong outcomes for Métis communities in Ontario. ∞

Celebrating a Changemaker

continued from Cover

Throughout her career, Tammy has worked closely with communities, partners, and colleagues to strengthen workforce opportunities and promote inclusive, culturally responsive labour market outcomes. She is widely recognized for her practical, collaborative, and community-centred approach, as well as her commitment to ensuring Métis citizens have access to meaningful and sustainable employment.

"The reason I have been with the MNO for so long is ... the people,"

"The reason I have been with the MNO for so long is the people," said Webb. "I have met so many wonderful people along the way and have loved every minute of my job."

A proud Métis citizen, Tammy is also a wife, mother, sister, and grandmother. Family and community are central to her values and continue to guide her work. She remains deeply passionate about creating pathways that support Métis individuals and communities in achieving long-term success through education, training, and employment.

On behalf of the MNO, congratulations on your very well-deserved award Tammy! ∞

MNO ATTENDS INAUGURAL MNC NATURE SUMMIT

Launching the Métis Nature Strategy

Representatives from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) joined Métis governments and partners on November 25 and 26 for the inaugural Métis National Council Nature Summit in Calgary, Alberta.

Hosted at The Confluence Historic Site & Parkland, the gathering marked the official launch of the newly and collaboratively developed Nature Strategy. Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, environmental practitioners, and Métis leadership came together to discuss shared priorities for protecting and caring for lands and waters.

The two-day summit focused on the Strategy's five interconnected priorities for action: ecosystem healing, Métis-led conservation areas, understanding the state of the environment, food security and sovereignty, and the protection of water, ice, and snow. Governing Members also highlighted the work already underway in communities, showcasing Métis leadership and the deep relationships citizens maintain with the natural world.

"The new Nature Strategy empowers Métis citizens to care for our lands, waters, and wildlife



Above: MNO citizens takes part in a panel discussion at the MNC Nature Summit.

"The new Nature Strategy empowers Métis citizens to care for our lands, waters, and wildlife in ways that honour our Métis knowledge systems."

in ways that honour our Métis knowledge systems," said MNO President Margaret Froh. "It offers a unified path forward to strengthen community resilience, uphold cultural responsibility, and centre Métis leadership in environmental protection."

Panel discussions explored Indigenous-led conservation, sys-

tem restoration, sacred waters, and the role of Métis values in environmental stewardship. Sessions on food security and sovereignty highlighted how harvesting practices and land-based knowledge support community wellbeing. A dedicated youth panel shared perspectives on the responsibilities younger genera-

tions carry when caring for the land, water, animals, snow, and ice.

The summit also included cultural learning grounded in Kiyokewin — the practice of visiting and building relationships — through trade booths, outdoor hide-tanning workshops, and cultural demonstrations that strengthened kinship across regions.

Participation in the Nature Summit supports key MNO priorities, including national advocacy to renew federal nature program funding set to sunset in 2026; stronger environmental partnerships; increased visibility



of Métis-led stewardship across Ontario; and shared learning among Governing Members.

Overall, the summit created space for meaningful dialogue on Indigenous leadership in protecting biodiversity and responding to environmental change. With a new Nature Strategy in place, Métis governments are well positioned to continue driving positive, citizen-led action. ∞

GOVERNANCE

PCMNO Provincial Secretaries gather for strategic planning and government updates

MNO Provincial Secretaries gathered at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville in December for an impactful day of updates, strategic planning, and discussions aimed at strengthening supports for citizens, government operations and infrastructure. Leadership addressed key issues while

providing updates on priority areas such as housing, health, justice, economic development, and more. Through collaboration and forward-thinking leadership, the MNO continues to advance a path of Métis self-government and self-determination for Métis citizens and communities. ∞



From left to right (top row): Theresa Stenlund, Provincial Secretary - Métis Rights, Intergovernmental Relations and Communications; Margaret Froh, MNO President and Provincial Secretary of Justice; Kathleen Anderson, Provincial Secretary - Economic Development and Government Infrastructure, and Associate Secretary of Finance and Records. (Bottom row): Executive Senator Steven Callaghan; Jo Anne Young, Secretary of Finance and Records; Mitch Case, Provincial Secretary - Education and Métis Rights, Intergovernmental Relations and Communications.

PARTNERSHIP

MNO President meets with Minister to advance stewardship priorities

President Froh and Hon. Julie Dabrusin discusses climate work

MNO President Froh recently reconnected with the Honourable Julie Dabrusin, federal Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, to discuss MNO's exceptional work in environmental stewardship. The

MNO appreciates the government's foundational investment and are committed to renewing long-term predictable funding for our distinctive environmental and climate programming. ∞



Above: MNO President Margaret Froh with the Honourable Julie Dabrusin, federal Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature.



Above: Past and present leadership and senators from the Métis Nation of Ontario, Otipemisiwak Métis Government, and the Métis National Council meeting with Canadian Senators Mary Coyle and Patti LaBoucane-Benson.

Amplifying Métis voices and history

Métis Senators and Elders gather at the Canadian Senate

Past and present leadership and senators from the MNO and Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) met with Canadian Senators Mary Coyle, and Patti LaBoucane-Benson in December at the Senate of Canada in Ottawa.

The gathering was an important reminder of the need to create space within Canada's highest chamber for Métis voices, histories, and community-driven discussions.

Attendees were also invited to view *Lii Michif Niiyanaan: We Are Métis*, a documentary created by our sister government, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, highlighting Métis identity, resilience, and nationhood.

The MNO remains committed to sharing Métis stories and ensuring they are included in national conversations. ∞

A Legacy of Care and Community



Remembering Angie Mercredi-Crerar

The Métis Nation of Ontario was saddened to learn of the passing of Métis Elder Angie Mercredi-Crerar, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to her family, friends, and community.

Angie was a compelling example of care and commitment in the Métis community. She spent her life looking out for others, especially for Elders who deserved support, safety, and respect. In Grande Prairie, she helped found the Elder's Caring Shelter and served for many years as President of Métis Local 1990. She was also recognized with a King Charles III Coronation Medal for her service and leadership to the Métis community.

Angie was one of the funniest people to ever live, with a sharp wit and the most infectious laugh. Her legacy will live on in the people and places she helped shape.

Rest in peace, Angie. ∞

Highlanders on the Hill

MNO President celebrates Métis connections to Scotland in Ottawa

MNO President Margaret Froh was delighted to attend Robbie Burns on the Hill, hosted by Speaker of the House, Francis Scarpaleggia and his wife Jan. The evening was a wonderful celebration of Scottish culture.

A memorable toast to the immortal memory of Robbie Burns was given by John Devine head of the Scottish Government Office in Canada. Liberal MP Charles Sousa (Mississauga Lakeshore) did not disappoint in his toast to the Lassie's while, Conservative MP Tamara Kronis (Nanaimo-Ladysmith), regaled with a toast to the Laddies.

The room of dignitaries included Members of Parliament, Senators, Cabinet Ministers, and their guests. Former Speaker Peter Millikan, who began the tradition was on hand. The evening became a tribute to the Hon. Kirsty Duncan, former Cabinet Minister and acclaimed Scottish Highland dancer herself, who passed away the day earlier.

President Froh had the true pleasure to be seated between The Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre), and The Hon. Ruby Sahota, Secretary of State for Combatting Crime, and caught up with The Hon. Elizabeth May among so many other friends to the Métis Nation of Ontario.

Many Métis families trace their heritage to Scottish fur traders and some of that influence can be seen in our cultural practices, particularly in the form of fiddle music and the jig and reel.

In celebration of the Métis connection to Scotland, the MNO wishes a happy Robbie Burns day to all who celebrate! Slàinte mhath! ∞



Above: MNO President Margaret Froh attends the Robbie Burns on the Hill event and caught up with friends of the MNO, including Office of the Minister of Citizens' Services Chief of Staff Ryan Cotter; The Honourable Hedy Fry (top left); John Devine, Head of the Scottish Government Office in Canada; Tamara Kronis, Conservative MP for Nanaimo-Ladysmith (top right); Elizabeth May, Green Party MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands (bottom left); and Speaker of the House Francis Scarpaleggia and his wife, Jan (bottom right).



Sugaring A Métis Family Tradition

The spring maple sugar harvest has been an important seasonal Métis community tradition for generations. For many, the annual maple sugar harvest has involved the entire family.

Every Métis River Lot family had a designated sugar bush along “the hill” at the far end of their River Lot, so that they could participate in the annual maple sugar harvest. As late as 1889, the Miron family were still harvesting sugar on their section of “the hill” decades after most of their Métis community had been displaced by recent settlers. Many Métis families carry on their community’s annual spring maple sugar harvest tradition to this day. ∞



"Métis, dance as good as any body"

Jigs have long been part of Métis community life, connecting families and generations through the spirit of love and celebration. Far more than entertainment, dance created spaces where elders, adults, and children gathered to share rhythm, movement, and joy.

Through nights filled with music and movement, dance strengthened bonds and carried knowledge from one generation to the next. That same spirit continues today, with Métis dances remaining central to community celebrations, family gatherings, and cultural events in Sault Ste. Marie and across the Métis Homeland. ∞



Métis Music at Moose Factory

For Métis communities across the historic North-West, music has always been a vibrant, continuous thread woven through daily life, setting the tone for both gatherings and large community celebrations. On New Year's Day in 1859 at Moose Factory, a fight broke out among the Hudson's Bay Company's Métis and Norwegian employees. Métis fiddler Patrick Faries recalls smashing his fiddle on the head of the first person that came onto him. This moment shows how closely music was tied to Métis life, central to celebrations and even breaking up a fight. ∞



Métis Spring Traditions in Mattawa

Spring was a particularly important time of year for many Métis families. In early January 1849, for instance, the Langevin family was noted as “making a camp above the fort” at Mattawa, referring to a traditional harvesting camp. By April that year, “Langevin traded 100 lbs of maple sugar” at the Mattawa post.

