

The Métis Trailblazer

2025 AGA | Issue #03



Kera McInnes



Isabel Carter



Katrina Colles



Brianne Neufeld

Mandy Swidersky



**Métis
Employment
& Training**



Jenn O'Gorman



President David Chartrand
MMF President & Acting Minister,
Métis Employment & Training



Indie Oyugi



Cody Frech



Derek Lamy



Nick Viver



**Métis
Employment
& Training**

Contents

3	GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT CHARTRAND
4	GREETINGS FROM MINISTER LEDOUX
5	JOHN FLEURY: A LEGACY OF SERVICE, LEADERSHIP, AND RED RIVER MÉTIS PRIDE
9	MET SUCCESS STORIES:
11	BREAKING NEW GROUND: TREVOR EARLY
13	BLOOMING FUTURES: INDIE OYUGI
15	RED RIVER RAISED: SAM GURKE
16	TRAINING TOMORROW'S LEADERS: KATRINA COLLES
17	FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: MANDY SWIDERSKY
19	A LEGACY OF OPORTUNITY: MÉTIS EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
23	FROM THOMPSON TO TUSCANY: ISABEL CARTER
28	MET PARTNERSHIPS
29	KERA MCINNIS'S SOCIAL WORK CAREER THRIVES WITH SUPPORT FROM MET
31	RED RIVER APPRENTICE IS POWERING HIS FAMILY'S FUTURE: DEREK LAMY
33	STEEL, STONE, & STRENGTH: JENN O'GORMAN
35	IT'S NEVER TOO LATE: JESSICA MCNIVEN
38	CONTACT MET



**Métis
Employment
& Training**

.....

The Métis Trailblazer Magazine is published by Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) department which operates through funds provided by the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Agreement with Employment & Skills Development Canada (ESDC).

*A message from the Manitoba Métis Federation President
& Acting Minister of Métis Employment & Training*

David Chartrand



The Red River Métis are trailblazers. From the beginning of our Nation to today, we have created our own path, developed our own economy, and led the historic Northwest with determination and unwavering resolve. We don't wait for opportunity to come to us; instead, we create it.

For over 26 years, since signing the first Métis Human Resource Development Agreement (MHRDA 1), we have built new pathways for prosperity, empowering our Citizens to step confidently into the future. Today, industry and governments alike recognize the unmatched strength, skill, and success of the Red River Métis.

The Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department has set a gold standard for labour market excellence. Our Citizens are leading in trades, healthcare, education, technology, and energy, delivering results that resonate across Canada and the globe. With over \$15 million invested annually in training, services, and partnerships, MET has transformed lives, supporting tens of thousands of our people in securing meaningful, sustainable careers.

This past year reminded us of both our strength and our responsibility to the legacy of the Red River Métis champions who came before us. With the passing of John Fleury, we lost a dedicated Minister whose work helped shape the success of MET. His commitment will be remembered, and his vision will continue to inspire us. As President and as Acting Minister of MET, I will ensure that this Department continues to grow stronger and deliver for Red River Métis Citizens.

Our success is rooted in our unity: strong families build thriving communities, which in turn builds an unbreakable Nation. We are not just participating in the economy; we are defining it, creating a country where every Red River Métis Citizen can dream big, achieve boldly, and succeed on their own terms.

As we continue our journey to claiming our rightful place in Canada's confederation, the Red River Métis will remain a force to be reckoned with – breaking down barriers, securing prosperity for our families, strengthening our communities, and building a lasting future for our Nation.

Believe in yourself. Believe in Métis.

Meeqwetch,

David Chartrand, L.L.D. (Hon.), O.M.
President, Manitoba Métis Federation
Acting Minister of Métis Employment & Training

A message from the Associate Minister of Métis Employment & Training

Joan Ledoux



The Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department has built a legacy of economic empowerment for the Red River Métis through grit, determination, and vision. From modest beginnings, MET has grown into a cornerstone of opportunity, fostering resilience, building ambition, and creating pathways that allow our Citizens to succeed on their own terms.

The passing of Minister John Fleury reminds us of the responsibility we carry to continue this important work. His strength and determination were instrumental in advancing our mission, and his contributions remain part of MET's foundation. We honour his legacy by pressing forward with renewed resolve and a commitment to grow even stronger.

As I reflect on my own journey from grassroots service on local and regional boards to my role today as Associate Minister of Métis Employment & Training and Minister of Post-Secondary Education, I am proud of the progress we have made together. Our programs have opened doors for thousands of Red River Métis Citizens, turning dreams into realities through education, training, and meaningful employment.

The Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Agreement unlocked resources that continue to empower our Citizens. Under President Chartrand's leadership and the dedication of our staff, MET's programs and services have empowered and will continue to empower Red River Métis Citizens, opening doors to education, skills development, and meaningful careers.

Looking ahead, our mission remains clear: to uplift Red River Métis Citizens by creating boundless opportunities through education and training, ensuring a future where dreams become success stories. As a united family, we work hand in hand to ensure the prosperity of our Nation, fueled by the same passion that sparked our journey 26 years ago.

With heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering commitment and shared vision, we will continue to blaze trails of Red River Métis excellence, together, for generations to come.

Meeqwetch,

Joan Ledoux

Associate Minister of Métis Employment & Training.
Minister of Post-Secondary Education



John Fleury

A Legacy of Service, Leadership, and Red River Métis Pride

The sudden passing of John Fleury has left the Red River Métis Nation with a profound sense of loss. John was more than a Cabinet Minister. He was a Veteran, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend to many.

He was also a leader whose determination and compassion shaped opportunities for tens of thousands of Red River Métis Citizens. His passing closes a chapter for our Nation, but the pages he wrote through his years of dedicated service, leadership, and impact will be read for generations of Red River Métis Citizens to come.

John's story begins with a proud Red River Métis family

that valued service to community. His father, George Fleury, was among the founders of the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). The example set by George, and the sacrifices made by so many early leaders, influenced John's path from an early age.

John carried this legacy with humility. Those who knew him remember a man who never sought recognition for himself. Instead, he gave credit to the people around him.

He saw leadership not as a title but as a responsibility, and that belief shaped the way he worked across the Southwest Region and within the MMF Cabinet.

Before entering political life, John served his country in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry First Battalion. His years in the Canadian Armed Forces gave him strength, discipline, and loyalty, qualities that he would later bring to his service with the MMF. John was deeply proud of his military service, often speaking of the honour of representing his people and his Nation in uniform.

In 2000, John was elected as Regional Vice-President for the Southwest Region. He would go on to be acclaimed for his role several times, serving seven terms in total. He was known for his consistent presence in the lives of Red River Métis Citizens. Whether it was a Local meeting, a community celebration, or an annual assembly, John was there. He listened, he asked questions, and he made sure people knew their voices mattered.

His leadership style was not loud or showy. It was

grounded in care and connection. John did not see himself as separate from the people he represented. He saw himself as one of them, and that closeness is what made him so effective.

Perhaps John's greatest career legacy is his leadership of the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department. From its inception in 1999, John helped build MET into one of the most successful Indigenous employment and training programs in Canada.

He understood the challenges that Red River Métis Citizens faced in the labour market. For generations, systemic barriers had left many without access to education, training, or meaningful employment. John wanted to change that. He believed that opportunity should be within reach for every Citizen, regardless of where they lived or what obstacles they faced.

