



*The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to increase communication between management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research*

## In this issue:

- Community Profile - NRJ
- Saskatchewan Book Awards
- GDIT&E All Staff Conference
- Apprenticeship Initiative Open House

## Highlights:

- GDIT&E Service Awards 2
- Traditional Dinner to Support Aboriginal Writers 4
- Adult Basic Education in PA 4
- IT Update 5

## Proud Métis Paramedic

By Sherry McLennan

Brendin St. Amand is a 20-year-old mild mannered young man, born and raised in Prince Albert. He speaks with great pride about the Primary Care Paramedic Program that he recently completed in November 2011. The program was offered through SIAST Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. Brendin is the son of Gloria and Marcel St. Amand. Brendin took his high school education at St. Mary's High School and graduated in June of 2010. Upon his graduation, Brendin knew exactly what he wanted to do ... and that was to help people. He decided on a career as a Paramedic.

Brendin applied to GDIT&E and was approved for funding. He was ecstatic. The program was 40 weeks in length, and set to start in the January of 2011. He prepared himself, mentally, physically, and emotionally for the year ahead. Brendin stated, "The program was tough, you go in to the program thinking you know a little about emergency situations and come out of the program feeling overwhelmed at the vast amount of knowledge you have just absorbed in that short time frame of 40


weeks." The program consisted of in class hours, scenarios, skill testing, and field experience. The field experience consisted of in and out of hospital practicum.

Brendin stated, "There is so much to know, because you are ultimately responsible for the care of the patients before you get them to the hospital, and some are life and death situations." While in the program they train you about life threatening situations, and how to prepare for the worst possible case scenario. There are times, when your life may be on the line. But you don't think of that, you just go because you know that there is an emergency situation, and you get in there and do what you have to do to assist the patient. The best feeling in the world is when you know you have helped to save a life.

Upon completion of his program in October 2011, Brendin was hired by the Pelican Narrows Health Region as a full-time Primary Care Paramedic. He is also working part-time in Prince Albert for the Parkland Health

Region. One of the requirements of Brendin's practicum was to experience a rural and urban placement. He spent his time in Prince Albert and Nipawin. His clinical time was spent at the Victoria Hospital in the Emergency Room, and one day assisting in the operating room with the anaesthesiologist.

While in the field, Brendin and his partner were transferring a woman who was in labour from Pelican Narrows to Flin Flon Hospital. On route, the woman was going to deliver the baby in the ambulance. So with Brendin's training he was able to assist in bringing a healthy baby girl into this world. She weighed 5 lbs. The proud young father shook Brendin's hand with such appreciation and respect. Brendin said that he will remember that experience forever. That was definitely the best moment of his career so far.

As Brendin aptly puts it, "With every job there are some positive and some negatives. But through it all and at the end of the day...my job is to help save lives, to take control of the situation that others may not be able to handle. I'm proud to wear my uniform and know that I have a great deal of responsibility resting on my shoulders. I'm proud to be Métis, and proud to be a Primary Care Paramedic." 



## Community Profile: Northern Region II

By James Oloo

This article is the second in our monthly series of demographic and socioeconomic profiles of the Métis Nation regions in Saskatchewan. The goal is to shed light on how the Métis population is fairing in such indicators compared to the general population in Saskatchewan. This will help us to identify areas we need to improve. Until the recently released 2011 Canada Census become available, we will continue using the 2006 figures.



Brendin St. Amand,  
Proud Métis paramedic (See page 1).

Northern Region II (NRII) has a Métis population of 2,365, or about five percent of the total Métis population in Saskatchewan. About 60% of the NRII Métis population is below the age 30 years. NRII Region office is in Buffalo Narrows with Local offices at Buffalo Narrows, Dillon, La Loche, and Turnor Lake. The Regional Director for NRII is Marlene Hansen while the position of the region's representative at the GDI Board of Governors is currently vacant.

Educational attainment for the NRII Métis individuals aged 15-24 years were as follows: 78% had not

completed high school and 22% had high school diploma. Of those who had completed Grade 12, 26% had completed postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree. Among the general population in the same age group, 48% had not completed high school while 52% had high school diploma. Of those who had high school diploma, 32% had completed postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

There are 995 Métis people in NRII in the 25-64 years age group. Educational attainment for this group was as follows: 63% had no high school diploma (compared to 19% of the general population in the same age group); 12% had high school diploma as their highest level of education (compared to 26% for Saskatchewan); 7% had a postsecondary certificate or diploma in apprenticeship or trade (compared to 14% for Saskatchewan); 9% had a non-university certificate or diploma from a college (compared to 18% for Saskatchewan); and 8%

had a university certificate, diploma or degree compared to 22% for the general population in the same age cohort.