The following day, the industrious Langevins began clearing land nearby with the intention of farming. Their successes were made clear in the 1861 census, which noted that the Langevins “farm exclusively and live comfortably by it.”

Many of these important spring traditions carry on within the Mattawa Métis Community to this day. ∞



COMMUNITY



Above: MNO President Margaret Froh stands with Love Yourself First program organizers at past breast cancer screening session.

Love Yourself First

Métis women empowered through awareness, education, and early action

The Love Yourself First project began in 2022 after Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Community Council Women's Representatives recognized the disproportionately high number of Indigenous women diagnosed with breast cancer. Low screening rates across Ontario—particularly among Métis women—underscored the urgent need for action.

Project Manager Luanne Cunningham, Region 8 Women's Representative and Vice-Chair of the MNO Women's Council, launched the initiative by connecting with Eleeyah Uri, Regional Program Manager with Ontario Health's Indigenous Cancer Care Unit, as well as the MNO Healing and Wellness Branch and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak. Planning soon began in collaboration with local MNO Community Councils

and Indigenous Cancer Care providers. Since its launch, the project has hosted 10 Love Yourself First events in communities across the province, from Toronto and Kingston to Geraldton and North Bay. Each session features a panel of local healthcare professionals and includes testimony from a breast cancer survivor from the region. MNO President Margaret Froh has also shared her own survivor story at several events.

Sessions open with a prayer led by a local Senator, followed by a traditional meal, a meaningful craft activity, and opportunities for participants to ask health-related questions. The goal is to create a welcoming, supportive space where women feel informed and encouraged to book a mammogram. Appointments are typically arranged within 10 days of the session for those who are interested.

To ensure women feel supported and safe during screening, an Indigenous Patient Navigator or program director is present on mammogram day to offer smudging, light snacks, emotional support, and reassurance. The program aims to address the two biggest barriers to screening—fear and discrimination within the healthcare system—by providing culturally grounded, compassionate care.

To date, more than 240 women have attended the screening and information sessions, and five Métis women have received early breast cancer diagnoses as a result of the program's outreach and follow-up.

"Most women put everyone else first.

We hope to help our sisters 'love themselves first' by getting screened, so they can stay healthy and continue caring for those they love," Luanne shares.

Maarsii to everyone involved in making this project possible, including Luanne Cunningham, the Ontario Indigenous Cancer Care Team, Eleeyah Uri, Shelley Cripps and the MNO Healing and Wellness Branch, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, MNO President Margaret Froh, MNO Community Councils, and the Women's Representatives on Council.

Remember to Love Yourself First — always. The program is planning to host additional sessions in 2026. Stay tuned for more information. ∞

To learn more about the Love Yourself First Project or to book a session, please contact Luanne Cunningham at MetisEvents20@gmail.com.



WOMEN
Honouring
WOMEN
AWARD

The 2026 Women Honouring Women Award nominations are open!

This award celebrates the remarkable contributions of Métis women who have made a difference through volunteerism, leadership, and cultural advocacy.

Nominations are open from:
March 1 to May 31, 2026



MÉTIS YOUTH CAMPS

Youth from across the province made their way to Huntsville for the 2025 Otawn Youth Cultural Camp.



Otawn

A weekend of Métis culture, connection, and adventure

Thirteen Métis students gathered at Camp Tawingo near Huntsville, Ontario for the 2025 Otawn Cultural Camp, a four-day experience from October 17 to 20 filled with workshops exploring Métis culture and way of life.

Nestled along the scenic shores of Lake Vernon, the camp provided a picturesque location for Métis students to connect with their peers.

On the first day, students arrived in the late afternoon, settled into their cabins, and got to know each other through ice-breaker activities. They reviewed safety guidelines and capped off the evening by

enjoying a hearty dinner together.

The next morning, the group made their way to the camp docks for a fishing activity, where several students proudly reeled in smallmouth bass. Later in the day, they took part in a tracking challenge, rotating through six stations to identify animals based on tracks, scat, and other signs of activity. Congratulations to the top participants who earned prizes for their skills!

On the final day, students set out on a hike to take in the beauty of the Muskoka landscape while learning about outdoor safety and how to stay prepared when exploring nature in their own communities.

Back at camp, they turned their creativity to the decorative arts—crafting custom phone cases and practicing traditional blanket stitching. In the afternoon, the focus shifted to harvesting and preparing traditional foods from the water, such as fish and wild rice, before everyone gathered to share a delicious fish fry and smoked fish snack.

As the weekend drew to a close, campers gathered for a special ceremony to reflect on their experiences, offer a closing prayer, thank the dedicated staff, and celebrate the youth graduating from the program. The evening also welcomed four new members to the camp community

through a traditional sash presentation.

“Some of the most unforgettable moments from these weekends come from the strong sense of community and personal growth each student experiences in just a few days,” says André Nault, Métis Youth Culture Camp Project Coordinator. “We strive to create an environment where students feel confident embracing who they are as Métis, so seeing that pride come to life is incredibly rewarding.”

Students departed Camp Tawingo with lasting memories and new friendships—maarsii to this year’s students and staff who made the weekend unforgettable! ∞

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Louis Riel Day marked across Ontario

Métis citizens and community members across the province gathered throughout the month of November to honour Métis leader Louis Riel and his courage and sacrifice. Marking a somber day for the Métis people, November 16 is the anniversary of Louis Riel's execution. However, it is also an opportunity to come together and celebrate Métis culture. This year, Métis citizens and MNO Chartered Community Councils held events across the province to celebrate Métis culture, recognize the many contributions of the Métis to Canada, and to highlight the struggles that Métis continue to face. ∞



Queen's Park



Toronto City Hall



Métis families gather for annual Family Rendezvous

Métis families from across Ontario gathered for the annual MNO Family Rendezvous at Deerhurst Resort from November 27–30, 2025—an opportunity to celebrate culture, community, and one another as the holiday season approached.

Hosted by the MNO events team, with support from programs and services across our Métis government, this year's Rendezvous welcomed more than 250 citizens for a weekend of workshops, storytelling, land-based activities, and shared celebration.

Families arrived Thursday evening to a warm welcome, community buffet, and registration, setting the tone for a complete and vibrant weekend ahead.

Friday began with breakfast and an Opening Ceremony led by members of the PCMNO, Senators, and Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) staff. Leader-

ship reflected on the importance of gathering as Métis families, honouring shared histories, and strengthening the relationships that ground the Nation.

Over Friday and Saturday, citizens participated in rotating workshops designed to encourage creativity, family bonding, and cultural learning. Highlights included Beading 101, Family Command Centre, a Family Memory Board workshop, festive Métis crafts, fireside storytelling, a guided forest walk, and the preparation of holiday packages for Métis Elders and Seniors. A Self-Care Room organized by the Community Wellbeing branch was also available throughout the weekend.

A well-attended drop-in session with the Self-Government and members of the Provisional Council of the MNO (PCMNO) provided families with an opportunity to learn more about the future of Métis governance in Ontario and to ask questions

about the path ahead.

Both afternoons included exploration time, allowing families to enjoy Deerhurst's indoor and outdoor activities—from swimming and skating to hiking and arcade games—making it one of the most cherished aspects of Rendezvous.

Friday evening brought a cozy Family Holiday Movie Night, while Saturday concluded with a lively Christmas Kitchen Party filled with music, dancing, laughter, and community joy.

The weekend ended with a closing ceremony led by Provincial Secretary Mitch Case and President Margaret Froh, acknowledging the work of MNO staff—particularly the Education and Training, Community Wellbeing, and Métis Family Wellbeing teams—and all staff who helped make the gathering possible.

Maarsii to all who joined us. We look forward to welcoming families again next year. ∞



Above: Métis families and MNO staff participating in culturally grounded workshops and holiday themed activities at the 2025 Family Rendezvous.

Niagara Region Métis Council youth group making cultural connections

Submitted by
Lisa Boivin-Rutherford
South West Region (Region 9) Manager

The Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) Youth Group continues to grow as a welcoming space where Métis youth can gather, learn, and build pride in Métis culture. What began as a small group has developed into an active monthly circle focused on connection and shared experience.

Open to Métis youth ages 13 to 18 in the NRMC catchment area, the group blends teachings, Métis customs, and land-based skills. Gatherings are designed to strengthen cultural knowledge while building confidence, teamwork, and mutual respect.

The group is guided by Youth Advisors — NRMC Council President Derrick Pont and volunteer Lisa Boivin-Rutherford — whose leadership helps keep the program engaging and grounded in Métis values. The program is supported through funding from the St. Catharines Catholic Diocese's Indigenous Reconciliation Fund.

Over the past year, youth have taken part in a range of hands-on activities, including compass and orientation training at Short Hills Provincial Park, archery and axe throwing, and a holiday bowling outing. In January, youth gathered to learn about Métis history and values. Participants also received an l'Assomption sash and reflected on The Giving Tree by Leah Dorion and its messages of generosity, reciprocity, and community responsibility.

Plans for the coming year include additional cultural skills sessions, land-based



learning days, fishing, canoeing, and group activities designed to balance fun with learning.

NRMC extends thanks to the youth, families, and advisors who continue to support and grow the program. The Youth Group remains an important space for Métis youth to build knowledge, relationships, and cultural connection.