Over the past 25 years, MET has supported more than 50,000 Red River Métis Citizens. More than 16,000 found employment, and nearly 10,000 returned to school. These numbers reflect real lives transformed. Parents were able to provide for their families. Young people discovered careers they could build on. Entire communities gained renewed strength.

For John, this was not just about numbers on a page. It was about families finding stability, dignity, and hope. He often reminded his team that the work was about people first. "We listened, adapted, and delivered," he said of MET's approach. "That's how we ensure our programs truly benefit our community."

Under his leadership, MET became a model for others to follow. Across Canada, organizations have looked to the MMF and to MET as proof that when Indigenous governments lead their own employment and training initiatives, the results are transformative.

During his years as a Cabinet Member, John was present for many of the most important milestones in Red River Métis history. He stood with his colleagues as the Supreme Court recognized the legitimacy of our land claim. He witnessed the Daniels decision in 2016, which affirmed the rights of Métis people under the



Constitution. He was there when His Holiness Pope Francis issued a historic apology. And he was part of the leadership team that signed the MMF's modern-day Treaty with Canada.

These were not abstract moments for John. He understood their importance because he had spent his life fighting for the rights and recognition of Red River Métis Citizens. For him, each victory represented a step closer to justice for his people.

Around the Cabinet table, John's presence was steady. He was respected for his wisdom and his humour. Colleagues recall how he could balance serious conversations with a smile or a gentle laugh that reminded everyone of the strength of community.

While John's public service was remarkable, those closest to him will remember him first as a family man. For 48 years, he and his wife Barb were inseparable. Together they raised five children and cherished the joy of grandchildren. At community gatherings, it was common to see John and Barb side by side, a quiet example of partnership and love that endured through every stage of life.

John's pride in his family was matched by his pride in his Red River Métis roots. He was deeply connected to the historic community of Ste. Madeleine, a place that carried painful memories of displacement but also resilience and survival. John worked to ensure that this history was never forgotten, and that the



“As we continue this journey, let us carry forward the spirit of innovation, strength and resilience that has defined us... Let us embrace new challenges, seize new opportunities, and build an even brighter future for the next generation of Red River Métis.

- JOHN FLEURY

strength of the people of Ste. Madeleine would continue to inspire future generations.

John Fleury embodied the very best of Red River Métis leadership. He was courageous in service, wise in governance, compassionate in community, and devoted to family. His impact can be seen in the thousands of Citizens who found careers, the families who built stability, and the young people who discovered their potential through the opportunities MET created.

His memory will remain strong within the MMF, within the communities he served, and within the hearts of the family he loved so deeply. While his presence will be missed at the Cabinet table, at community events, and in the daily work of building a stronger Nation, the legacy he leaves will continue to guide us.

John once said that the strength of the Red River Métis Nation comes from listening, adapting, and delivering for the people. His life was proof of that belief.

In loving memory
John Fleury
September 18, 1958 - April 2, 2025



MET Success Stories

Helping Red River Métis Citizens Turn Dreams into Careers

On his first morning on the job, a young Red River Métis worker tightened his boots, signed in with his supervisor, and stepped onto a worksite that felt both unfamiliar and exciting.

Just weeks earlier, he had been working with a Métis Employment & Training (MET) counsellor to polish his resume, prepare for interviews, and connect with an employer willing to give him a chance. That opportunity was more than just a new paycheck. It was a door opening to experience, confidence, and the start of a career.

At the heart of every success story is a journey that begins with a dream, meets challenges along the way, and finds strength through support.

For many Red River Métis Citizens, that story has been shaped by the MET Department, reflecting a longstanding partnership between the MMF and Canada.

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, federal Minister of Jobs and Families and the Minister responsible for the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET)



Agreement under Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), continues to support this longstanding partnership to ensure that Red River Métis Citizens can access training, education, and meaningful employment.

Whether you are planning your future, searching for new and

better opportunities, or an employer who is looking to recruit Red River Métis talent, the MET Department is here to help.

Through counselling and personalized assessments, Citizens can access Skills Development Assistance for training programs, certificate or diploma programs, apprenticeship training, academic upgrading, essential skills programs, and the final year of a first undergraduate degree, strengthening knowledge and employability.

Workforce development services, wage subsidies, and employer recruitment initiatives further extend these opportunities. The Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP) and Community Summer Employment Program (CSEP) are two examples, offering clients the chance to explore careers, gain experience, and build skills while staying connected to their communities.

MET also provides practical job search assistance including resume and cover letter development, interview coaching, and access to technology for job seekers.

As one client Kaley McLeod shared, “It made such a

difference knowing there were people in my corner who understood my journey and wanted to see me succeed.”

Employer partnerships complete the picture, creating opportunities for placements and long-term employment. As Julia Saari reflected after beginning her career in health care, “I wouldn’t be where I am today without this program.”

The stories in these pages highlight Citizens who have turned opportunity into achievement. From Tazmyn Reinfort, who pursued her education while caring for her family, to Cody Frech, who advanced his trade career while celebrating his Red River Métis identity, these voices show what becomes possible when resilience meets the right support.

These stories are not only about individual accomplishment. They are about a Nation investing in its people, creating pathways to education, employment, and community prosperity.

As you turn the page, you will meet Red River Métis Citizens who remind us that the strength of our Nation lies in the success of our people.



Breaking New Ground

Starting with skid steers and an HEO course, Trevor Early built a career in heavy equipment that now inspires his son to follow in his tracks.

On job sites across Manitoba, where the ground shifts under the weight of steel tracks and the rumble of engines fills the air, Trevor Early has built a career rooted in persistence and opportunity. Nearly two decades ago, he was starting out on small skid steers, unsure of where the path would take him.

Today, Trevor is a supervisor trusted to supervise crews on some of the province's largest projects.

"I started about 20 years ago on smaller skid steers," Trevor said. "When I wanted to go into bigger machines, I lined myself up with MET for the Heavy Equipment Operator course. I got into excavators and graders, and once I got that opportunity, I never looked back."

Breaking into the field was not simple. Companies were reluctant to hand the keys of a machine to someone without experience. The Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) course through Métis Employment & Training gave him the ticket and, more importantly, the hours needed to prove himself.



This summer, Trevor's son, Dalton Early, put in the work at his first job to save up for his first car — a 1981 Foxbody Mustang. Hard work pays off!



“When you first start, nobody wants to give you the opportunity with no experience,” he said. “With the HEO, you gain the experience and get the hours to get your foot in the door. Once the company sees you put in the work, they’ll give you the chance.”

Within a month of finishing his training, Trevor landed work. From there, his career began to climb. With each project he gained trust, responsibility and confidence, moving from the operator’s seat into a supervisor role where he now balances running machines with overseeing entire crews.

One of the most meaningful chapters of his journey has been working alongside his son, Dalton. At 16, Dalton has already joined him on job sites during the summer and is eager to pursue his operator certification and Class 1 licence.

“It means a lot to work beside my son,” Trevor said. “He’s getting experience early, and I know he wants to follow this path. It’s something we can share.”

The projects he has contributed to span the province and carry his pride. For Trevor, hydroseeding and final grading on Abinojii Mikanah remains one of the most memorable projects of his career.

He has also taken part in floodway restoration and carried out soil, sod and maintenance contracts at job sites throughout Manitoba. Together, these projects sharpened his skills, bolstered his reputation and deepened his pride in the work.

“Those were big jobs that really stood out,” he said. “Being part of them and seeing the results makes all the effort worthwhile.”

The lessons he has learned are now the advice he shares with other Red River Métis Citizens considering a similar path.

