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# GDI Communicator

*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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## GDI Meets with the JTF on Aboriginal Education

By Lisa Wilson

On September 28, 2012, GDI representatives met in Saskatoon with the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People (JTF). As the education arm of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, GDI presented the JTF with a Métis perspective on education and employment for Métis people in Saskatchewan.

In addition to the documented in-person meeting between GDI and the JTF, GDI made a written submission to the task force, covering four main areas related to the Métis: early childhood education, K-12 education, post-secondary education, and employment. The GDI document notes the important link between Métis-directed education and sustaining Métis culture. It is well known at GDI that Métis education must focus on more than simply replicating the status quo, but rather, be firmly grounded in Métis culture to ensure success and instill cultural pride and perpetuity (Métis National Council, 2009).

On the aim of connecting education and culture, GDI's founders were clear in their mission and purpose. Today, we owe them a big debt of gratitude for their vision and foresight.

The Métis are in a unique situation in Saskatchewan. Unlike the First Nations, we don't have K-12 schools, we lack federal supports for post-secondary education funding (particularly for university), early childhood education for the Métis is not targeted as Métis-specific, hence there is no accountability for Métis numbers, and the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreement excludes the Métis from federal childcare and early learning resources otherwise provided for First Nations and Inuit. Because of our unique position with respect to education, GDI has endeavoured to ensure that the Métis voice is loud and clear in this provincial consultation.

At times during the consultation the discussion was broad, focusing on policy and jurisdictional issues; at other times, it was down to earth and at the level of significant individual experiences. One administrator offered an example of a Métis student, graduating from a DTI skills training program, and with the student's mother in the audience at grad. The mother started crying during the program when her son's name was read and he was acknowledged as a hard working, contributing member of the graduating

class. When asked what the matter was, the woman indicated that she was crying tears of gratitude—her son, she said, had never been acknowledged in school, in any way, ever. His typical experiences in school had been as if he had no real part in his own education—as if he was irrelevant to the system in which he was participating. Yet there he was at the DTI grad, not being acknowledged for anything outstanding—he wasn't the best student, he didn't achieve the highest marks—he was simply being acknowledged as a student in our school, as a graduate of our program, and for his attributes as a human being. This simple recognition was enough to make his mother weep. This moving story offered an example of how significant the small things can be in a person's education journey.

The JTF was formed by agreement between the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations in 2011. Its primary goal is to help identify practical, grass-roots solutions for eliminating the current gaps in education and employment outcomes for Métis and First Nations people. For more information, contact Lisa at [lisa.wilson@gdi.gdins.org](mailto:lisa.wilson@gdi.gdins.org)





## New DTI Program Sees 100% Success Rate

By Chantelle Gagnon



Shayla Diehl, a recent graduate of the DTI Medical Device Reprocessing Technician Program, got a job with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region  
Photo by Chantelle Gagnon

DTI, in partnership with Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region (RQHR), offered the second Medical Device Reprocessing Program in Regina this past spring. Seven women began the program in April 2012 and on Friday August 31 all seven successfully completed the program.

DTI decided to offer this program after RQHR identified a need for more qualified workers in this department. As infections become increasingly more resistant to treatment, the role of Medical Device Reprocessing technicians is becoming even more critical in preventing the spread of serious and deadly diseases.

This is a very important role and RQHR is now requiring new employees to have this certification upon hiring.

The Medical Device Reprocessing program is a SIAST certificate program that is generally offered as a distance course. DTI brokered the course and offered it in a classroom setting for the second time; so far DTI is leading the way as the only college in the province to offer this program as direct delivery.

The 20-week program is comprised of four main courses that include: Foundations of Medical Device Reprocessing, Decontamination, Cleaning, and Disinfecting; Inspection, Assembly, and Packaging, Sterilization, Storage, and Distribution, as well as a 4 week Practicum.

The students worked very hard throughout the program, balancing their studies with their busy home lives. Upon completion of the four main courses, six of the students were offered employment with RQHR and one student was accepted into a

Practical Nursing Prep Program. Originally a four-week practicum was set up, however, because the students did so well, the practicum was not required and they went right to work instead.