For more information, contact Lisa Boivin-Rutherford at LisaBR@metisnation.org.



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A Season of Togetherness

Métis families gather on the land for Fall Family Camp

Métis families from across Ontario gathered in October for the Métis Nation of Ontario's Fall Family Camp—a four-day celebration of culture, community, and outdoor adventure.

Held at Camp Wanakita in Haliburton, the in-person event brought families together to connect, learn, and take part in engaging activities that celebrated Métis culture and the beauty of the fall season.

Families settled into their cabins Friday afternoon and then were welcomed to camp by staff and presenters. After a delicious dinner, the evening continued with crafts and games such as cup decorating, button making, and jar crafts. Later that evening, adults attended an information session on MNO programs and services while children enjoyed open programming in the main hall.

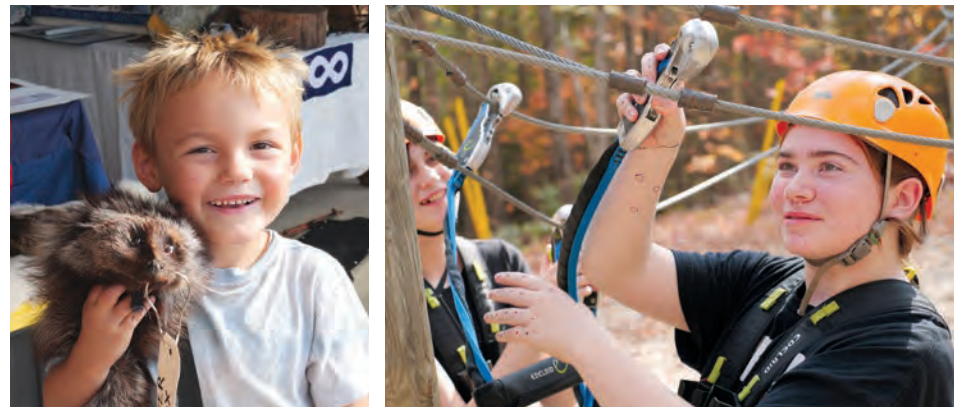
Saturday's schedule kicked off with families taking part in cultural activity stations featuring fur and scat identification, tote bag decorating inspired by sash colours, beginner jigging lessons, and outdoor art projects such as lead rubbing. In the afternoon, families explored Camp Wanakita through hikes, scavenger hunts, and canoeing, while others joined beginner beading sessions indoors.

The evening Kitchen Party around the campfire was a highlight of the weekend, featuring s'mores, jigging, and gross motor games, including a lively tug of war game that filled the night with laughter and joy. Older youth, known as "Moose," also had the chance to test their teamwork and problem-solving skills in an escape room challenge.

The fun continued on Sunday with a needle felting workshop, where families learned to sculpt wool into creative designs using special barbed needles, as well as a lively predator vs. prey game led by YMCA staff. Families enjoyed more self-guided created time, including dot art, beading, and swimming. Children were then divided into age-based groups for the afternoon programming as they learned new skills such as archery, jam making, and high ropes climbing.

The camp concluded Sunday evening with a closing ceremony at the fire pit, where families reflected on the weekend and decorated their commemorative camp shirts. By Monday morning, Métis families departed with new memories, friendships, and a sense of pride and community.

Maarsii to the families and staff who made the weekend unforgettable! ∞



Above: Families gathering at Camp Wanakita in Haliburton for the 2025 MNO Fall Family Camp.

CLEAR WATERS MÉTIS COUNCIL

Council warms spirits with Winter Feast

Set against the backdrop of more than 40 World War II aircraft, the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Clear Waters Métis Council (CWMC) held its Winter Feast, bringing together leadership and community members for an evening of culture and celebration at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton.

The event began Saturday, January 24 in the afternoon with guided tours of the museum, which featured not only the historic aircraft but also Métis vendor tables and engaging children's activities. Prior to the feast, guests heard remarks from CWMC Council President Dana Robbins, followed by an opening prayer and land acknowledgement from CWMC Senator Nancy Bouchier.

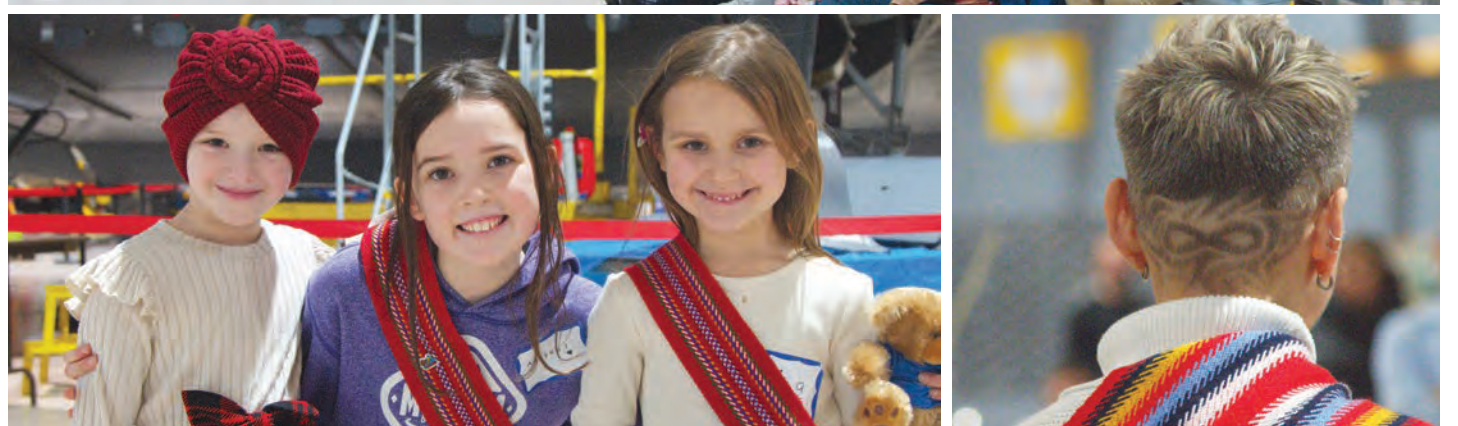
In addition to CWMC members, several MNO leaders attended, including MNO President Margaret Froh, PCMNO Secretary-Treasurer Jo Anne Young, and PCMNO South West Councillor Kathleen Anderson. Hamilton Mayor Andrea Horwath also joined the evening's festivities.

In her address, Mayor Horwath recognized the work of the Clear Waters Métis Council in creating a space for community to gather, especially during the winter months.

"These grey, cold, and sometimes isolating months are when it's most important to come together with friends and family," she said.

"Gathering at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum reminds us that Métis history is not separate from Canadian history—it is woven into it," said President Froh as she shared the story of the Bussineau brothers and their service during the First World War.

Raised in a close-knit Métis family near



Above: Métis citizens in the South West Region (Region 9) gathered at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton for the Clear Waters Métis Council Winter Feast.

Sault Ste. Marie, brothers John Joseph and George Bussineau enlisted together in January 1916. They trained in Niagara and served overseas in the same battalion. George was fatally wounded and died on January 16, 1917. Their story reflects the strength, loyalty, and sense of responsibility carried by Métis families across generations. (To learn more about Ontario Métis history, visit OntarioMetisFacts.com.)

"We are spending a lot of time telling our stories," President Froh added. "Weaving Métis identity and storytelling into everyday life is how we help create strong, confident young Métis people."

The evening continued with a lively performance by Métis brothers Nicholas and Danton Delbaere-Sawchuk, who had everyone on their feet dancing the Red River Jig beneath the wings of the

museum's Lancaster Bomber. After a shared meal, door prizes were drawn, with many guests walking away winners—including one lucky attendee who won a free flight in a historic warplane.

President Robbins' closing remarks brought the evening to a memorable close and affirmed a shared sense of Métis belonging. ∞

THUNDER BAY & DISTRICT MÉTIS COUNCIL



Not a Blue Christmas in Thunder Bay

Submitted by
Alicia Brink
Region 2 PCMNO Councillor

Thunder Bay & District Métis Council (TBDMC) welcomed more than 300 citizens to a festive holiday celebration in December, bringing together community, culture, and holiday cheer. True to the spirit of the season, the event was filled with music, dancing, family, and camaraderie. Attendees enjoyed gifts, exciting door

prizes, delicious food, and crafts for all ages. The celebration was topped off with an energetic performance by the King of Rock 'n' Roll, Elvis (stage name, Daylin James). This event was far from Blue Christmas as his performance had Senators and citizens alike on their feet dancing to classic Elvis hits. To stay up to date on events and initiatives hosted by the Thunder Bay & District Métis Council, visit www.mnotbay.com. ∞

SAULT STE MARIE HERITAGE CENTRE

Sault Ste. Marie rings in the New Year with a Métis tradition

Submitted by: **Mitch Case**, PCMNO
Councillor - Huron-Superior Regional
Métis Community

As the clock struck midnight welcoming the New Year, a sound rooted in generations of Métis tradition rang out across Sault Ste. Marie: the bell in the tower of the Sault Ste. Marie Métis Heritage Centre.

The ringing of the bell, a custom long practiced in Métis communities and revived in Sault Ste. Marie over the past several years, once again marked the turning of the year. As its clear tones echoed through the city, nearby fireworks lit up the neighbourhood, blending traditions of the past, with those of the present.