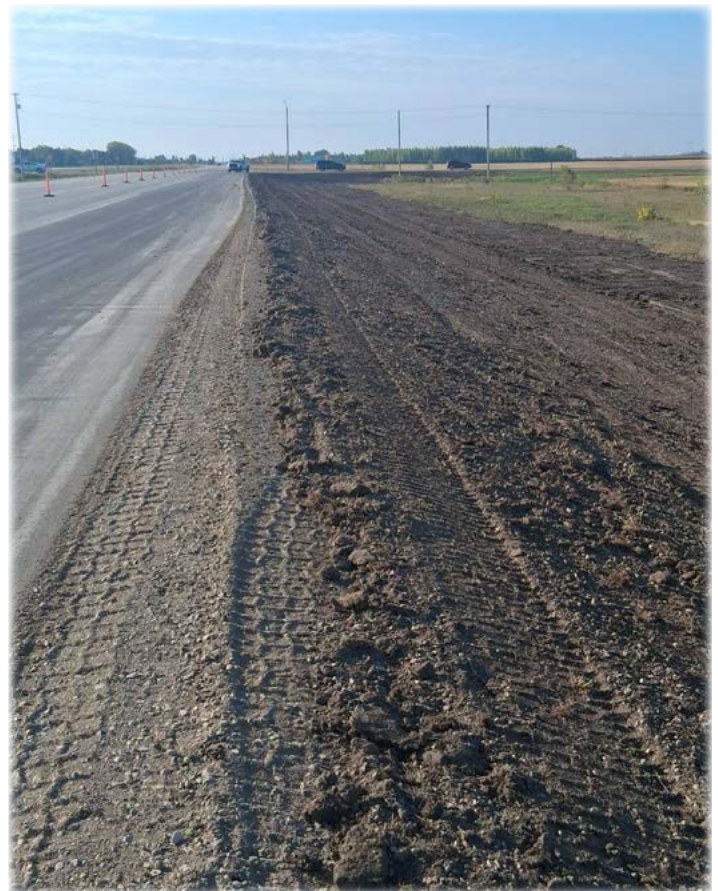
“I recommend the HEO course,” he said. “Before you take it, when you’re on a site, keep an eye on the operator. That way when you do get the chance, you have an idea of what’s going on. You need patience

and a good work ethic. If you can get into the course, it’s a golden ticket.”

He also points out that the winter months can be the best time to train, since operators are in demand for snow removal. For those ready to step up, he said the opportunities are there.

“If you’re a machine operator, there’s never a shortage of work. It’s a no-brainer,” he said. “It’s a good step to get experience and build a solid career.”

Trevor Early’s story is one of steady determination and the doors opened by Métis Employment & Training. From the first chance he was given to the crews he now leads, his career shows what is possible when training, work ethic and opportunity come together. And with Dalton ready to follow in his footsteps, that legacy is already continuing.



Trevor Early on an erosion protection project near Highways 59 & 210

Blooming Futures

A Summer at Charlie May Farm



Indie Oyugi, Melanie Henry (MET Southwest Regional Coordinator), Jamie Carels (Owner, Charlie May Farm)

This past summer, sixteen-year-old Indie Oyugi, a high school student at Fort Richmond Collegiate in Winnipeg, Man., discovered just how transformative a summer job can be, rooted in purpose, community, and connection to the land.

Through the Manitoba Métis Federation's Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP), Indie joined the team at Charlie May Farm, a local flower farm with a commitment to sustainability and community.

Offered through the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department, the SSEP provides wage subsidies and hands-on work experience for Red River Métis youth aged 15 to 30. The SSEP is designed to support career exploration, mentorship,

and skill-building, while helping employers, like Charlie May Farm, expand their capacity and grow their impact.

"This summer I was fortunate to join Charlie May Farm through the Manitoba Métis Federation Summer Student Employment Program," says Indie. "Each day on the farm, surrounded by a dazzling palette of blooms, I've spent time weeding, assembling bouquets, and drying flowers."

The work gave Indie a new appreciation for the unseen care and craftsmanship behind every petal and stem. "This hands-on experience has helped me understand just how much care goes into

creating something that appears effortlessly beautiful,” she says.

Working side-by-side with experienced farmers and florists, Indie learned more than just the names of flowers. She gained insight into how challenges are overcome through collaboration and adaptability.

“During tough moments, I’ve admired the incredible problem-solving and resilience of my coworkers,” she reflects. “It’s taught me that every challenge has a solution.”

One of the unexpected joys of the summer came from simply learning to name what she was seeing. For Indie, this sparked a new way of experiencing the world around her.

“There’s something magical about identifying a bloom in the wild and knowing its name.”

Every Monday morning, Indie helped prepare fresh flower arrangements for the farm’s local subscription project, a routine that became one of her favourite parts of the job.

“Every Monday morning, my coworker and I curate flowers for our subscription project—a highlight of each week,” she says.

“Recently, we’ve also started selling bouquets at a local CO-OP, which adds a fun new rhythm to our routine.”

Now entering Grade 12, Indie says the SSEP gave her space to reflect on her passions and the kind of

work that gives her purpose and joy.

“With graduation on the horizon, I’ve been reflecting deeply on my career path,” she explains. “This opportunity revealed how much I enjoy working with nature, using my hands, and expressing creativity through design. Finding clarity in these passions has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders.”

For Jamie Carels, owner of Charlie May Farm, having Indie on the team was equally rewarding. Jamie says the experience reinforced just how valuable mentorship and youth support can be, not just for the student, but for the business as a whole.

“This summer, I had the immense pleasure of welcoming Indie through the Summer Student Employment Program,” Jamie said. “Indie’s enthusiasm, curiosity, and dedication have been nothing short of inspiring, and I’m grateful for the chance to mentor such a bright and eager young mind.”

The added capacity allowed Jamie and her team to grow the business in new and exciting directions.

“Having Indie’s support enabled us to expand what we offer—bringing florals to weddings and events, hosting more workshops, and participating in local farmers’ markets,” she explains. “We’ve even started selling bouquets at a nearby CO-OP, something we couldn’t have managed without extra help.”

Beyond day-to-day support, Indie’s presence allowed Jamie to take a

step back and pursue business goals that had been on hold.

“Her presence also gave me time to strengthen my own floristry skills and experiment with new growing methods that were previously out of reach.”

Jamie says the summer was a milestone for both her and the farm.

“It’s been a pivotal summer not just for Indie, but for our farm too,” she says. “Managing a growing team has taught me so much, and helped propel Charlie May Farm forward in ways I hadn’t imagined.”

Looking ahead, Jamie is excited to keep building on what was accomplished during the summer season.

“Looking ahead, I plan to expand our perennial gardens and introduce more native plants to our offerings—all while continuing to grow our wedding and event services.”

The SSEP program continues to support stories like this across our Homeland, connecting Red River Métis youth with meaningful work experience while helping businesses and communities grow and thrive.

For Indie and Jamie, it was a season of clarity and growth, renewal and mentorship, together in a shared journey rooted in learning, Red River Métis culture, and community.

.....
To learn more about the SSEP and how to apply for the 2026 summer employment season as a student or employer partner, visit mmfemployment.ca in Spring 2026.

Red River Raised

Regenerative Agriculture the Red River Métis Way



them completely new to him.

“I’ve learned how to drive tractors, work directly with cows, and tackle mechanical tasks—skills I had never imagined picking up before this summer,” he explains.

While the farm work was rewarding, it was the introduction to regenerative agriculture that had the biggest impact on him.

