



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

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Community Profile: Western Region II

By James Oloo

In this month's analysis of our monthly series of socioeconomic and demographic profiles for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan regions we highlight the performance of the Western Region II (WRII) Métis population. The article uses 2006 Canada Census data.

Each of the 12 Métis regions has an elected Regional Director who is also a member of the MN-S Provincial Métis Council. Darlene McKay is the Regional Director for WRII. Region office is in Prince Albert with local offices at Christopher Lake, Debden, Domremy, Duck Lake, Leask, Shell Lake, and Weldon. Tammy Mah represents WRII at the GDI Board of Governors.

WRII has a Métis population of 9,515, about 37% of whom are between ages 0-19 years. Of those aged between 15-24 years, 55% do not have high school diploma, while 45% had completed Grade 12 or equivalent. Of those with high school diploma, 70% had Grade 12 as their highest level of education and 30% had completed postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree. For the general population of Saskatchewan in the same age group, 48% had not completed high school while


52% had high school diploma. Of those with high school diploma, 32% had completed postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

WRII has 4,640 Métis individuals aged between 25-64 years. Of this, 23% had no high school diploma (compared to 19% of the general population in the same age group) and 77% had Grade 12 or higher. Of those with high school diploma, 38% had Grade 12 as their highest level of formal education (compared to 26% for Saskatchewan); 23% had a postsecondary diploma or certificate in apprenticeship or trade (versus 14% for Saskatchewan); 22% had a non-university certificate or diploma from a college (versus 18% for Saskatchewan); and 17% had a university certificate, diploma or degree compared to 22% for the general population in the same age group.

Thus, among aged 25-64 years proportionately more WRII Métis had postsecondary certificate or diploma in apprenticeship or trades and in non-university postsecondary training than did the general

population in Saskatchewan at 23% versus 14% and 22% versus 18% respectively. This is perhaps due to the work of Aboriginal-focused institutions such as GDIT&E and DTI, which should be enhanced even as we strive for improved performance in other areas. However, proportionately more non-Métis people than their Métis counterparts aged between 25-64 years had a university certificate, diploma or degree.

Labour market participation for the WRII Métis was as follows: For those aged between 15 and 24 years, 63% were in the labour force while 37% were not. Of those in the labour force, 88% were employed while 12% were not. For the general population in the same age group, 66% were in the labour force while 34% were not. And of those in the labour force, 88% were employed.

For the WRII Métis population aged 25 years and over, 74% were in the labour force while 26% were not. Among those in the labour force, 90% were employed while 10% did not have jobs. Within the general population in the same age cohort, 69% were in the labour force and 31% were not. Of those in the labour force, 95% had jobs. Thus, proportionately more WRII Métis than the general population aged 25 years and over were in the labour market. 



GDI Inaugural Golf Tournament

By Lisa Wilson

On May 31, 2012 GDI hosted our inaugural golf tournament at the Moonlake Golf and Country Club in Saskatoon. Over 100 golfers took part in the tournament to help raise funds for the Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation. The goal was to raise \$10,000, which will then be matched by the Saskatchewan Advantage scholarship fund, with all funds to be awarded as scholarships to Métis students.

Golfers from a number of corporations and communities participated in the event, including representatives from BHP Billiton Cameco, SMEDCO, Areva, MNS, SaskEnergy, University of Saskatchewan, CCDF, Saskatoon Tribal Council, Saskatoon Health

Region, and Round Prairie Ventures. GDI provided a variety of ways to be involved, including corporate sponsorship, team and individual registration.

The format for the tournament was a four-person Texas scramble. Supper, prizes, and entertainment by Donny Parenteau followed the golfing. The top team overall was the Saskatoon Tribal Council, comprised of Dennis Esperance, Elwin Cameron, and Dave Morin. Second place went to SaskEnergy, third to Cameco, fourth to GDI, and fifth to SaskTel. Longest drive went to Leanne Bellegarde (women) and Kendall Nicolas (men). All prizes were awarded based on

random draws and all teams received prizes. Geordy sent the following message to all involved in the event: "I would like to thank our staff for assisting with the inaugural scholarship Texas scramble fundraiser on May 31st. The golf tournament was a huge success and raised nearly \$21,000 (gross) for our scholarship foundation. Once our expenses are paid, the profit will be matched by the department of Advanced Education through the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship program. We expect to begin these awards in the fall of 2012. Thank you all for assisting with this important event. Many of our students will benefit from the money raised."