For Métis citizens, the ringing of the New Year bell is more than a countdown—it is a living connection to ancestors who marked time, gathered community, and welcomed new beginnings in the same way. Its revival has become a meaningful annual moment, reminding listeners of the enduring presence and resilience



of Métis culture in the city. The Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council extended thanks to Councillor figures and Regional Councillor Mitch Case for their efforts in keeping the tradition alive and ensuring it continues to be shared with the wider community. In a message of goodwill, the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council wished all citizens, friends, and neighbours a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year, as the echoes of the bell carried hope and unity into the year ahead. ∞

SAULT STE MARIE HISTORIC MÉTIS COUNCIL

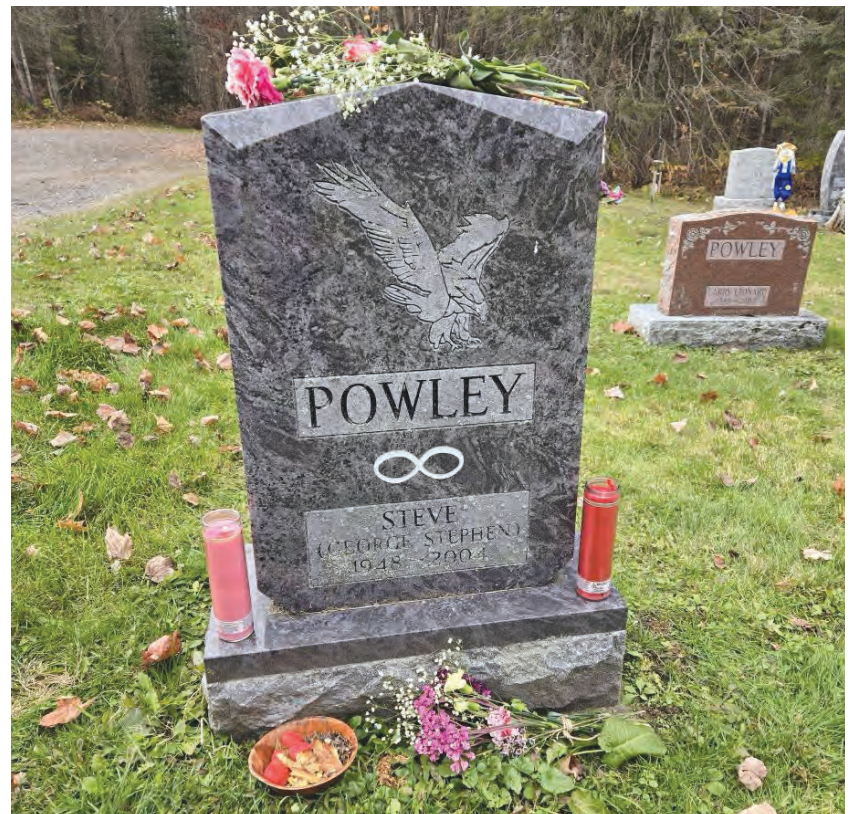
Honouring the ancestors on All Souls Day

Submitted by
Mitch Case, PCMNO
Councillor - Huron-Superior
Regional Métis Community

The Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council hosted a small gathering of community members at the Sault Ste. Marie Métis Heritage Centre to pay tribute to our ancestors on All Souls Day. While All Souls Day is observed across many faiths, for Métis families it has long held a deeper cultural meaning, a moment to blend prayer, re-

membrance, and community togetherness in honour of those whose lives built the foundations of today's Nation. The gathering began at the Heritage Centre, where community members made floral bouquets to be distributed to cemeteries throughout Sault Ste. Marie. Candles were lit, and offerings of food and tobacco were placed to honour the spirits of Métis ancestors. Each act—a flower, a flame, a prayer—carried forward the love, gratitude, and remembrance that bind generations together.

Honourary Senator Brenda Powley offered prayers on behalf of the community at each cemetery visited. Her words reminded those present, and those long departed, that remembrance is a sacred duty. Bouquets, candles, and offerings were placed at several important sites to the Métis of Sault Ste. Marie. The Heritage Centre grounds, which is the former graveyard of the NWC/HBC post, where the community continues to gather in the heart of their historic river-lot community. Holy Sepulchre Cemetery - The final resting place for those once buried in the original Sacred Heart Cemetery—a burial ground that was twice relocated during the city's development. Pine Grove Cemetery where contemporary Métis leaders Steve Powley and Dolores Pinder are laid to rest, both remembered for their immense contributions to the recognition and revitalization of Métis rights and culture. As dusk settled and candles glowed against the November air, the soft light reflected the community's ongoing promise: to keep the memories of their ancestors alive, to speak their names, and to pass forward the teachings that continue to guide the Métis community. ∞



TORONTO & YORK REGION MÉTIS COUNCIL

Wintery weather can't stop Métis holiday lunch gathering

Heavy snowfall and cold temperatures didn't stop Métis citizens and community members from gathering for the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Toronto & York Region Métis Council (TYRMC) and Region 8 Holiday Lunch, held at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto.

The event began late Sunday morning with dot art, "Get to Know You" Bingo, and Métis vendor displays. Attendees also had the opportunity to connect with the MNO Advocacy team to learn more about programs and services available to Métis citizens.

To open the gathering, guests heard remarks from TYRMC Programs & Communications Coordinator Atika Irvine-Tench and TYRMC President Amie Therrien. The National Anthem was sung by MNO employee Conlin Delbaere-Sawchuk, followed by an opening prayer delivered by TYRMC Senator Paul Irvine.

"It's been so great to see both new and familiar faces today,"

said President Therrien. "During these winter months, it is especially important to gather as a community. It brings warmth and comfort, and reminds us that we support one another through every season."

The afternoon continued with musical performances and jiggging by Paul Irvine, Conlin Delbaere-Sawchuk, and Atika Irvine-Tench. As guests enjoyed a meal prepared by Hudson Bernard of My Chef Toronto, Conlin performed two breathtaking performances of songs honouring Louis Riel: La Métis and Chanson De Riel.

Throughout the event, community members connected with one another, shared stories, and learned more about supports available through the MNO—reflecting how local gatherings strengthen relationships and community.

The event concluded with heartfelt closing remarks from Council President Therrien and door prizes, wrapping up a memorable gathering. ∞



SOUTH WEST REGION

Métis children bring culture to life through art and story

Submitted by
Lisa Boivin-Rutherford,
South West Region Manager

Over the holiday season, Métis children across the MNO South West Region shared their creativity and culture through the Métis Kids Colouring & Storytelling Contest. Participants completed *Ontario Métis Facts* colouring pages and responded to storytelling prompts, submitting artwork along with optional photos, videos, and written reflections.

Families across the region responded with enthusiasm, and submissions highlighted creativity and the important role families play in supporting Métis storytelling across generations. The South West Regional leadership team thank all children and families who took part.

After reviewing the many thoughtful entries the contest winners were announced:

- *Ages 1-3:* Allison, Age 3 — Clear Waters Métis Council catchment
- *Ages 4-6:* Blair, Age 6 — Niagara Region Métis Council catchment

- *Ages 7-9:* Benson, Age 7 — Clear Waters Métis Council catchment
- *Ages 10-13:* Isabelle, Age 13 — Grand River Métis Council catchment

One especially meaningful submission came from Benson, who coloured the Métis Maple Sugaring page and shared a video about visiting a family member's sugar farm in northern Ontario, connecting his artwork to lived Métis experience. South West Regional Councillor Kathleen Anderson later met Benson and his family at the Clear Waters Métis Council Winter Feast, highlighting how community gatherings help strengthen regional connections.

To celebrate all participants, we created a video showcase featuring submitted artwork and stories from across the region.

Through this contest, Métis children were encouraged to learn, create, and share their voices—bringing Métis stories to life through the next generation. ∞



Visit the link or scan the QR code to view a video of these talented artists:
bit.ly/3MuTHWz





NORTH CHANNEL MÉTIS COUNCIL

Supporting families through a holiday season initiative

Submitted by **Mitch Case**
PCMNO Councillor - Huron-Superior
Regional Métis Community

The North Channel Métis Council (NCMC) brought the spirit of the season to life on December 7, by distributing Christmas gift cards to Métis citizens in the community. As cost of living continues to rise, the NCMC are always looking at how they can support families.

The event offered more than holiday support but a chance to gather, visit,

and celebrate together. Laughter and conversation filled the space as citizens stopped by, reflecting the strong sense of kinship that continues to define Métis communities.

The North Channel Métis Council extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who came out to take part and helped make the day a success. ∞



NIAGARA REGION MÉTIS COUNCIL

Annual early learning and child care Christmas party

Submitted by **Lisa Boivin-Rutherford**
MNO South West Region 9 Manager

The Niagara Region Métis Council (NRMC) hosted its annual Early Learning and Child Care Christmas Party at Balls Falls Conservation Area, bringing Métis families together to celebrate the season.

Led by NRMC Treasurer Tracy Boese and council members, the event created a welcoming space for families to gather and connect. Children and parents took part in hands-on activities including

cookie decorating, dot art, and ornament making. A special visit from Santa added to the excitement, with each child receiving a gift. The celebration wrapped up with a shared meal of pizza and snacks.

NRMC extends thanks to the council members and volunteers who organized the event, as well as the families who attended and helped make the gathering memorable. Events like the ELCC Christmas Party help strengthen community connections and support Métis families across generations. ∞



HISTORIC SAULT STE MARIE MÉTIS COUNCIL

Métis Council hosts first family Christmas celebration

Submitted by **Mitch Case**
PCMNO Councillor - Huron-Superior
Regional Métis Community

This past holiday season the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council celebrated its first annual Family Christmas Party, bringing Métis families together for an afternoon filled with joy, creativity, and community connection.