“One of the most impactful parts of this experience has been learning about regenerative agriculture,” Sam explains.

“Unlike conventional farming, which can deplete the soil over time, regenerative practices aim to restore and improve the health of the land.”

“These practices include methods like rotational grazing, cover cropping, minimal soil disturbance, and integrating livestock in ways that mimic natural ecosystems,” he adds.

For Sam Gurke, this summer offered more than a job. It offered a new way of thinking. As a student participant in the Manitoba Métis Federation’s Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP), Sam spent the season working on a farm that raises cattle and uses regenerative agricultural practices.

“This summer, I’ve been working on a farm that raises cattle and practices regenerative agriculture,” says Sam. “It’s been my first time working in this kind of setting, and the experience has been both challenging and incredibly rewarding.”

The SSEP, offered through the MMF’s Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department, provides meaningful work placements and wage subsidies to Red River Métis Youth aged 15 to 30.

The program is designed to help young people explore career paths, develop practical skills, and gain real-world experience, while supporting a wide variety of employer partners.

Throughout the summer, Sam took on a wide variety of tasks, many of “The goal is to build soil health, increase biodiversity, improve water retention, and ultimately create a more resilient and sustainable food system.”

“I believe it provides me with an insight into where the food I eat comes from and the work that goes into it... having that understanding of where food comes from is beneficial because it makes me feel more grateful for it.”

By the end of the summer, the connection between agriculture, the environment, and the future was clearer than ever.

“Seeing these practices in action has changed the way I think about farming, food, and our relationship with the environment,” he says.

“It’s given me a much deeper appreciation for the role agriculture plays in addressing climate change and preserving natural resources—and it’s definitely influenced the way I’m thinking about my future.”



Training Tomorrow's Leaders: How MET Helped Katrina Become a Teacher

Red River Métis Citizen Katrina Colles completed her Bachelor of Arts with the support of Métis Employment & Training (MET) at the Winnipeg MET office. By funding her final year, MET enabled Katrina to focus on her studies and prepare for a teaching career in Manitoba's labour market. Her story highlights MET's impact on Red River Métis Citizens.

MET, along with the Post-Secondary Education Support Program (PSESP) and Louis Riel Institute (LRI) Bursaries, funded Katrina's final year. "Met positively impacted me by funding me during my final year of my Bachelor of Arts," she said. This support allowed her to fully engage in campus life. "I had the opportunity to focus on my studies and really appreciate the time spent on campus as a student," she noted. Without MET, she would have faced financial strain. "If it was not for the help of MET I would have been working long hours as a student and commuting back and forth from campus daily," she added.

MET's support enriched Katrina's university experience and passion for teaching. "This program has given me the opportunity to learn and

reflect how important education is. Without the support from MET I would not be where I am today in my studies," she shared. A laptop purchased with MET funds enhanced her studies. "I have been impacted by the Met program positively as I was given the chance to purchase a laptop with my funds, allowing me to not only study on campus, but also elsewhere," she said.

Katrina struggled with a heavy course load and motivation. "During this program I struggled to keep up with the heavy course load and deadlines," she said. She joined study groups and sought help. "Over the year I learned how to manage time better, I joined study groups, and found help from professors and tutors," she noted. Balancing responsibilities was also challenging. "Another struggle was balancing responsibilities, it was challenging to manage school, work, relationships, and my personal life," she added.

Katrina aspires to a full-time teaching position. "If MET helped me find employment, my ideal job would be a full-time teaching position," she said. Her skills and passion will meet the demand for educators in Manitoba's labour market. Katrina plans to pursue a Bachelor of Education and start her teaching career. "Graduate with my Bachelors of Education, and start my dream career in teaching," she said.

From Student to Teacher

How MET Helped Mandy Find Her Path to Success

For Red River Métis Citizen Mandy Swidersky, the path to becoming an educator has been shaped by perseverance, cultural connection, and timely support from the Manitoba Métis Federation's Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department.

As she completes the final year of her Education degree, Mandy reflects on how MET's support has changed her life - not just by covering her tuition and essential needs, but by giving her the space and confidence to succeed, personally and professionally.

"I received funding from MET during my last year of schooling," Mandy explained. "The support from MET has allowed me to focus on doing well in my courses and not having to worry about money."

Thanks to the Winnipeg MET office, Mandy's tuition was paid in full for her final year of study, and she received a monthly allowance that helped cover basic needs and bills.

"My tuition for my last year was paid in full by MET, and I received a monthly allowance that helped with bills and basic needs."

That financial support proved essential - not only relieving stress but making it possible for her to fully engage with her studies, maintain her mental wellness, and stay connected to her cultural roots through beading.

"Without the support from MET, I would not have been able to focus on my schooling as much as I needed to," she said.



Photo Provided by Mandy Swidersky

"Since MET funded my last year of schooling, this allowed me to feel secure in my finances. This meant that I did not have to find a part-time job to support myself while in school. Instead, I could focus solely on achieving high grades and connecting with my culture through beading."

A Summer That Shaped a Career

In addition to post-secondary funding, Mandy also participated in MET's 2024 Summer Student Employment Program. Through this initiative, she was placed at the Steinbach Family Resource Centre, where she gained direct classroom experience working with preschool-aged children.

"MET also helped me find a summer job in 2024," Mandy said. "I was placed at a resource centre, where I was able to teach children aged 3-5 about road safety and practice my teaching skills."

The opportunity helped her bridge her academic learning with real-world practice - an experience she describes as transformative.

"This job was incredible, and I have made connections that will last for the rest of my life," she said. "I was in charge of running a Road Safety program for 3-5-year-olds and ran the social media pages."

The placement provided a meaningful introduction to early childhood education and community programming, while also helping Mandy grow her confidence as an educator. "Being trusted with that kind of responsibility made me feel capable and valued. It was more than just a job - it confirmed that this is what I'm meant to do."

Navigating Challenges

Mandy's post-secondary journey was not without its hardships. As a Red River Métis student who moved to a new city for school, she found herself dealing with the compounded stress of academic pressure, financial insecurity, and social isolation.

"During my schooling, I faced mental health struggles due to the workload of my courses," she said. "I was far away from home, was alone in a city where I didn't know many people, and I felt very alone."

Without a local support network, the pressure of balancing coursework and life became overwhelming. "It was hard on my mental health because it felt like I had very little support."

It was during this period that MET's support became not just financial, but foundational.

"Thankfully, with the support from MET, I was able to focus on getting my mental health to a good spot instead of worrying about how I would pay my bills," she said. "That peace of mind was what I needed to reset and succeed."

Being able to focus on wellness while continuing to progress in her program helped Mandy build resilience and deepen her sense of purpose in supporting others.

Vision for the Future

Mandy's goals for the future are rooted in both education and entrepreneurship. She hopes to continue her academic journey by returning to university for a Master's degree in education, with a specialization in counselling.

"I would like to return to school to receive my Master's degree in Education (Counselling)," she said. "I've realized how important it is to support students not just academically, but emotionally as well."

Her experience overcoming mental health challenges while studying has inspired her to create safe and supportive spaces for future students who may be navigating similar struggles.

At the same time, she is committed to honouring and advancing her cultural identity through beadwork - something that began as a personal practice and now has the potential to grow into a small business.

"I would also like to improve my beading skills and start my own business of selling my beadwork," she said.

By combining education, wellness, and cultural entrepreneurship, Mandy's future vision is holistic and community-driven - grounded in both Red River Métis tradition and a contemporary commitment to healing and growth.