Shayla Diehl, one of the recent graduates was hired fulltime by RQHR right after graduation. Shayla stated, "I found DTI to be a warm and welcoming environment. With the small classes you are known by your name and not as a number, which is very encouraging. There is always someone there to help you with anything, to enable you succeed. I finished my course and was immediately got a job with RQHR as a Medical Device Reprocessing Tech. I could not be more thankful for the opportunity that DTI has given me."

DTI would like to extend thanks to RQHR, GDIT&E, and SIAST for helping make this program a great success, with a 100% graduation rate. We are very proud of these graduates and wish them all the best in their future careers.



Class of 2012 - Left to right: Daphne Lavallee, Margaret Kinrade, Shayla Diehl, Kristen Moran, Lesley Kaiswatum, Kattie Therrien. (Danielle Brooks is missing).  
Photo by Chantelle Gagnon

## Manitoba and MMF Sign Harvesting Agreement

By James Oloo

In September 2012, the Government of Manitoba and the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) signed a harvesting rights agreement to recognize hunting and fishing rights of the Manitoba Métis. The agreement allows Métis people to hunt and fish for domestic use in locations that have been agreed on by Manitoba and MMF without

having to get a licence from the provincial government.

The new rules governing Métis hunting will be based on Métis practices, and Métis hunters will carry MMF harvester cards to identify themselves.

The agreement also sets out a process for the future

collaborative research and expansion of the area where Métis harvesting rights are now recognized in Manitoba. As part of the deal, Métis people will continue to be required to follow safety and conservation regulations.

For more information please visit

[www.mmf.mb.ca](http://www.mmf.mb.ca)

### Metis Laws of the Harvest

THIRD EDITION



Guide to Metis Hunting, Fishing, Trapping and Gathering



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## Burt Award for Aboriginal Literature Launched

By James Oloo

The Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature was launched last month. It is a unique Canadian literary award and readership initiative recognizing excellence in English-language literary works for Young Adults by Métis, First Nations, and Inuit authors.

The Burt Award was established by CODE - a Canadian charitable organization that has been supporting literacy and learning for over half a century - with support of philanthropist William Burt and the Literary Prizes Foundation. It aims to provide engaging and culturally-relevant books for young people across Canada. It will be given annually to three English-

language literary works for Young Adults by Métis, First Nations, or Inuit authors. The authors of the winning titles will be awarded a first prize of \$12,000, a second prize of \$8,000 and a third prize of \$5,000. Additionally, publishers of the winning titles will be awarded a guaranteed purchase of a minimum of 2,500 copies, which will ensure that Métis, First Nations, and Inuit youth across the country will have access to the books through their community's schools, libraries, or Friendship Centres.

The Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature is rooted in the strong partnership between CODE, the Métis National Council, Inuit

Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations, the National Association of Friendship Centres, the Association of Canadian Publishers, and the Canada Council for the Arts. The partners will be responsible for administering the jury process.

Both published and unpublished works by Métis, First Nations, or Inuit authors are eligible for the Award. Books by Aboriginal authors that were published between May 1, 2010 and April 30, 2013 can be submitted by publishers by May 1, 2013. Winning titles for the inaugural Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature will be announced in September 2013. For further information, please visit <http://www.codecan.org>.



Burt Award logo  
Credited to codecan.org



ABE Level 4 Phys Ed Class  
Photo by Lori Perkins

## ABE Level 4 Gets a New Elective

By Tracy LaPrise & Danette Senterre

This year, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 4 program in Saskatoon has launched a new elective course. Led by instructor Danette Senterre, Physical Education 30 has been introduced to our program. The curriculum focuses on wellness and overall health, which is a goal we advocate for all our students. Making healthy choices regarding nutrition and also being physically active are the main focuses of the new class.

Furthermore, a positive, responsible attitude on the part of students to their own physical health and well-being, as well as respect, care, and concern for other

people and the environment, is a key aspect of Aboriginal way of life.