Families enjoyed activities for all ages, including cookie decorating, ornament painting, colouring, and holiday crafts, along with a shared pizza lunch. Laughter and conversation

filled the room as families spent time together and created new memories grounded in Métis community values.

A highlight of the afternoon was a special visit from Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus, whose arrival brought excitement and smiles to children and families alike. Council members extend their thanks to the volunteers and families whose participation made the event a success, reflecting the strength of Métis families and the value of coming together in community. ∞



BARRIE-SOUTH SIMCOE MÉTIS COUNCIL

Métis Council hosts annual children's Christmas party

Submitted by **Danielle Callander**
Barrie South Simcoe Métis Council
Secretary

The Barrie Métis Council welcomed families to its much-anticipated annual Children's Christmas Party on November 30. Cherished by Métis children and parents alike, this celebration brings together Barrie South Simcoe Métis Council families and children for an afternoon filled with festive activities and community spirit.

From games and prizes to holiday crafts and a visit with Santa, the

children enjoyed a festive day capped off with a wish list gift. Each child also took home an advent calendar and a gingerbread house kit to decorate with their families, helping to carry the joy of the event into the holiday season.

This year's party saw an enthusiastic turnout, with 52 children participating. The Barrie Métis Council extends its thanks to all the families who attended and is already looking forward to next year's celebration, eager to spread even more Christmas cheer. ∞

Solar power shines at Sault Ste Marie Métis Heritage Centre

The Sault Ste. Marie Métis Heritage Centre has a new solar installation that will help power the facility for years to come. The project marks another important step in the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) commitment to environmental stewardship, clean energy, and long-term sustainability across the province.

The installation is part of the broader MNO Solar Panel Program, which supports clean, renewable energy generation for Métis households and MNO-owned buildings wherever installation is feasible. The Centre's new 8kW grid-tied solar system is designed to offset nearly all of its electrical consumption. Through net metering, excess energy produced during sunny periods is returned to the provincial grid. When the Centre requires more electricity than it produces, such as at night, it can draw power back from the grid as needed. "Our most enduring value as a people is our love and care for Mother Earth. This solar project helps us to care for her," said Steve Gjos, President of the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council.

"These solar projects are an important investment in our Nation's future," said Jacques Picotte, PCMNO Region 3 Councillor and Provincial Secretary of Environment, Emergency Preparedness & Climate Change. "By harnessing renewable energy, we're not only reducing our environmental impact but also demonstrating to our citizens and partners that the Métis Nation of Ontario is serious about taking action on climate change." "The Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council have worked hard for many years to develop the Heritage Centre, a



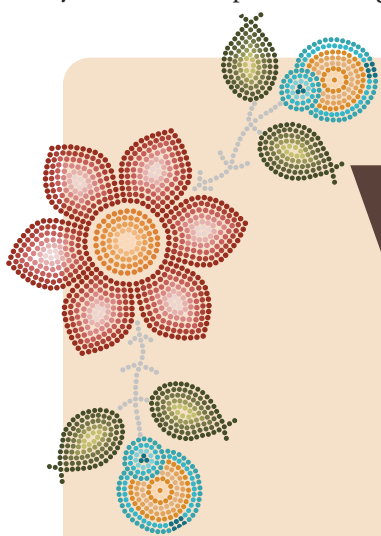
Above: New solar panels are installed at the Sault Ste. Marie Heritage Centre this past summer.

first of its kind in Ontario," said Mitch Case, Regional Councillor for the Huron-Superior Regional Métis Community. "This is an important next step – the building that holds our stories, now also embodies our values – of conservation and care for the environment that gave birth to our people. I want to thank Secretary Picotte and his team for this investment in the Region, and the Sault Council for the wisdom in seeing the value of this important step"

The MNO will continue expanding renewable energy initiatives across the province as part of its commitment to sustainability, community energy independence, and Métis-led climate action. ∞



Watch www.metisnation.org for more!



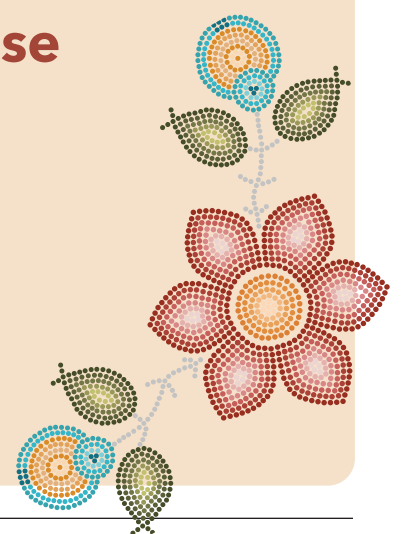
VOLUNTEER *of the* YEAR AWARD

Do you know an outstanding Métis citizen whose hard work deserves recognition?

Nominate them for the Volunteer of the Year Award!



Deadline for submissions:
August 7, 2026



Métis Voices

Sharing What Self-Government Means ...

We would like to thank every Métis citizen who has shared their voice on this Self-Government journey - here is some of what has been said so far.

"[Self-Government is] important because it gives Métis people the fundamental right to speak freely for themselves and the future of Métis people."

"Self-government is crucial to ensuring that the history and traditions of our people are kept alive. It will ensure our culture will be instilled in our children and then on to their children."

"Self determination to me means a difference to our youth, our next generation. To live and prosper as Métis people. Opportunity to thrive and develop as a people and community."

"I am so proud to be Métis. Years ago, no one knew what Métis was. Now we have Self Government."

"It is my duty to my family and our ancestors to see our dream of nation fulfilled."

"Métis self-government is essential to the future of Métis citizens! No one understands our history, culture, needs, or traditions better than our own people."

"I think we are moving in the right direction for our people."

"Self-governance allows us to support our community in a focused, self-directed manner."

"For me, it is about supporting each other in our journey back to ourselves."

"Métis self-government to me means all Métis citizens have a right and a voice in the development of future laws, citizenship and internal departments."

"Self-government is huge. In my opinion it's helping our Métis people and community to live our life the way we should be able to live it."

"Historically and culturally, it is important to establish the proper governance to support our culture in a way that respects us individually and collectively."

"Getting to a constitution will go a long way in asserting our rights, creating systems that work for us, etc."

"The constitution ... must reflect our culture, values, and what Métis identity is... We will look to what will work for us but also for generations to come."

"It is important for the preservation of history and the recognition of rights, heritage, and our voice for future generations."

"It's really important that we have a constitution that provides the fundamental rules and guiding principles that can really hold the collective together."

"Self-government is important to me because it is a continuation of our ancestors' efforts to retain our distinct way of living and to assert our rights."

"It brings more meaning to who we are as a people and community."

"I want my children to be proud of who they are and where they came from."

Art Wall

Where the Dreams of Our Ancestors Awaken

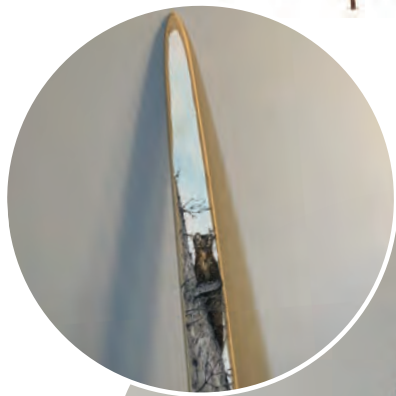
This past year, citizens from across the MNO shared their visions for Self-Government on the Digital Art Wall through beadwork, paintings, poems, and stories.



above: Amanda Pierce, "Chrysalides"



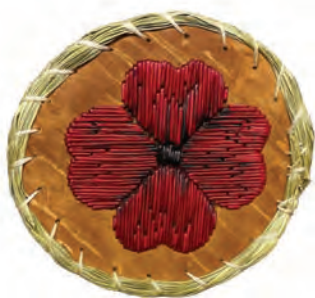
right: Lorrie Potvin
"Homage to Beading"



left: Sheryl Lees
"Ontario Pine Marten"



above: Joe Jesseau,
"Bois Brules"



top: Richard Southwell "Good Days
End Voyageur" Wood Carving

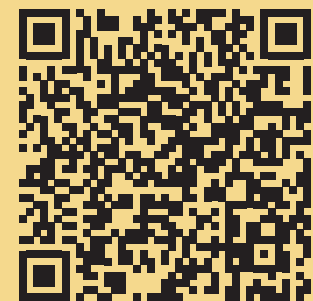
left: Jennette Lavery-Smith,
"Quillwork Poppy"

right: Darlene Emerson, "Moose Tray"



**TAKE A LOOK.
BE INSPIRED.**

Scan the QR code to visit our website to explore the full gallery and join in.



And if you'd like, add your own voice to the art wall.

COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Self-Government Team with any comments or questions.

Métis Self-Government
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Ottawa, ON K1P 5H1
Call: 1-800-263-4889 Ext. 7 (One MNO)
E: Self.Government@metisnation.org
www.metisnation.org/Self-Government



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE JOINED THE CONVERSATION SO FAR!

Looking to Learn More?
For more background information and all updated details, visit our Linktree.



STARS IN OUR SKY



Pat

A MÉTIS FAMILY'S STORY COMES TO LIFE FOR YOUNG READERS: Children's author and Métis citizen Pat Skene released her newest children's novel, *One Beaded Earring*, in the fall of 2025. *One Beaded Earring* follows Delia, a young girl who admires her mom's long beaded earrings—strands that shimmer like waterfalls. When Delia wears them to school to impress her friends, one earring slips down a bathroom drain. Upset, she confides in her grandmother, who reveals that the earrings were made to honour her mom's Métis citizenship. From there, Delia begins a journey of understanding, reflection, and self-expression. Pat hopes readers of all backgrounds connect with Delia's journey. "It's about finding who you are and being proud of it. You don't have to feel 'less than.' You don't have to stay silent."