Mandy Swidersky's story is a vivid example of how culturally rooted support programs can empower Red River Métis Citizens to not only achieve academic success, but also nurture personal development and identity. From tuition and monthly allowances to meaningful summer employment placements, MET's wraparound services helped ensure Mandy had the resources, the time, and the encouragement to stay on track - even when the odds were overwhelming.

Her story illustrates what's possible when Red River Métis youth are empowered to walk their education journey with confidence and pride.



A LEGACY OF OPPORTUNITY

Métis Employment & Training

For more than 26 years, the Manitoba Métis Federation's (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department has stood as a cornerstone of opportunity and growth for Red River Métis Citizens.

Guided by a Citizen-first approach, MET continues to empower individuals through training, education, and employment supports that reflect both the needs of our people and the realities of today's labour market.

Since its inception, MET has been recognized as one of the top Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) agreement holders in Canada, impacting more than 50,000 individuals through its programs and services.

The 2024–2025 fiscal year saw

another period of strong results. MET served 2,245 clients, of which 810 secured employment, 971 enrolled in funded programs, and 669 returned to school. These are not just numbers but real stories of Red River Métis Citizens moving toward stability, self-sufficiency, and pride.

President of the Red River Métis Government and Acting Minister of Métis Employment & Training, President David Chartrand reflects on these successes. "Every Citizen who walks through MET's doors represents a dream for themselves, their family, and our Nation. Our government invests in those dreams because when Red River Métis Citizens succeed, the entire Red River Métis Nation succeeds. MET is proof of that."

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration forms the cornerstone of MET's strategy. By partnering with industry leaders, government bodies, and educational institutions, MET ensures comprehensive support for its clients.

Notable partnerships with organizations like Stanley Electric, Knutson Building, and NRG Management exemplify MET's commitment to providing meaningful employment opportunities. These partnerships extend into various sectors, ensuring diverse career paths for Red River Métis Citizens. By aligning with industry trends, MET not only addresses labour market needs but also strengthens economic stability within the Red River Métis Nation.



Métis Employment & Training

MET partners with employers across our Homeland to empower Red River Métis Citizens towards success with a range of programs, services, and supports – from employment counselling to individual sponsorships, job search assistance, and MORE!

PROGRAMS & SERVICES:

MET offers programs, services and supports to help Red River Métis Citizens achieve their goals, from employment counselling to recruitment services.

INDIVIDUAL SPONSORSHIPS:

Funding is available for eligible programs such as certificate or diploma programs up to two years, the final year of the first undergraduate degree, apprenticeship training, and essential skills training.

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS:

We work with employers in our Homeland to offer recruitment services and wage subsidies, providing valuable work experience for our clients.

JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE:

Our staff provide guided assistance with resume and cover letter development, technology access for job search activities, and information on employment and training opportunities.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Through employment and training counselling and personalized assessments, MET supports Red River Métis Citizens in developing the skills and training needed for today's workforce. Eligible programs include certificate or diploma programs (up to two years), the final year of a first undergraduate degree, apprenticeship training, academic upgrading, and essential skills training at recognized institutions. Red River Métis Citizens must apply to and receive approval from MET before beginning programs in order to be eligible for MET support.

In 2024–2025, MET sponsored 492 clients in certificate, diploma, or final-year degree programs, along with 80 in apprenticeship training. These investments strengthen household stability and prepare Citizens for long-term careers in health care, early childhood education, social services, trades, and technical fields.

Minister Joan Ledoux, Associate Minister of Métis Employment & Training and Minister of Provincial Education, notes: "MET is about more than training or job placement. It is about building confidence, dignity, and opportunity for Red River Métis Citizens. Our commitment is to adapt to a changing labour market while staying true to the needs and aspirations of our people."

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

MET delivers a wide range of services that strengthen employability and create pathways to long-term careers. In 2024–2025, 971 clients were supported in sponsored or funded programs, and hundreds more participated in project-based training that gave them real-world experience.

The Summer Student Employment Program (SSEP) provided 318 placements with 219 employer partners, representing more than \$3.1 million in commitments. By giving youth their first taste of the working world, SSEP equips them with teamwork, communication, and time management skills that will carry into their future careers.

Beyond numbers and programs, workforce development is about Nation-building. Every time a Citizen gains new skills or secures long-term employment, it strengthens not only their household

but also the collective future of the Red River Métis Nation. Higher incomes, greater job stability, and stronger participation in key industries throughout our Homeland are creating ripple effects that benefit families, communities, and generations of Red River Métis Citizens to come.

JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

MET staff provide one-on-one support to Red River Métis Citizens seeking employment. Services include resume and cover letter development, interview preparation, and access to job search technology. In 2024–2025, 810 clients successfully secured employment with MET's support. As one past client shared, having someone who understood their journey made all the difference: "It felt like I had people in my corner who wanted me to succeed."

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

Strong partnerships with employers remain at the heart of MET's success. By connecting businesses with motivated, job-ready Red River Métis workers, MET creates pathways to lasting careers while helping employers fill workforce shortages. Wage subsidies and customized recruitment support make it easier for employers to hire Citizens and invest in their success.

In 2024–2025, employer partnerships spanned industries from construction and healthcare to childcare and information technology. These collaborations ensure that Red River Métis Citizens are not only job-ready but also positioned for growth in Manitoba's evolving economy.

Kerry Smith, Senior Director of Métis Employment & Training, emphasizes: "Every investment we make in skills training and employment support creates ripple effects. It builds stronger households, stronger communities, and ultimately a stronger Red River Métis Nation."

HONOURING A LEGACY

This year was also marked by the passing of Minister John Fleury, whose leadership helped shape the growth of the department. A veteran and tireless advocate for economic inclusion, his legacy lives on in every Citizen supported by MET. The department dedicates its 2024–2025 achievements to Minister Fleury, whose vision of opportunity and prosperity for all Red River Métis Citizens continues to guide our work.

Associate Minister Joan Ledoux emphasizes, "Our vision is to continue building on our legacy of success, adapting and innovating to meet the needs of our Citizens, while preserving and promoting our rich Red River Métis heritage."

Through continued dedication and strategic planning, the MET Department aims to further enhance its impact, ensuring that every program and initiative contributes to the vibrant growth of the Red River Métis Nation. For those looking to build a future rooted in opportunity and cultural pride, MET stands as a guiding force, embodying the promise of a brighter tomorrow.



For more information on MET's programs and services, and to learn how you can participate, visit our website at mmfemployment.ca or contact us directly at 204-586-8474 or MET@mmf.mb.ca



Success Starts at MET

When Red River Métis student Isabel Carter left Thompson to pursue culinary arts in Brandon, she didn't do it alone. With full support from the MMF's Métis Employment & Training Department, she gained the tools, confidence, and financial freedom to focus on her future — winning competitions, studying in Italy, and building a proud future.




Assiniboine
College

From Thompson to Tuscany

A Red River Métis Student's Story of Food, Faith, & Finding Her Way

Isabel Carter's first day in her culinary uniform at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon, Manitoba was more than the start of a new academic chapter. For the Red River Métis Citizen from Thompson, Manitoba, it was the launch of an extraordinary journey, one that would lead her from a small northern town to a five-star student restaurant, a culinary competition victory, and a transformative tour of Italy.

With the support of the Manitoba Métis Federation's Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department, Carter found the financial and emotional foundation to chase her dreams without the burden of financial stress.