Among the NRII Métis aged 15-24 years, 34% were in the labour force and 66% were not. Of those in the labour force, 48% were employed while 52% were not employed but looking for employment. For the general population in the same age group, 66% was in the labour force while 34% was not in the labour force. And of those in the labour force, 88% were employed while 12% were unemployed.

For the NRII Métis population aged 25 years and over, labour force activity was as follows: 53% were not in the labour force while 47% were in the labour force. Among those in the labour force, 78% were employed while 22% did not have a job but sought employment. Among the general population in the same age cohort, 31% were not in the labour force while 69% were in the labour force. Of those in the labour force, 95% were employed. Employment rate for this age group was 70% (compared to 37% for NRII Métis) and unemployment rate was 6% while that for the NRII Métis was 22%. 🌐

## GDI T&E Awards Banquet

By Angie Yew

On February 15<sup>th</sup> GDIT&E held an Awards Banquet at its 2012 All Staff Conference. This being the fifth year since GDIT&E was founded, Geordy McCaffrey, the GDI Executive Director, graced the occasion by recognizing almost 12 years of service by Tavia Laliberte, GDIT&E Director.

Jim Edmondson, Director of Human Resources, introduced Program Coordinators (PCs) who presented Five Year Service Awards to their staff. The recipients were: Bill Lehne, PC, Saskatoon; John Kyle, Employment Counsellor (EC), Nipawin; Debbie Stavely, EC, Prince

Albert; Angela Poitras, EC, Meadow Lake; Sheena Yew, EC, Saskatoon; Sherry McLennan, EC, Prince Albert; Marina Morin, EC, Beauval; Peggy Chartier, EC, La Loche; Shanna Morrison, EC, Regina; and Wendy Weeks, EC, North Battleford.

Congratulations! 🌐



Sheena Yew (second right) with her 5 year Service Award. With her are (from L-R), Sylvia Moss, Jim Edmondson, and Geordy McCaffrey.  
Photo by Angie Yew.



## GDI Publications Shortlisted for Sask Book Awards

By Lisa Wilson

The GDI Publishing Department has done it again, making the shortlist 11 times for this year's Saskatchewan Book Awards. Of the 13 categories available in the awards, GDI books were shortlisted in nine.

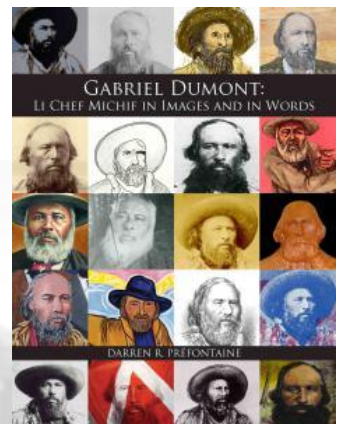
Three GDI Publications in the race for various awards are: Darren R. Préfontaine, *Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Words* (four nominations); Leah M. Dorion (translated by Rita Flamand), *Relatives with Roots: A Story About Métis Women's Connection to the Land* (five nominations); and Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton (illustrated by Sherry F. Racette and translated by Norman Fleury), *Call of the*

*Fiddle* (one nomination). All shortlisted authors have a connection to the Institute. Darren Préfontaine is a Curriculum Developer at GDI Publishing; Leah Dorion is faculty member at SUNTEP Prince Albert; and Wilfred Burton is a former faculty member of SUNTEP Regina.

The publications are the products of a team effort. "David Morin, GDI Curriculum Developer, did the layout for each of these books," says Karon Shmon, Publishing Director. "The rest of the Publishing staff has done research, scanning, proofing and editing, and other duties within the department to ensure each book receives the necessary focus."

The Saskatchewan Book Awards recognizes and celebrates excellence and diversity in Saskatchewan writing and publishing. It is a principal ambassador for the province's literary community, promoting greater awareness of Saskatchewan books, authors, and publishers through its awards, public reading events, and other promotional initiatives.

The GDI books competed among 101 titles comprising 233 entries. The awards will take place in Regina on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations and good luck! More information about the Saskatchewan Book Awards can be found at [www.bookawards.sk.ca](http://www.bookawards.sk.ca)



*Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Words* by Darren R. Préfontaine received 4 SBA nominations.

## GDIT&E Staff Conference a Success

By James Oloo

GDIT&E marked its five year anniversary and conducted professional development at a staff conference in Prince Albert from February 14-16. The event included training, games, discussions, and an awards ceremony. It was an opportunity to get together with colleagues from around the province, renew friendships, and strengthen networks.

The keynote address was given by Jessica Dunkley, a deaf Métis physician, who wowed the audience with a gripping and inspiring speech.

Lisa Wilson, GDI Director, led the staff through the enjoyable and competitive game of the Métis Family Feud, followed by a presentation by Brett

Vandale, DTI Director, which reminded everyone that teamwork and collaboration across departments is key to the Institute's success.