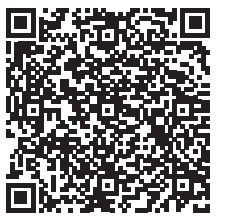
James

FROM GEORGIAN BAY TO COAST-TO-COAST: From Georgian Bay to coast-to-coast, James Quinn's journey is rooted in Métis culture, community, and a lifelong connection to the water. Raised fishing Ontario's lakes, James turned a simple question about fresh, local seafood into a thriving Canadian business—starting with a chest freezer in his condo and growing to ship seafood across the country. Alongside close friends, he founded Larry's Catch to deliver high-quality, responsibly sourced Canadian seafood with care and intention. Backed by a background in business and a family legacy of entrepreneurship, James built the company from the ground up while staying closely connected to his Métis roots. His story is one of resilience, purpose, and forging your own path.



Wenzdae

WEAVING IDENTITY, SPIRIT, AND SUSTAINABILITY INTO ART AND LIFE: Afro-Indigenous artist and Georgian Bay Métis Community member Wenzdae Brewster has spent more than thirteen years cultivating a multidisciplinary practice rooted in identity, sustainability, and ancestral knowledge. Working across beadwork, visual art, tattooing, illustration, and film under the name Wenzdae Weird, her creations blend spiritual symbolism with reclaimed and responsibly sourced materials. Having created pieces for Indigenous creatives and contributed beadwork to television productions, Wenzdae continues to expand her artistic reach. Throughout it all, her work remains grounded in honouring her identities. "I realized I could be infinitely grateful for my many beautiful and unique backgrounds," she says.



KNOW A MÉTIS CITIZEN WITH A STORY TO CELEBRATE? Stars in Our Sky highlights Métis citizen achievements in *Métis Voyageur* and online. Scan the code or email CommOps@metisnation.org to share their accomplishments with the MNO community!



Gabrielle

A MÉTIS SCHOLAR'S JOURNEY TO THE RHODES STAGE: Gabrielle Moreau is taking her Métis pride and passion for justice to the world stage after being named a 2026 Rhodes Scholar, one of eleven Canadians selected for the prestigious award. The scholarship will support her post-graduate studies at the University of Oxford, connecting her with a global network of changemakers. Currently studying Geography and Environmental Science and Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, Gabrielle focuses on environmental governance, Indigenous sovereignty, and climate impacts on communities. A proud Red River Métis citizen, she has served on the Métis Nation of Ontario Youth Council since 2020, advocating for youth voices while staying grounded in culture and community.



URBAN PORTAGE 2025 WINNERS

Métis citizens step up for health and community

As the fourth annual Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) Urban Portage Walking Challenge came to a close, we extended our appreciation to all MNO champions and citizens who stepped up—literally! From September until December, we saw a continuing show of Métis spirit, health, and determination from citizens across the province!

We are pleased to officially announce the 2025 Urban Portage Walking Challenge winners. While all of our communities performed admirably this year, one proved to be a step above the rest.

Please join us in congratulating Bancroft, who claimed the top title with an awe-inspiring 11,344,897 steps! Bancroft will be walking away with a funds to host a community celebration event.

A very special shout-out also goes to this year's runner ups: Second place – **Haileybury/Co-**

chrane/Timmins (with 10,732,843 steps) and Third place – **North Bay** (with 9964700 steps).

For their outstanding efforts in stepping up, both communities will also receive funds to host their own celebration events.

To everyone who participated, whether you took a few steps or thousands, your involvement was essential! Your hard work has inspired community pride, promoted physical and mental wellness, and encouraged Métis citizens to get outside and connect with the land.

Thank you for making the 2025 Urban Portage Walking Challenge another unforgettable adventure. We can't wait to see you lace up your shoes for next year's challenge. Together, let's aspire to even higher! ∞

ACHIEVEMENTS



Métis citizen Laura “Marge” Finn celebrates her 100th birthday surrounded by family, friends, and community members in Scarborough on November 30, 2025.

A Century Strong

The Métis Nation of Ontario proudly wished Métis citizen **Laura Marjorie Finn** a happy 100th birthday on November 30, 2025.

Family, friends, and community members gathered in Scarborough to celebrate Marge’s incredible century of life. Born in a small Métis settlement on the

Prairies, her journey has been shaped by resilience, music, hard work, and deep family ties—from speaking Michif as a child to raising six children, caring for others as a nurse, and continuing to share her humour and songs well into her later years. Marge’s story is one of strength, adaptability, and

love, reflecting the enduring spirit of the Métis Nation. We’re proud to celebrate her life, legacy, and the many stories she carries with her. Happy 100th birthday, Marge! ∞



Above: MNO citizen, Lizette Laurin, competing at the Canadian National Cornhole Tournament in Edmonton.

From Hobby to National Podium: Congratulations to Lizette Laurin

Lizette Laurin, an MNO Métis citizen and daughter of René and Elizabeth (Moreau) Laurin, competed in the Canadian National Cornhole Tournament in Edmonton in this past fall. Congratulations to Lizette on an outstanding performance.

She placed first in the Women’s Singles division and ranked among the Top Elite 16 Women. She also finished fourth in the Open Competi-

tion (men and women combined) and earned second place in the National Blind Draw division with a male partner from her club.

Lizette represents the Orillia Outlaws. She began playing as a hobby in October 2024 and quickly progressed to local and then national-level competition. She is already preparing for the 2026 National Competition in Ontario — and perhaps one day, the Olympics! ∞



Above: René Laurin, a Métis citizen and Métis language specialist.

Congrats, René!

René Laurin received a Certificate in Indigenous Language Revitalization from the University of Victoria in last spring. He also holds a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education (Indigenous Studies) from Brock University, earned in 2005.

René is Métis from the Dussome-Clermont Verified Line of the Métis Nation of Ontario and currently serves as an MNO Métis Languages Specialist. He joined the MNO staff in 2017 as a Bilingual Education Officer.

He has continued his studies while working in recreation with the Town of Penetanguishene and remains committed to ongoing learning and professional development. René is currently continuing Métis Studies online through Athabasca University. ∞

Education SPOTLIGHT

Brooke Wiens



BROOKE WIENS is an Métis citizen, elementary school teacher, business owner, community leader, and musician. We had a chance to sit down with Brooke to learn more about the importance of music, education and her Métis heritage. See the discussion by scanning the QR code here:





EMERGENCY Preparedness

For Métis Nation of Ontario citizens

DID YOU KNOW?

- MNO has a dedicated Emergency Management (EM) team supporting citizens before, during, and after emergencies
- We help Métis communities prepare, prevent, respond, and recover
- All programs are culturally informed and tailored to Métis needs

SPRING SAFETY FOCUS

WILDFIRE SEASON

- Keep grass trimmed low around buildings
- Clear branches and trees away from structures
- Use fire-resistant materials when building or renovation
- Explore FireSmart tips on the EM webpage

HOME FIRE SAFETY

- Clean and inspect chimneys and wood stoves regularly
- Use proper tools and follow manufacturer guidance
- Test smoke & carbon monoxide alarms
- Replace batteries seasonal

EARTHQUAKES IN ONTARIO?

- Yes – alerts now cover southern & eastern Ontario
- Notifications may come to your phone, radio, or TV
- If alerted, act quickly and take protective action

STAY CONNECTED

Find resources, alerts, maps, and preparedness tips online at: www.metisnation.org (search Emergency Preparedness)

Email: ContactUs@metisnation.org

Interested in a **Cultural Fire & FireSmart session**? Email with subject: *FireSmart Day in May*

Scan the QR code for emergency alerts, resources, and updates.



PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MNO

PCMNO UPDATES

PCMNO Meetings Fall 2025—January 2026

Over the past several months, Métis leadership from across Ontario has been making big decisions to support citizens, strengthen communities, and move forward as a Métis government. From housing to culture, from youth to governance, the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) has been focused on getting things done.

New Homes and Real Progress

There's been a major push on housing. This fall, Council gave the green light for next steps on a long-awaited **Métis affordable housing project** in Kenora. That means studies, planning, and early design work can now move ahead, bringing the project closer to reality.

But that wasn't the only step. Council also asked staff to look at ways to include subsidized units in both the Kenora and Midland projects. The goal is to make sure these homes stay affordable for the citizens who need them most.

Council also supported applying for new federal housing dollars through the Build Canada Homes program, again focusing on the Kenora project as a pilot. And on the systems side, Council confirmed that MNO will continue to have a voice at the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services table—making sure Métis perspectives shape broader housing decisions in the province.

Decisions About Councils

Being a government also means taking responsibility when local governance structures are under strain. In October, PCMNO addressed situations where Community Councils were struggling to function, not because of community values, but because of practical realities such as quorum and participation.

For the **Northern Lights Métis Community Council**, PCMNO temporarily suspended the charter after quorum could no longer be maintained. At the same time, PCMNO authorized steps to hold a new election, with the goal of giving citizens an opportunity to re-establish the council if there is renewed interest and capacity.

In **Windsor—Essex—Kent**, PCMNO faced a longer-term challenge. After several years of effort and limited participation, PCMNO made the difficult decision to revoke the community council's charter. Importantly, this was not the end of representation. PCMNO directed staff to explore alternative ways to support and represent citizens in the area, recognizing that different approaches may be needed across regions.

PCMNO also took steps to strengthen local governance across Ontario. A **new funding model for Community and Advisory Councils** was approved,

providing each active council with a stable base amount, with additional funds distributed based on population. For unorganized areas, regions will now have more flexibility to direct funding where it is most needed.