"MET covered my tuition, uniforms, books, my knife kit—even bus fare to visit home for Christmas and spring break," Carter says. "As a full-time student, not having to work another job or take out loans meant everything."

Leaving her tight-knit community in Thompson for the unfamiliar city of Brandon, Carter carried more than just a suitcase of kitchen tools and college supplies. She brought her Métis culture, her faith, and a mix of excitement and nerves about what lay ahead. It was her first time living away from home and her first experience in a professional kitchen, making the transition both thrilling and daunting.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to be there at first," she admits. "It felt overwhelming."

Enrolling in Assiniboine's Culinary Arts program, Carter faced a whirlwind of intense kitchen training, classroom theory, and moments of homesickness. Yet, the MET Department's support allowed her to focus entirely on her studies. This transformative assistance removed barriers, giving her the freedom to immerse herself in learning and embrace the challenges of culinary school.

Carter's path to becoming a chef wasn't always clear. After high school, she took a year off to work as an RCMP guard in Thompson, performing wellness checks and monitoring individuals in custody. The role was serious, often emotionally taxing,

and leaned heavily on her natural empathy. While she briefly considered a career in policing, Carter realized her calling lay elsewhere—somewhere she could nurture others in a different way. Cooking, she discovered, was that calling.

Her passion for food took root in high school. Homeschooled until Grade 9, Carter entered RD Parker Collegiate in Thompson during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the transition was jarring for many, she found purpose in the school's culinary program under instructor Lisa Aube. By Grade 12, she was spending most of her days in the kitchen, where early lessons in cooking sparked the confidence she'd later carry into college.

At Assiniboine Community College, Carter dove into the Culinary Arts program, a hands-on experience

that transformed a historic dining space into a five-star teaching restaurant. She learned everything from baking to breakfast service, mastering not just recipes but the art of running a full-service kitchen. Surrounded by peers who shared her passion, she thrived in the collaborative environment, even as she adjusted to being far from home.

"I'd never worked in a place like this before, but I was ready to give it my all," she says. "It was exciting to make the same dishes as my classmates and see how everyone added their own flair."

Despite the demands of culinary school, Carter built a supportive community in Brandon. She joined a Bible study group that offered friendship and comfort during homesick moments. She bonded with Red River Métis peers and grew close to classmates who brought levity



"I was at a loss for words when I found out I was going to Italy for two weeks as a part of the "Tasty Italia" program. My time there was amazing. I learned so much about the culture and the food, as well as the landscape and history of the places we went. I think about how I may never have gone to school without funding from the MME, and in turn would never have gone on this potential once in a lifetime trip."



"Getting into the kitchen was so fun. I have never worked in this type environment before but was ready to give it my all. It was fun to create the same dishes as my classmates but how everyone's had a special personal twist to make it unique."

"My classmates knew how to make even a dreary day a good day. We have had so many laughs and I hope to have even more this coming year - one of my classmates is also sponsored by the Manitoba Métis Federation!"

to long, intense days. Visits home to Thompson or family trips to see her reminded Carter of her roots—and fueled her ambition to keep pushing forward.

The challenges of culinary school tested her resilience, but Carter drew strength from her routine, her faith, and the unwavering support of her family and the Manitoba Métis Federation. That foundation set the stage for remarkable opportunities, like an invitation to join the "Tasty Italia" program—a two-week culinary and cultural tour of Italy. From visiting a traditional pasta producer to walking 27,000 steps through Rome's ancient streets (in Crocs, no less), the trip was, in her words, "a once-in-a-lifetime" experience.

"Without MMF's support, I might not have gone to school, let alone traveled to Italy," she reflects. "I'm so grateful."

Back in Canada, Carter's talent shone at the Manitoba Pork Competition, where she was one of four students selected to compete. Her winning dish—bacon-wrapped apple pie stuffed pork tenderloin, inspired by a neighbor's recipe, paired

with her mother's sweet potato and carrots—earned her \$1,200 and a surge of confidence. The judges praised its "taste of fall," affirming her ability to tell stories through food.

"That win showed me I could create something special," she says. "It meant a lot to know my food could stand out."

Now in her second year, Carter is eager to dive into a month-long baking course and reconnect with classmates who share her dedication. "You can tell the returning students are here to build careers," she says. "And the instructors—they treat you like your work matters. That makes all the difference."

Looking ahead, Carter plans to complete the practical hours required to challenge the Red Seal exam after graduation. Her long-term goal is to start her own culinary business, possibly a catering company or meal plan service, to continue cooking for others in ways that feel meaningful.

"Food brings people together," she said. "A woman from my church hired me to bake and cook for her,

and that really encouraged me. I just love making food for people.”

Her experience, she says, is about more than food. It is about faith, identity, and opportunity — all of which were made possible by support systems she never took for granted.

“I’d be broke right now if it weren’t for them,” she said, laughing. “Instead, I’m going into my second year with savings, no student debt, and so much excitement. I feel like I’m actually building a future.”

Through MET’s support, Carter found not only the chance to pursue education, but the ability to fully show up for it. For students like her, that’s the difference between surviving and thriving.

From Thompson to Tuscany, Isabel Carter’s path has been anything but ordinary. With passion, purpose, and the support of her Nation, she is proving that a recipe for success starts with courage — *and a good pair of Crocs!*



“I was one of the four students picked to compete in the Manitoba Pork competition. We got to create dishes that had meaning to us and had stories to tell. I won first place—which was \$1200! Never in my life could I have imagined that these things would happen to me. I truly thank God for all that I have been able to achieve.”

MET

Partnerships



Employer partnerships are central to the success of the Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department. By working together with employer partners across private, public and government sectors, MET connects Red River Métis Citizens to quality employment opportunities while helping employers access motivated, job-ready talent.

When an employer partners with MET, they are not just filling a position. They are investing in the future of the Red River Métis Nation. Through MET's initiatives, such as targeted wage subsidies, recruitment, and training programs, we help our employer partners help sustainable career paths for Red River Métis Citizens while addressing real labour market needs in sectors ranging from healthcare and childcare to trades, technology, and beyond.

If you are an employer interested in becoming a partner, connect with us! Visit MMFEMPLOYMENT.CA or contact the MET Recruitment Team at METRECRUITMENT@MMF.MB.CA to learn more about wage subsidies, recruitment support, and training opportunities that can be tailored to meet the needs of your organization.

Kera McInnis's Social Work Career Thrives with Support From Métis Employment & Training



transforming her passion for social work into a profession, advocating for Indigenous communities.

“MET assisted me by paying for my final year of university, ensuring I had financial security so I could better focus on my studies,” she said. “The support I received through the Métis Employment and Training program had a profound impact on my life. Because of MET, I was able to graduate without debt, while also being able to save throughout the academic year.”

Kera’s journey began with a commitment to serve her community, and MET’s support made it possible. By alleviating financial burdens, MET helped her focus on her studies and field placement, paving the way for an impactful social worker in Manitoba.

MET, along with the Post-Secondary Education Support Program (PSESP) and LRI Bursaries, funded Kera’s final year.

“By covering the costs of my final year in the Bachelor of Social Work program, MET relieved a significant financial burden and allowed me to fully focus on my studies and field placement,” she noted. This support ensured financial stability, enabling her to excel academically.

Red River Métis Citizen Kera McInnes completed her Bachelor of Social Work with the support of Métis Employment & Training (MET) at the Winnipeg MET office. By funding her final year, MET enabled Kera to graduate debt-free and prepare for a career in Manitoba’s labour market. Her story highlights MET’s impact on Red River Métis Citizens,

MET's support transformed Kera's life and deepened her Red River Métis identity.