The students in the Physical Education 30 class are learning about and participating in a variety of activities. Since the start of the school year, the students have started a personal fitness program. Each week they set goals for participation in physical activities at school and home. They analyze their activity records to determine if they are meeting their weekly goals, which have evolved greatly since September. Initial feedback is positive.

The students went on a canoe trip on South Saskatchewan River. After two practice sessions, they paddled into Saskatoon from the Berry Barn. This was a 3-hour paddle with a hot dog cookout on an island along the way.

Currently, the students are practicing and developing skills and strategies for basketball. Other activities being planned for this semester include floor hockey, soccer, swimming, cross-country skiing, and sledding.

We are looking forward to a fun year and improved health! Please feel free to join us in a Phys Ed 30 class to meet the wonderful students and get active!!



ABE Level 4 Phys Ed Class  
Photo by Lori Perkins





## GDI to Offer Master's Degree Program

By Lisa Wilson



Jim Edmondson, HR Director, and Sheena Yew, Employment Counsellor at GDIT&E Saskatoon  
Photo by Angie Yew

In a bold new move into the realm of graduate studies program delivery, GDI has partnered with the University of Regina to offer a two and a half year community-based Master of Education program in Prince Albert. The program, open to educators who have at least two years of teaching experience and an academic average of 70% or higher in their BEd, is slated to begin in July 2013.

The new Master's degree program is a natural progression for GDI, given that the SUNTEP program has graduated over 1,000 people with their BEd degrees. It means GDI will be able to offer our SUNTEP grads, and other qualified applicants, an opportunity to extend their learning to the graduate level. Many SUNTEP graduates already go on to pursue further education, including graduate degrees. The new GDI program expands those opportunities and allows former SUNTEP students the chance to "come home" again. For many graduates, their SUNTEP memories are fond, representing experiences of cultural affirmation and renewal not often available in mainstream programs. The opportunity to reconnect with their higher education foundation is

welcomed by many. In fact, interest in the program is high, with 60 people filling out expressions of interest in a pre-advertising query and at least half of those being former SUNTEP students.

The program is planned to have between 20-25 seats, and while open to anyone, the program will be of particular interest to Aboriginal educators and those with an interest in Aboriginal education, which would pretty much encompass any teacher involved in Saskatchewan schools today! The program addresses leadership in curriculum and instruction with a focus on Aboriginal education. The program will also incorporate opportunities for applied research. As a GDI delivered program, culture will of course be an important aspect.

Michael Relland, Program Coordinator for SUNTEP Prince Albert, has been instrumental in pulling the program together for Prince Albert. He notes that even with 1,000 SUNTEP grads in the province, "we're still underrepresented in the schools." The interest in the Master's degree program is encouraging, and he says, "If that holds, we'll probably end up doing more than one round." Michael will be

coordinating the new program.

The program will be offered on a part-time basis to accommodate teachers who are working in schools and will lead to a full Master of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction. The program consists of ten courses (30 credit hours) and is designed to serve a cohort of students. Classes will be offered by innovative means, including on weekends, evenings, by distance, and/or via community-related applied research assignments. Total cost of tuition for the program is \$12,500 per student.

The GDI Board of Governors approved the new program in October 2012 and a contract between the U of R and GDI was subsequently finalized. The program is an independent initiative of GDI and receives no funding support or direction from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

For more information please contact Michael Relland at 306-764-1818.



## 2012 Métis Awards

By James Oloo

The inaugural Métis Awards of Saskatchewan ceremony was held in Regina on October 20, 2012. 10 distinguished Métis individuals were recognized and honoured for their outstanding achievements

and contributions to their community. They included Christine Ginter for Education Award; Jeanne Pelletier was named Most Honourable Métis Woman; Dallas Boyer won the Youth Award; Carrie Bourassa won

the Science and Wellness Award; Keon Francis received the Entrepreneur Award; Senator Elder Nora Cummings received the Lifetime Achievement Award. For more information visit [www.wearehelpers.org](http://www.wearehelpers.org).