Thanks to all Institute staff who volunteered to make this event successful! 🌟



Tavia Laliberte, in the middle, with her Study group and Lt. Governor F. Lewis



Tavia Laliberte, GDI Executive Director, at a tour of Aerospace PEI

GDIT&E Director Attends Leadership Conference

By Tavia Laliberte

Leadership & Sustainable Communities was the theme of 2012 Governor General Leadership Conference. The conference was created in 1983 to "Improve decision-making abilities among young leaders likely to occupy high level positions in the near future" and is held every four years. 230 Canadians were selected from across Canada to participate. Our journey began in Halifax where we were bombarded with an amazing list of high profile speakers for three days including an opening gala with the current GG David Johnston and a past GG Adrienne Clarkson as special guests. Participants then broke into smaller study groups to explore the country. I had the pleasure

of visiting Prince Edward Island and the Îles de la Madeleine, Quebec - an adventure for me, as I knew very little about the Maritime and east coast way of life. For 9 days, our group of 15 toured the Islands meeting with business, government, union, and other leaders. Highlights include dinner with the Lieutenant Governor Frank Lewis at Government House; touring the Confederation Bridge and helping it celebrate 15 years; preparing a meal at the Upper Room Food Kitchen for those in need; learning about PEI's Aerospace industry; and hearing from Chief Darlene Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation,

one of two First Nations on the Island. We then visited Îles de la Madeleine, where we met with the mayor, toured local businesses, and learned about the islands' unique history.

All participants went back to Ottawa and gave presentations to the GG on our reflections in leadership and sustainable communities. Each day over the course of the two-week trip was filled from 7am to 10pm. I learned much at the conference especially from my study group.

GDI Executive Director, Geordy McCaffrey attended the conference in 2000, where he visited Southern Ontario. 🌟



SUNTEP Regina – Nourishing Métis Learning Spirit

By Russell Fayant

It is not uncommon for University of Regina (U of R) students of other faculties and programs to wander over to SUNTEP Regina's offices to inquire about the possibility of taking SUNTEP classes. Smaller class sizes and quality instruction are important factors, yet both of these may be accessed in any of the U of R's three Federated colleges. What make SUNTEP Regina unique are its innovative nature and its drive to make Métis knowledge and traditions accessible in an academic setting.

In 1980, it was recognized by SUNTEP's builders that the general education program lacked a class wherein students could learn to understand, deconstruct and combat the social 'ism's that plagued our communities. In response, ECCU (or Cross-Cultural Education) was designed and implemented by SUNTEP faculty. The class was so effective that it became foundational to our programming and has since been expanded into two separate ECCU classes.

It was in this context of innovation and adapting to our students' needs that SUNTEP Regina recently developed a new course entitled ESST 190 (Métis Traditions and Knowledge). The theoretical basis for the class was established by Program Coordinator Joanne Pelletier and researcher and former SUNTEP Instructor Dr. Sherry Farrell-Racette, and is instructed by Faculty member Russell Fayant. The primary objective of the class is to re-introduce students to prominent Métis traditions while giving them the skills to incorporate those same traditions into provincial school curriculum.

The need for the class came out of observations of both our students and the university at large. For our students, who are increasingly urbanized and lacking in opportunities to engage in their culture, the class offers opportunities to get to know Métis cultural carriers such as Norma and Joe Welsh, Erma Taylor, Maria Campbell, John Arcand, Sherry Farrell-Racette and Wilfred Burton.

As Farrell-Racette (2011) observed, "Unlike First Nations students, there are no Métis-controlled elementary and secondary schools, and no home communities/territories outside of northern Saskatchewan. Increasing urbanization, and the ongoing impact of colonizing/inferiorizing practices embedded within mainstream media and education are complicated by the emphasis on First Nations content and history. It is possible that this class will be the initial phase in assessing and further strengthening Métis knowledge and practice throughout the program."