In line with the Institute's values with respect to Métis culture, there were cultural break-out sessions involving beading led by Cassandra Morin; art led by Jennifer Brown; and Métis history presented by John Hanikenne.

Representatives of various GDIT&E units also gave presentations on what they are working on and how these affect the Institute's goals and service delivery. Tammy Cummins discussed scholarships and why our clients should be encouraged to apply for them. Jason DeBack gave

an update on the Apprenticeship Initiative; Bobbie McLeod and Audrey Arcand gave a presentation on the recently revised GDIT&E policy; Shanna Morrison and Jacqueline Halliday presented KETO as an essential component of GDIT&E work and relationship with Service Canada; while Tim Metz led the session on Labour Market Information.

On the last day of the conference, Sylvia Moss led discussions on best practices in customer service and how this could be applied within all GDIT&E offices, while Sheena Yew and John Klyne moderated discussion on managing community and client relationships. The conference presented a forum for networking as GDIT&E staff in similar roles had the opportunity to meet and discuss strategies, successes and challenges. 

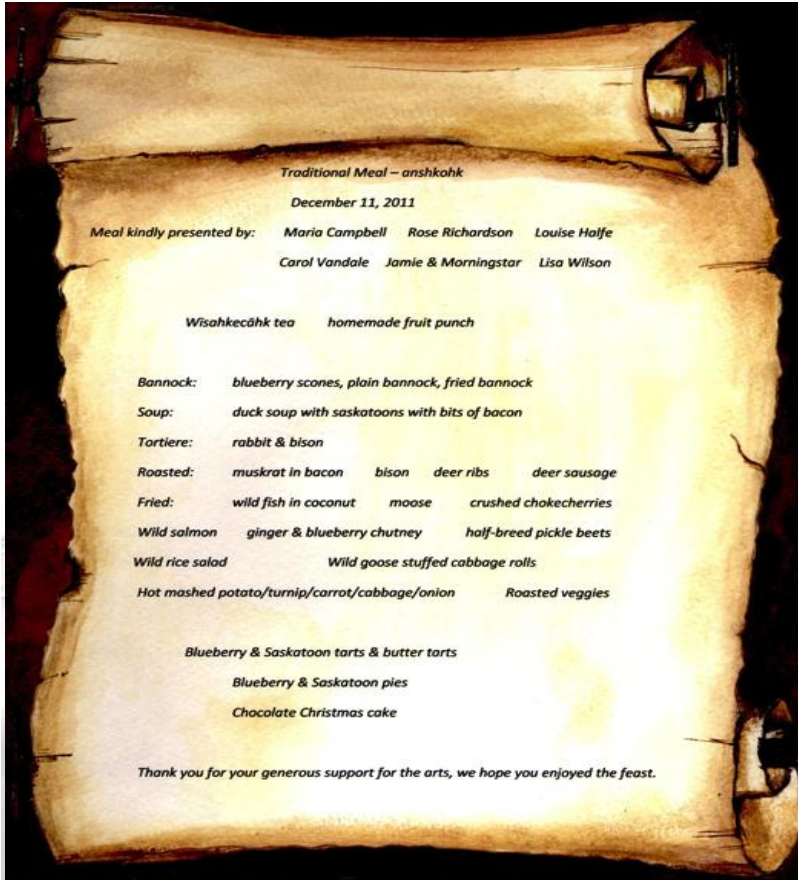


Sheena Daigneault (L), Program Coordinator at Île-à-la-Crosse, presenting a gift to Dr. Jessica Dunkley (R). Photo by Angie Yew.



## Traditional Dinner Helps Support Aboriginal Writers

By Lisa Wilson



On December 11, 2011 a group of On December 11, 2011 a group of Aboriginal writers got together to prepare and serve a traditional meal for five special guests. The guests, who included two SUNTEP Saskatoon students, had pledged their support for the development of an Aboriginal writers' circle by bidding their pledges at an auction for the chance to attend.

The auction was held at the Anshkohk Aboriginal Literature Festival in October 2011, where Louise Halfe auctioned off the "traditional dinner with Aboriginal writers." The dinner (see the menu on the

left), hosted at Louise's house, was prepared and served by Louise Halfe, Rose Richardson, Maria Campbell, Carol Vandale, Lisa Wilson, and Morningstar Mercredi and her partner Jamie.

After dinner, Rose Richardson entertained us with stories and drumming as we enjoyed the view of the South Saskatchewan River from the living room of Louise's beautiful house.

Proceeds from the dinner amounted to \$750 and will be used to establish the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Writers' Circle Inc, a nonprofit organization that will support and advocate for Aboriginal writers in Saskatchewan. 🌐

## Prince Albert Adult Basic Education

By Claudette Moran

"The deepest human need is for self-esteem, and each of us has an obligation to help one another achieve it and maintain it." (Knowles, 1980).