Finally, PCMNO approved the creation of a regional bank account for **MNO Region 3**. This decision supports increased regional responsibility and accountability as the MNO continues to build self-government capacity at all levels.

Protecting Métis Culture and Storytelling

The work of our Métis government goes beyond roads and buildings. It's also about culture, language, and history. In November, PCMNO approved major repairs to the **Powley Institute building** in Sault Ste. Marie. That building will be home to the MNO's education and research arm and keeping it safe and functional is a top priority.

PCMNO also supported steps to establish a Board of Directors to guide the Institute's growth, with a focus on skills and regional voices.

They also took an early look at **the future of Labatte House**, which is one of the oldest Métis dwellings still standing in Ontario. The house may be donated to the MNO. PCMNO asked for more work to explore how it could be preserved and used in a way that honours its history.

Meanwhile, the **MNO Cultural Camp** continues to move forward, with a new opening date set for fall 2026. It will serve Métis children, families, and communities year-round.

Youth Voices, Future Leaders

Youth leadership wasn't an afterthought at these meetings. It was on the agenda and taken seriously. The MNO Youth Council shared where things stand with plans for the **Métis Youth Leadership Conference**, including the real impact of funding cuts on what's possible this year. Council's response was clear—keep going. Leaders encouraged the Youth Council to press ahead and said that youth engagement will be especially important as constitution-building continues.

Building for the Long Term

PCMNO is also thinking ahead. In December, they approved funding for a study looking at whether the MNO should establish a permanent office in Ottawa. That kind of presence would help support long-term government-to-government work with Canada.

They also updated who has signing authority on behalf of the MNO and clarified the role of the Chief Executive Officer, aligning day-to-day operations with the growing needs of a self-governing Métis government. ∞

IN MEMORIAM



Remembering Marg Raynor

The Métis Nation of Ontario is saddened to share the passing of Margaret Elizabeth Raynor, a citizen of the Georgian Bay Métis Community, who resided in Tiny, Ontario.

Margaret was widely respected for her contributions to the preservation and promotion of Métis art, culture, and history. An accomplished artist, musician, and culture bearer, she worked tirelessly to ensure Métis traditions and identity were shared, remembered, and celebrated within her community and beyond. She was also a dedicated educator, inspiring generations of students through her teaching and mentorship.

In recognition of her lasting impact, Margaret was recently awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal, honouring her commitment to strengthening Métis culture and heritage.

Margaret's work leaves a meaningful legacy that will continue to benefit future generations. The Métis Nation of Ontario extends its sincere condolences to her family, friends, and all who knew her.

Maarsii, Margaret, for your many contributions to Métis culture in Ontario. ∞



Remembering Heather May Ann Garratt

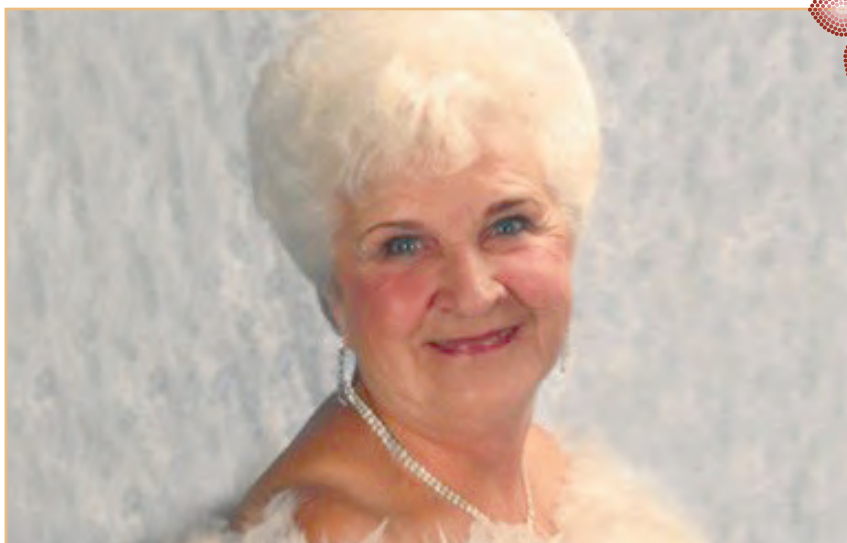
The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) mourns the passing of Heather May Ann Garratt, a respected Métis leader, devoted family member, and cherished community builder.

She lived a full and meaningful life as a beloved wife of Greg Garratt, PCMNO Councillor for the Historic Georgian Bay Métis Community, but also as a mother, grandmother, sister, business owner, and dedicated Métis leader.

Heather traced her Métis ancestry to families who migrated from Drummond Island in 1828, with roots in the Labatte and Laramie-

Cloutier family lines. She dedicated 16 years to leadership and community building with the Georgian Bay Métis Council, including six years as Treasurer and later serving as Councillor at Large. Heather played a key role in revitalizing the annual Georgian Bay Métis Rendezvous and supporting the preservation of Métis culture, traditions, and community events.

Maarsii, Heather, for your strong commitment to community, your pride in hard work and service, and above all, for your warm smile and sense of humour. ∞



Remembering Evelyn Agnes Richards

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) remembers and honours the life of Evelyn Agnes Richards, a proud MNO citizen and longtime resident of Sault Ste. Marie.

Born and raised in the Gore Street area, Evelyn learned the value of hard work at an early age, beginning her first jobs at just 15 years old. Music was central to Evelyn's life. She shared this passion with her husband, Raymond Richards, whom she married in 1942. Together, they performed throughout northern Ontario and were inducted into the Great Northern Opry Hall of Fame. Evelyn continued to sing and

play guitar well into her later years, keeping music at the heart of her home.

A proud Métis woman, Evelyn valued family, community, and time spent outdoors. She and Raymond raised four children and were blessed with nine grandchildren.

Evelyn lived her life with kindness, creativity, and pride in her Métis identity. She often shared words inspired by her love of music, believing that "life is a song, love is the music."

The Métis Nation of Ontario extends its sincere condolences to Evelyn's family and loved ones, and honours her life and legacy. ∞



Remembering Maurice Thevenot

The Métis Nation of Ontario is saddened to share the passing of Maurice Thevenot, a Métis Nation of Ontario citizen who resided in Somerset, Manitoba.

Maurice devoted his life to education and community. He taught for 30 years in Manitoba, where he was affectionately known as "Mr. T." A lifelong educator, outdoorsman, farmer, and mentor, he passed on strong values of perseverance, responsibility, and care for others to generations of students, family members, and friends. He cherished time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, sharing his love of the land, hunting, farming, and traditional music. Maurice's annual family gatherings and outdoor adventures created lasting memories and strengthened bonds across generations.

Maurice took pride in his heritage and later in life reconnected with his Métis roots, descending from the St-Onge dit Letard and Levasseur Métis family lines of Drummond Island and Mackinac, as well as his Lafrenière ancestry of Penetanguishene. His deep respect for history, land, and kinship informed how he lived and taught and nurtured those around him.

Rest in peace, Maurice. Maarsii. ∞

Maple Sugaring on Métis River Lots

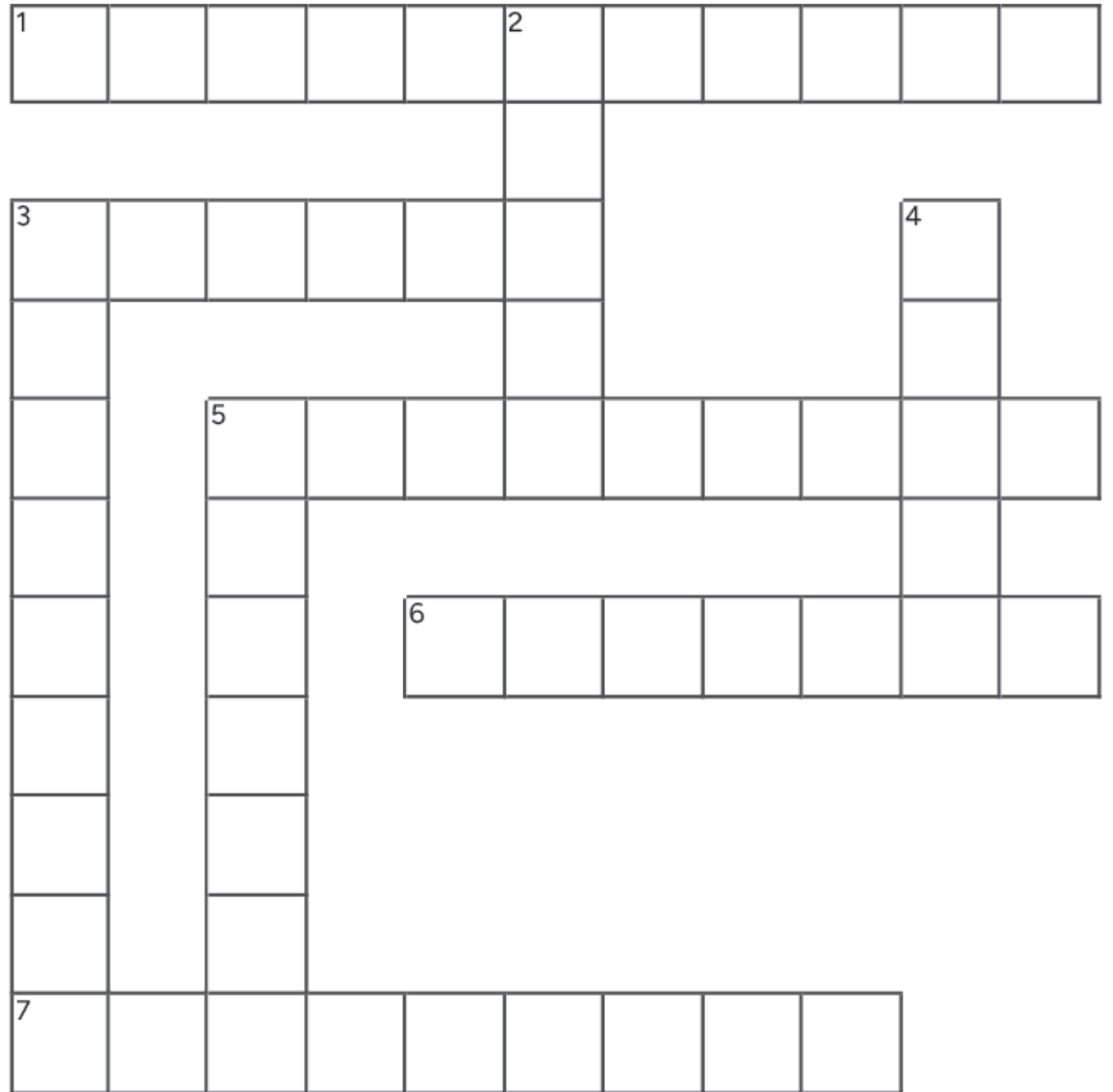
Read *Maple Sugaring on Métis River Lots* to find the answers or visit: bit.ly/4szzFcl