In class, students participate in Métis traditions such as rug braiding, beading, constructing a Red River cart, Métis dance, Michif speaking, and oral storytelling. Students are introduced to these traditions by community experts who often employ the 'listen, watch, do' technique of teaching.

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Photo credited to Christina Johns



Tavia preparing dinner at the Upper Room Kitchen, PEI

SUNTEP Coordinator retires after 29 years with GDI

By James Oloo

Lorraine Amiotte, SUNTEP Central Coordinator in Saskatoon and the longest serving GDI employee, will be retiring from GDI at the end of June 2012.

Lorraine joined GDI as a clerk steno almost 29 years ago. She has held many positions including administrative coordinator and program coordinator.

Lorraine has many fond memories of GDI. Her daughter Laurel and her niece Nicole Amiotte-Bilinski are both graduates of SUNTEP Saskatoon.

Of the impact of GDI, Lorraine says, "I've seen GDI change many lives and open so many doors. It is heartening to see a positive impact on the Métis over the generations, as the

sons and daughters of our graduates also attend GDI." Lorraine plans to relax and spend more time with her family. Best wishes in retirement and thank you for helping make GDI what it is today, a highly respected academic and training institution that enhances Métis culture.

The article is based on Lorraine's interview with Karon Shmon, the Director of GDI Publishing Department. 🌐



***Project of Heart* brings hope and healing to SUNTEP**

By Christina Johns

Armed with Sharpie markers, small wooden tiles, a legacy to honour and the “heart” to make a difference, SUNTEP Regina students went to work to preserve and reclaim the memory of the many Métis and First Nations children who attended and lost their lives in residential schools. All SUNTEP students participated in the artistic social justice project entitled *Project of Heart* over the past two semesters.

Project coordinator Sylvia Smith, a high school teacher from Ottawa, describes *Project of Heart* (P.O.H.) as a “hands-on, collaborative, inter-generational, inter-institutional artistic endeavour. Its purpose is to commemorate the lives of the thousands of Indigenous children who died as a result of the residential school experience.” After learning about the truths of Indian Residential schools in Social Studies class, Sylvia Smith’s students wanted to do more to

bring greater public awareness to the large number of deaths that had occurred in residential schools across Canada. Along with their teacher’s help, they developed a social justice project that is now growing in recognition and has recently been awarded the Governor General’s award for excellence in teaching Canadian history.

A key objective of P.O.H. is to encourage “ownership” of this historic injustice by the non-Indigenous community. By doing so, non-Aboriginal Canadians can then be moved to take responsibility for the continued oppression of Indigenous people in Canada, and be inspired to take action. She also explains that the project “commemorates the families and communities to whom those children belonged. It is designed to bring awareness both to the settler community of predominantly European Canadians and communities of new Canadians from other parts of the world.”

Many students of all ages, all across Canada have been involved in the project, by decorating tiles, doing research, visiting with Elders and becoming more aware of the effects of residential schools on generations of Indigenous people.

P.O.H. also seeks to expand the opportunities available for the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders to be heard within mainstream-educational/religious institutions.

By joining with other groups who are making space for Indigenous knowledge, institutions can help to change attitudes and behaviours – hearts and minds – as Elders give voice to the traditions that were suppressed by residential schooling.

Continued on page 5.

SUNTEP Regina – *Continued from page 3*

The result is that students can begin the cultural reclamation process while learning how to help their future students in elementary schools do the same. They learn how a Red River cart can be used to teach geometry, how a Métis recipe can be used to teach measurement, how retelling a story can involve analysis and synthesis, how decoding historical pictures can deconstruct societal biases, and how a Red River jig is a great way to culturally engage children while getting a work out! The benefits for themselves and their future students are endless. For the university at large, ESST 190 contributes to the greater movement to ‘decolonize the academy’. That is, to assert our

cultural presence and to make the university a more welcoming and inclusive place for Métis students and Indigenous knowledge in general.