## Community Profile: Eastern Region II

By James Oloo

In this month's analysis of the socioeconomic and demographic profiles for the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan regions we highlight the performance of the Eastern Region II (ERII) Métis population. The purpose of the monthly is to highlight the performance of the Métis population against such indicators. The article uses 2006 Canada Census data.

Each of the 12 regions has an elected Regional Director who is also a member of the MN-S Provincial Métis Council. Helene Johnson is the Regional Director for ERII. The Region Office is in Archerwill with local offices at Carrot River, Hudson Bay, Invermay, Melfort, Nipawin, Tisdale, and Wynyard. The Region is represented at the GDI Board of Governors by Viola Bell.

ERII has a Métis population of 1,500, just over 40% of whom are below age 20 years. About 71% of the ERII Métis population aged between 15-24 years did not have high school diploma, while the other 29% had completed at least Grade 12 or equivalent. Of those who had successfully finished high school diploma, 57% had high school as their highest level of education while 43% had completed postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree upon graduating from high school. Among 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.

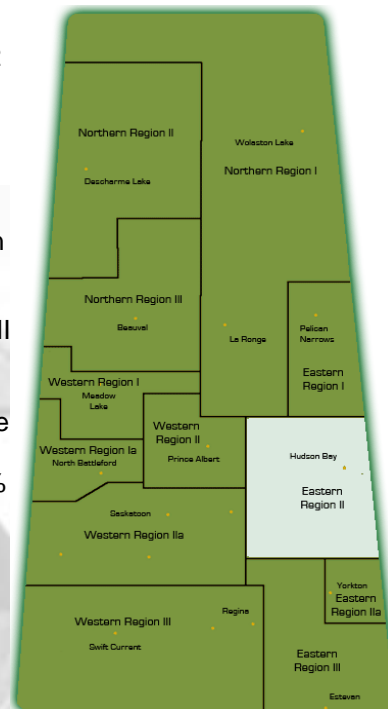
ERII has 745 Métis people aged between 25-64 years. Of this, 33% do not have high school diploma (compared to 19% of the general population of Saskatchewan in the same age group) and 67% had high school diploma or higher. Of those who had successfully completed high school, 38% had Grade 12 or equivalent as their highest level of education (compared to 26% for Saskatchewan); 25% had a postsecondary diploma or certificate in apprenticeship or trade (versus 14% for Saskatchewan); 21% had a non-university certificate or diploma from a college (versus 18% for the general population of Saskatchewan); and 15% had a university certificate, diploma or degree compared to 22% for the general population in the same age group.

Thus, among those aged 25-64 years, proportionately more ERII Métis had postsecondary diploma or certificate in apprenticeship or trades and in non-university postsecondary training than did the general population in Saskatchewan at 25% versus 14% and 21% versus 18% respectively. The former could be attributed to the work of Aboriginal-focused institutions such as GDI.

Also, note that, relatively more ERII Métis (38%) had Grade 12 as their highest level of education compared to the general population (26%). This is a group that can be empowered through training to acquire skills that are needed in the labour market.

Labour force activity for the ERII Métis was as follows. Of those aged 15-24 years, 43% were in the labour force while 57% were not. 90% of those in the labour force were employed while 10% had no job. For the general population, 66% were in the labour force while 34% were not. And of those in the labour force, 88% were employed. Thus, slightly more ERII Métis aged between 15-24 years in the labour force had employment than general population at 90% versus 88% respectively.

For the ERII Métis aged 25 years and over, 69% were in the labour force while 31% were not. Of those in the labour force, 90% were employed 10% did not have employment although they were looking for jobs. Among the general population of Saskatchewan in the same age group, 69% were in the labour force and 31% were not. Of those in the labour force, 95% had jobs while 5% did not have a job. Thus, while the same proportion (69%) of the ERII Métis population aged 25 years and over and the general population in the same age group was in the labour force, relatively more Métis people did not have jobs – at 10% compared to 5% of the general population. This group could be targeted for skills training especially in the areas that are in demand in the labour market.



St. Mary's School Jiggers  
Photo credit: Bonnie Hryciuk





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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.*



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