Adult Basic Education programs use a variety of instructional methods and apply many philosophical theories. One such approach used by the instructors in the PA ABE (often without thinking about what it is called) is the "Humanist" Philosophical approach. This approach is evident in the cultural and learning activities inherent in our programming. Activities are integrative and learner-centered.

Coming up in the PA Learning Center is 'Around the World in a Métis Blaze' - this is a cross cultural assignment for all levels.

This year's theme is 'Celebrations. Learners pick a country of their choice and research their government systems, language, and cultures. Each level is assigned a specific task; for example, Level 3 researches how women are celebrated in their cultures, while Level 4 takes on language through short stories, poems, and songs. Learners dress up in the traditional clothing, prepare an authentic dish, and present to each other and to the community.

As Métis people, we have always heard how our world is shaped by stories; stories about the Little People, the Northern Lights, and Big

Foot, among others. On February 29<sup>th</sup>, the Level 4 will be celebrating a Short Story Festival of original work. The project is designed to get students comfortable in expressing themselves through their written work.

These are just two examples of learner-centered instructional practices. Other activities at the PA Learning Center include volunteering, work placements, courses like WHIMIS, Food Safety, First Aid, and Driver Education. All activities are designed to build learner confidence, knowledge, and experience that will assist them in various aspects of their life and career goals. 🌐



## IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

### Website

In January 2012, the website received over 71,000 page hits. The highest activity was on the following pages: News, Upcoming events, and Programs and Services.

Recent updates to the site include GDIT&E Policy Changes, and the renewal of SIAST-DTI Federation Agreement.

To better serve our clients, we are working on a revised DTI Application process including a workflow procedure that tracks the progress of each application received. Coming soon will be a revised Programs Listing page that will allow searching of programs by location and study area.

### IT Support System

In January 2012, we received 32 new requests to the support system, of which 25 are already completed and closed (78% closure rate).

### Intranet Launch

The Intranet site is now live. An email was sent to each staff member when the account was created with a temporary password. If you haven't already, please reset your password. Send any questions to IT Support at support@gdins.org, gordon.holtslander@gdi.gdins.org, or myself.

We have also added some common forms to the Intranet for staff to use. These are in the areas of Benefits, General HR, and Pay Administration. Please

refer to the Forms section under the Staff Menu to download these forms.

### Internal Vacancies

Following consultation with SGEU, we are now posting all internal vacancies to the Intranet. This will streamline the process and make the information more accessible. During this transition period, HR will continue to email internal vacancies to staff until March 30, 2012. From April 1, vacancies will be posted to the Intranet only.

### IT Office Move

We will soon have a new IT presence in Regina. In order to support the training delivery better, I will be moving from my current office to the DTI Building on Winnipeg Street at the end of February. All phone numbers will remain the same. ☺



Philip McCloskey (L) from the Ministry of Highways leading a discussion during the apprenticeship open house. Photo by Brody Parent.

## Saskatoon Apprenticeship Initiative Open House

By Jason DeBack and Brody Parent

GDI Apprenticeship Initiative is a workplace strategy that aims to increase Aboriginal participation in the trades sector. Between March 2011 and January 2014, the initiative is expected to have at least 120 clients registered in the program.

On February 22, 2012, Saskatoon held the first Apprenticeship Initiative open house at the newly renovated 1001 22<sup>nd</sup> Street location. The goal of the open house was to provide information about the program to prospective apprentices and interested employers. A networking opportunity followed to give both parties time to meet and talk with each

other, ask and answer questions about the initiative as well as job opportunities.

Over 30 people including potential clients and representatives of five companies attended the event. It was a great opportunity to market the initiative, develop a database of potential apprentices in the region, and for those involved to learn about the program. We hope that new partnerships may emerge from contacts made.

Philip McCloskey from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure gave a brief discussion on the benefits of partnership and fielded questions from interested

employers. Also in attendance were Tavia Laliberte, GDIT&E Director, Sylvia Moss, Program Coordinator, Saskatoon; Debbie Stavelly, Employment Counsellor, Prince Albert; Dwayne Docken, Employment Counsellor, Saskatoon; Brody Parent, Admin Coordinator, Saskatoon; and Jason DeBack, the Apprenticeship Coordinator.

Those in attendance enjoyed refreshments provided by DTI, and raffle giveaways provided by GDIT&E.

Similar events are being planned for other regions with the next open house scheduled for as a great way to market the initiative in local communities. The next open house will be held in Regina on April 12, 2012. Please spread the word. ☺



Jason DeBack, Apprenticeship Coordinator, giving a presentation during the open house in Saskatoon. Photo by Brody Parent.



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#### **GDI Mission:**

*To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.*



**GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE**  
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