The creation of ESST 190 is just a small step in a larger process that is seeing SUNTEP grads make significant cultural, economic and social contributions to the Métis community and to the Province of Saskatchewan. In the words of Dr. Farrell-Racette (2011), “This is not learning about, this is learning to become-with the specific goal of citizenship and leadership development

within the larger context of sovereignty and self-government.” As SUNTEP Regina students and faculty continue to engage in the decolonization process, it is hoped that like a braided rug, the knowledge gained in ESST 190 will be woven into the mosaic of school-based learning adding all the richness, colour, and depth of Métis knowledge and traditions.


The article first appeared in the U of R’s *Education News, Fall 2011/Winter 2012*. It is reprinted here with permission of the author. 



Photo by Christina Johns



Christina Johns at the SUNTEP Regina 2012 Graduation ceremony
Photo credit: Erma Taylor



DTI 20th Anniversary - Save the Dates!

By Lisa Wilson

2012 marks DTI's 20th anniversary and we plan to celebrate! A planning committee has been working diligently on anniversary conference and celebration events to mark the occasion, to be followed by GDI's Annual General Meeting. Dates for the event are November 8, 9, and 10, 2012. Please mark your calendars.

Project of Heart *Continued from page 4*

During their involvement in this unique social justice project, SUNTEP students shared stories of people and relatives they knew who attended residential school. They were stories of pain and of relationships that developed while in residential school, while others were humorous anecdotes passed down from grandparents and great-grandparents. Through the sharing of stories, we gathered together as students, teachers, artists and activists to remember the forgotten and piece together this influential, yet poignant part of Canadian history. Being able to talk about the residential school experience has been hurtful to some students, but in some ways it started a healing process aided by research, the sharing of the experience with family members, the smudging of the tiles and visits with an elder/residential school survivor.

On this journey for understanding through heart and spirit, SUNTEP students decorated over

A sneak-peak of conference plans reveal a student-focused day on November 8th, with workshops and a student recognition banquet.

Friday November 9th is shaping up to be full of interesting and motivating sessions, including poetry and prose workshops, bannock making, Métis beadwork, square dancing

400 tiles with imagery, words and symbols created in memoriam to the Aboriginal culture, language and self-esteem stripped away by assimilation and racism embodied at residential schools.

As evidence of the project's lasting impact, as the social justice activism component of the project, SUNTEP students have developed lesson and unit plans to use in their field placements so P.O.H. will continue to be shared and honoured.

The project's goal is to have 50,000 decorated tiles, each one representing a life lost in the many residential schools across Canada. Although the future and final resting place of the tiles is still uncertain, there is a possibility of an installation of the tiles as a part of the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. This is only a small gesture of reconciliation for the past and continued oppression of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Art has the power to bring together people from all ages and backgrounds. It can bring about awareness


and jiggling. A 20th anniversary banquet and fundraising gala for the Métis Veterans monument will round out the day on the 9th. November 10th has been set-aside for the GDI AGM.

If you have questions, please call Tony Blacklock or Jessica Sandell at 306-242-6070 or toll free 1-877-488-6888, or by email at tony.blacklock@dti.gdins.org.



and understanding, as well as promote critical thinking and healing. Drawing on tiles will, of course, never erase the horrors of residential schools or reverse the damage done to families and communities, but it can bring about hope; hope that we can someday eradicate the perils of hatred, racism and ethnocentrism. Sylvia and her students had the vision to bridge the emotional and spiritual power of art to bring about healing to communities who are still in crisis despite governmental 'apologies'.

P.O.H. is a demonstration of the resiliency of Aboriginal peoples and their resistance to the cultural collision between Aboriginal peoples and the European colonizers. We are still valiantly fighting to reverse the devastating effects that years of oppression has had on indigenous cultures and traditions. We hope that the inter-generational damage will not be forgotten but used as a reminder that this cultural genocide must never happen again! For more about P.O.H. visit www.projectofheart.ca.

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Tavia, 2nd left front row at 2012 Governor General Leadership Conference



Entertainers at the SUNTEP Regina 2012 graduation
Photo credit: Erma Taylor



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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
of Native Studies and Applied Research