ACROSS

- 1 Multifaceted, like the Métis economy at Sault Ste. Marie
- 3 Season of the Métis maple sugar harvest
- 5 Traditional Métis land use area, including lands and waters
- 6 Métis water-based occupation complementing maple sugaring
- 7 Historical name for Métis used in many primary source materials

DOWN

- 2 Métis maple product made on Sault Ste. Marie River Lots
- 3 Common name for a forest where maple is harvested (2 wds)
- 4 Sault Métis family known for River Lot sugaring as late as 1889
- 5 Area of Sault Métis River Lots where sugaring occurred (2 wds)



Colour Me!

Métis Maple Sugaring – The spring maple syrup harvest has been an important seasonal tradition in many Métis communities for generations.

Historically, every Métis River Lot family in Sault Ste. Marie had a sugar bush along "the hill" at the far end of their River Lot, so that they could participate in the annual maple harvest.

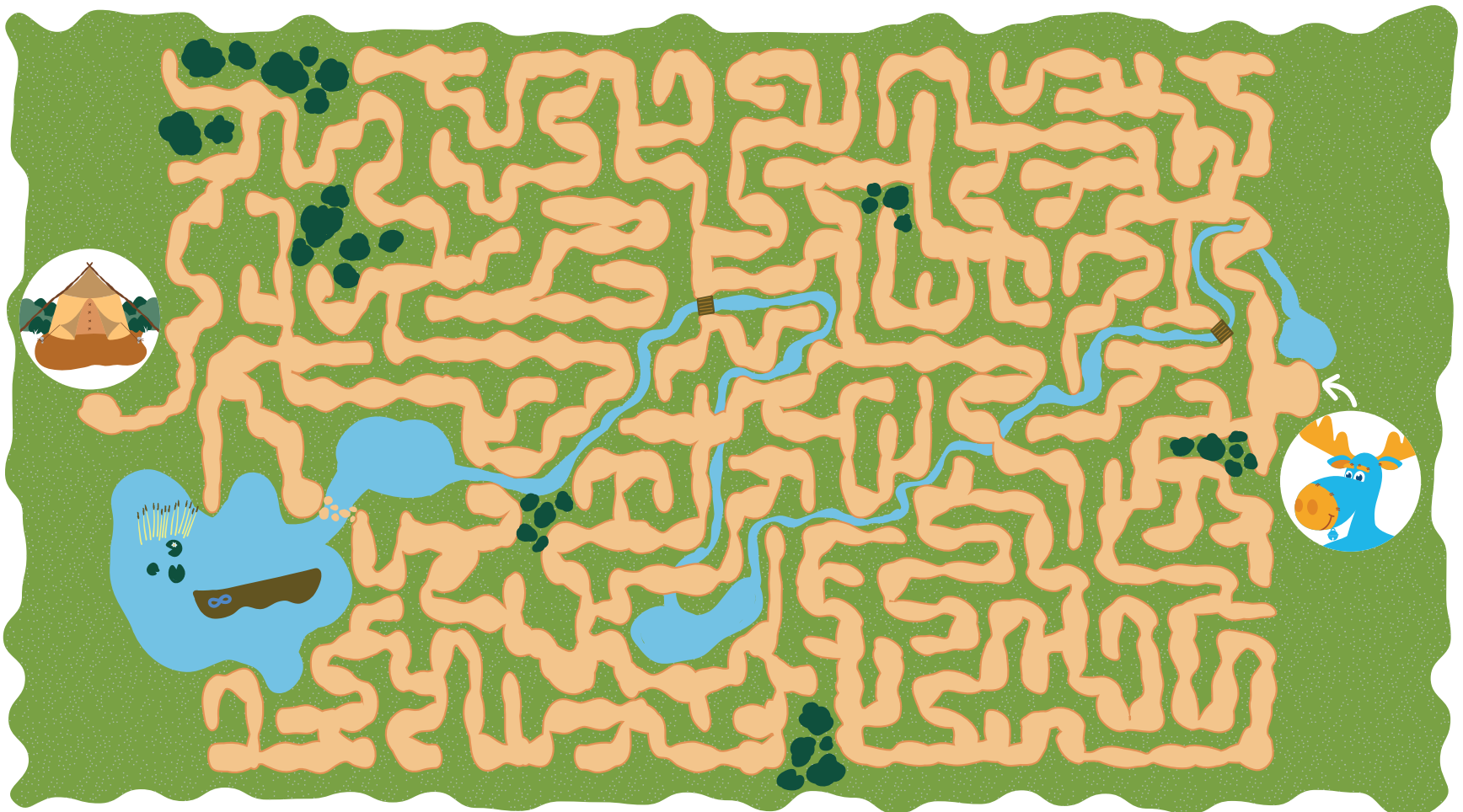
As late as 1889, the Miron family were still harvesting maple sugar on their Métis River Lot, decades after most of their Métis community had been displaced by settlers.

What are your favourite family springtime traditions?



Marty's Mazes

Marty the Moose is visiting his uncle to help trap Ontario animals.
Help Marty find his uncle's **trappers' tent!**



Marty is foraging some fresh berries for a kitchen party.
Bring Marty to his uncle's **blueberry bush field!**



LOVING THESE PUZZLES?

Visit the Ontario Métis Facts Game and Activities page for more. Here, you'll find fun new ways for the whole family to learn Ontario Métis Facts.

Scan the QR code for more fun-filled and informative activities!





HOME CHILD CARE PROGRAM: The MNO is pleased to offer start-up support, funding, and professional development to eligible MNO citizens interested in becoming Licensed Home Child Care Providers. This program is open to citizens with a complete registry file and includes ongoing access to resources and training opportunities.



MINI MÉTIS PLAYGROUPS: Our playgroups are continuing into 2026 in Kingston and Midland for families with children ages 0-6. Enjoy sensory play, crafts, songs, and story time in a relaxed, inclusive space. Métis Healthy Babies Healthy Children Coordinators and Developmental Resource Consultants will be available to support. **Planning to attend? Contact your local coordinator:**
Kingston - TracyR@metisnation.org
Midland - LisaT@metisnation.org



EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2024-25 IMPACT REPORTS: The MNO Education and Training Branch has released its 2024-2025 Impact Reports, highlighting the accomplishments of each team across the branch. Discover how these teams supported Métis citizens over the past year by exploring the full reports.



EDUCATION HUB UPDATE

All Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) support programs and resources have been added to the MNO Education Hub App!

Early Learning & Child Care

∞ Tiny Tribune

MÉTIS KIDS, MÉTIS CULTURE, MÉTIS STORIES

A fun and engaging newsletter for Métis families, filled with crafts, stories, and updates – all rooted in Métis tradition.

READ THE LATEST ISSUE NOW!

Scan the QR code to explore!

ONTARIO MÉTIS FACTS

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Application period:
March 1 - May 1, 2026

Apply now!

PSE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Attention current and aspiring Métis post-secondary students! Applications for the MNO Financial Assistance Program opened March 1, 2026. MNO citizens can now apply to receive funding to access post-secondary education and reach their highest potential. Download the MNO Education Hub app with the link below to learn more and ensure you don't miss program openings and deadlines.



Scholar Talks

CALLING ALL SCHOLARS & GRAD STUDENTS:

Apply to present your academic research at a *Scholar Talks* event!

SCHOLAR TALKS: Are you an MNO citizen who is a scholar or graduate student? The MNO is seeking virtual presenters for our Scholar Talks series. Scholar Talks is a live event series featuring virtual presentations from Métis scholars and experts across Ontario. Presenters are invited to share their research with the broader Métis community in a 20-30 minute presentation. Interested? Scan the QR code to complete the presenter form:



Infinite Reach

Join the one and only mentorship program for Métis post-secondary students in Ontario!

∞

Applications open
March 1 - May 1, 2026!

INFINITE REACH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM: Join the Infinite Reach Student Solidarity Network, Ontario's only mentorship program for Métis learners. As an Infinite Reach Facilitator, you'll build professional networks, uplift fellow students, and help amplify Métis presence and visibility on campus. Applications are open March 1 to May 1, 2026. Apply now!