"This experience has also deepened my connection to my Red River Métis identity and truly shows the value of community support and education," she added. Graduating debt-free provided a strong foundation for her career.

As the first in her family to graduate university, Kera faced navigation challenges. "Being the first in my immediate family to attend and graduate from university was both an honour and a challenge," she said. Balancing responsibilities intensified doubts. "

"Having to also balance school, work, coaching and family responsibilities only added to these feelings of doubt," she noted. These challenges built her resilience and empathy, preparing her for Manitoba's labour market.

Kera aims to work with Indigenous organizations,



focusing on children and youth.

"If possible I would like to work for an Indigenous organization or agency, so I can continue to deepen my connection to my culture and community while also delivering culturally appropriate and holistic services to individuals and families," she said.

She also plans to pursue a Master's degree in Social Work. "After gaining more hands-on social work experience I would like to complete my masters in social work based in Indigenous knowledge," she said.

Year after year, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF)'s Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department guides Red River Métis Citizens towards a future where their skills, heritage, and ambitions merge to thrive in the modern workforce.

Operating under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISET) agreement between the MMF and Canada, Métis Employment & Training offers a diverse range of employment & training programs and services to support Red River Métis Citizens on their path to success.

Our focus on forming partnerships with industry employers is essential, and ensures Red River Métis Citizens have access to the best possible career opportunities. MET has a proven track record of fulfilling the labour market needs of employers while securing long-term employment opportunities for Red River Métis Citizens.

Red River Métis Apprentice is Powering His Family's Future

Red River Métis apprentice Derek Lamy completed Level 3 of his electrical training with MET support, earning a rewarding career close to home.

The road to becoming a journeyman electrician has been shaped by sacrifice, determination, and community support - especially for Derek Lamy, a proud Red River Métis Citizen.

With support from the Manitoba Métis Federation's Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department, he successfully completed Level 3 of his Apprenticeship Technical Training - Common Core Electrical program, taking a major step toward building a fulfilling and stable career close to home.

"I'm incredibly grateful for the ongoing support I received from the Métis Employment & Training (MET) program throughout my apprenticeship journey," Derek said. "Thanks to their sponsorship, I've now completed Level 3 of the Apprenticeship Technical Training - Common Core Electrical program."

For Derek, MET's assistance made all the difference - not just in financial terms, but in giving him the confidence to keep moving forward, even when the journey was hard. "MET's financial assistance made a huge difference," he said. "More than that, their encouragement gave me the confidence to keep pushing forward."

Before enrolling in his electrical training, Derek worked away from home as a driller - a job that took him far from his family in the Parkland region and left him longing for stability and time with loved ones. "Before I started, I was working away from home as a driller, which meant missing out on time with my young family," he said. "This program has changed the course of my life in the best way."

The decision to pursue a new path in the trades was both personal and practical. Derek wanted a career that would not only challenge



him and provide growth, but allow him to remain rooted in his community.

Through this training and with MET's help, I was able to pivot into a rewarding career that allows me to live and work in the Parkland region," he said.

Derek's enrolment in the Applied Electrical Installation program at the Parkland campus marked a turning point in his life. The program gave him the hands-on training and theoretical knowledge needed to succeed in the industry - and just as importantly, it helped him make the right connections.

"Taking the Applied Electrical Installation program at the Parkland campus gave me the advantage I needed to find an employer willing to support my apprenticeship path," he said. "The experience gave me both the skills and the industry connections that helped me get my foot in the door."

Today, Derek works for Bob's Electric in Dauphin, Manitoba - a respected company that has supported his continued growth and training on the job.

"I'm proud to be working with Bob's Electric in Dauphin, MB, a respected company that has supported me as I continue my apprenticeship."

His experience shows how local training, when matched with community-driven supports like those offered by MET, can lead to meaningful long-term employment. "The training and connections I gained through the program were essential in securing this role," he said.

The road to becoming an electrician wasn't without its challenges. With training available only in Brandon, Derek was faced with long commutes and time away from his family - on top of the already demanding workload of the program. "One of the biggest challenges I faced was the travel involved - training was only available in Brandon, which meant long commutes and time away from home," he said.

Still, he pressed on - motivated by his goals and the support he received. "Balancing that with family responsibilities wasn't easy," he admitted. "The experience taught me resilience and the value of

community during challenging times." That resilience paid off.

Despite the logistical and emotional strain of the journey, Derek stayed the course and came out stronger, both personally and professionally.

Derek's commitment to his trade was validated in a major way in 2023 when he won the IDEAL Battle of the Schools - a prestigious national competition for electrical students across Canada. "I was really proud to win the 2023 IDEAL Battle of the Schools," he said. "It's a national competition that brings together top electrical students from across Canada."

The victory was more than just a personal achievement - it was confirmation that the investment in his training, time, and effort was leading somewhere meaningful.

"It was a huge confidence boost and definitely one of the highlights of my apprenticeship so far," Derek said. "The experience confirmed that all the hard work, training, and support I've received are really paying off."

With Level 3 complete and valuable industry experience under his belt, Derek is now focused on finishing the final level of his apprenticeship and officially becoming a journeyman electrician.

"My main goal is to complete my final level of training and become a certified journeyman electrician," he said. "I'm fully committed to my trade and plan to keep working and contributing within the Parkland region."

He's also thinking about the next generation - those who are just beginning their own apprenticeship journeys. Derek hopes to pass on what he's learned and help others navigate the same path.

"I also hope to mentor future apprentices one day, just as I was supported early in my journey," he said.

With the demand for electricians remaining strong across Manitoba, Derek knows he's chosen a trade that can support him - and his family - for the long haul.

"With electrical work being in such high demand, I feel fortunate to be in a position where I can grow a stable, meaningful career while supporting my family," he said.



Steel, Stone, & Strength

A Red River Métis Mother's Path to Heavy Equipment Mastery

On remote job sites surrounded by rock and mud, where the hum of heavy machinery fills the air, Jenn O'Gorman has built a career few would have imagined possible when she first started out in Winnipeg over a decade earlier.

A proud Red River Métis Citizen from Garson, MB, Jenn is a single mother of six children, and a heavy equipment operator who has carved a place for herself in an industry that often tells women they do not belong. Her story is one of resilience, opportunity, and the steady power of determination.



Fourteen years ago, Jenn was working long hours for the City of Winnipeg, clearing snow in winter and debris in spring.

At the same time, she held down four other jobs, everything from semi-trucking to cleaning. It was a balancing act born out of necessity. Providing for six children meant saying yes to whatever

work would pay the bills. Yet even in those hectic years, she carried a vision of something more.

Jenn wanted a career that was stable, that recognized her abilities, and that offered a future for her and her family. Heavy equipment caught her attention. The field promised steady work and a path to something lasting. "There's always work in this field, and it's a huge window of opportunity for jobs," she said.

The leap required courage. Her employer was hesitant to support her ambitions, but she pressed forward on her own. She enrolled in an intensive eight-week course with Operating Engineers of Manitoba and earned certifications on rock trucks, excavators, and other machines.

In 2017, she joined Union 987 Operating Engineers and began specializing in pipelining. It was a turning point that took her from local jobs to projects across the country.

Proving herself was never easy. There were moments when supervisors doubted her ability to handle the machines or the physical demands of the work. Each time, she met the challenge with quiet confidence and skill. "It's hard to get into," she said, "and you have to show you're capable of doing the same job they can."

Her words to those who questioned her were direct and unforgettable: "You weren't born in that seat, and somebody gave you a chance. So, give me one and I'll show you."

That persistence, combined with her talent, earned her the respect of her peers, spanning jobsites across Canada, leaving no stone unturned. From Manitoba to Alberta to British Columbia to the Yukon, she has operated some of the toughest equipment on some of the most demanding sites in the country.

One of her proudest moments came three years ago in British Columbia, when she was entrusted with a CAT 350cl Excavator on the TransCanada pipeline. "I felt like everything I had worked for was coming together," she said. "It was proof that I belonged here."

None of it would have been possible, she insists,

without the Métis Employment & Training Department. By chance, she found MET after dialing the wrong number, a mistake that turned into a life-changing opportunity.

At MET's Southeast Regional Office she connected with an Employment & Training Counsellor who helped her secure funding for training. "I wouldn't be where I am today without Métis Employment & Training," she said. MET's support covered her tuition and gave her a sense of community, surrounded by other Red River Métis workers who were also investing in their futures.

For Jenn, pride in her achievements is matched by an even stronger drive to keep moving forward. Leadership is her next horizon.

"I am proud of everything and would just like to do more," she said. The motivation is not only for herself. It is also for her children, who have watched their mother refuse to be limited by circumstances, stereotypes, or others' opinions.

She wants other Red River Métis Citizens to know that the opportunities she seized are within their reach too. Her advice is simple but heartfelt: seek guidance, stay positive, and do not let discouragement win.

"Get as much advice as possible, don't get discouraged, keep positive, and keep going," she said. "When you don't know who to phone, keep searching. When you find them, keep calling until they answer."

Her story is a reminder that possibility often hides inside difficult beginnings. What started with six children to raise, five jobs to balance, and a dream of stability has become a career that spans provinces and industries. With the right support, hard work, and courage to keep asking for a chance, she has transformed her life and set an example for others to follow.

As Jenn looks ahead, her legacy is already clear. It is not just in the machines she has operated or the projects she has completed. It is in the doors she has opened, the barriers she has overcome, and the hope she gives to other Red River Métis Citizens who blaze their own trails as Heavy Equipment Operators.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

With determination and support, Red River Métis mother Jessica McNiven turned her dream of becoming a nurse into a reality—strengthening her family and community in the process.



At 36, Jessica McNiven, a Red River Métis mother from Dufresne, Manitoba, made a bold decision: to return to school and become a nurse.

With a young family depending on her, the choice came with sacrifice, uncertainty, and pressure—but also a deep sense of purpose.

“Métis Employment & Training had a huge impact on my life,” she said. “If this program didn’t exist, I would have never been able to financially afford to go back to school for two years.”

Jessica had always dreamed of doing more, of

building a stable, meaningful career that could support her family and serve her community. But like so many mothers, her dreams took a back seat.

With two school-age children and a home to manage, there was never time or money to pursue her goals. Returning to school full-time meant juggling parenting, studying, and the emotional toll of leaving the comfort of routine behind.

“Some struggles and obstacles I had to overcome during my nursing program was juggling school and home life,” she shared.

"I am a married mom of two school-age children so finding the balance to be with my family but also studying and getting good grades."

It meant late nights, missed events, and constant trade-offs; but, it also meant growth, confidence, and the pride of showing her children what's possible when you don't give up.

Jessica graduated and now works at a personal care home in Steinbach, while also picking up shifts at Ste. Anne Hospital. Her presence in the healthcare system isn't just filling a staffing gap, it's anchoring elder care in community values, compassion, and lived experience.

Her goal now is to complete the foot care nursing program and start her own business.

"Hopefully start my own business doing foot care nursing!" she said, with the determination of someone who knows the weight of every hard-earned step.

Her journey shows what's possible when Red River Métis Citizens are empowered to pursue education and employment on their own terms.

By investing in herself, Jessica is helping to build stronger families, healthier communities, and a future where her children see opportunity, not barriers.



“

***Métis
Employment
& Training
had a huge
impact on
my life***

Métis Employment & Training

Where Your Potential Meets Opportunity

The Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) Métis Employment & Training (MET) Department guides **Red River Métis Citizens** towards a future where their skills, heritage, and ambitions merge to thrive in the modern workforce.

Operating under the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISET) agreement between the MMF and Canada, MET offers a diverse range of employment & training programs and services to support Red River Métis Citizens on their path to success.

Our focus on forming partnerships with industry employers is essential, and ensures Red River Métis Citizens have access to the best possible career opportunities. MET has a proven track record of fulfilling the labour market needs of employers while securing long-term employment opportunities for Red River Métis Citizens.

✓ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS & SERVICES

MET offers a diverse range of programs and services, from skills development assistance & employment & career counselling, to wage subsidies & employer recruitment - all designed to assist Red River Métis Citizens improve their employability and secure long-term employment.

✓ SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Through counselling and personalized assessments, we assist Red River Métis Citizens in skill development training to enhance their knowledge, abilities, and readiness for employment. Eligible programs include certificate or diploma programs (up to two years), the final year of a first undergraduate degree, apprenticeship training, academic upgrading, and essential skills training programs offered by recognized training and educational institutions. Programs that are started before applying and receiving approval from MET will not be eligible for support.

✓ EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

We partner with employers across our Homeland to offer recruitment services and wage subsidies to Red River Métis clients, providing valuable work experience and increasing their chances of securing long-term employment.

✓ JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

Our knowledgeable staff offer personalized Job Search Assistance, including résumé and cover letter development, access to technology for job search activities, and information on employment, training, and career opportunities.



**Métis
Employment
& Training**

Thompson MET

171 Cree Road
Thompson, MB
Phone: (204) 677-1430
Email: THOMET@mmf.mb.ca

MET Recruitment

412-200 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 204-586-8474 ext. 2731
Email: METRecruitment@mmf.mb.ca

Winnipeg MET

412-200 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: (204) 586-8474 ext. 2796
Email: WPGMET@mmf.mb.ca

Southeast MET

56 Parkview Avenue
Grand Marais, MB
Phone: (204) 754-3112
Toll Free: 1-888-304-2383
Email: SEMET@mmf.mb.ca

MET Home Office Administration

1st Floor – 150 Henry Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 204-586-8474 ext. 2731
Toll Free: 1-800-665-8474
Email: MET@mmf.mb.ca

Interlake MET

28 St. Laurent Drive
St. Laurent, MB
Phone: (204) 646-2706
Toll Free: 1-866-317-3347
Email: INTMET@mmf.mb.ca

Southwest MET

656 – 6th Street
Brandon, MB
Phone: (204) 725-7525
Toll Free: 1-888-627-9663
Email: SWMET@mmf.mb.ca

The Pas MET

456 Fisher Avenue
The Pas, MB
Phone: (204) 623-5701
Email: PASMET@mmf.mb.ca

Northwest MET

422 Main Street South
Dauphin MB
Phone: (204) 638-9485
Toll Free: 1-877-542-4925
Email: NWMET@mmf.mb.ca

Find us on 
@MMFEMPLOYMENT



For more info
SCAN HERE!
or visit **MMFEMPLOYMENT.CA**



Métis Employment & Training

**MMF – National Government of the Red River Métis
Métis Employment & Training
300 - 150 Henry Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0J7
Phone: 204-586-8474 ext. 2731
Email: MET@mmf.mb.ca**