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1980-2017:

Proud Past, Bright Future



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 Represents the True Resilient Spirit of the Métis

By Mandi Reigh Elles

Mandi is a graduate of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) Regina.

Tanishi! Dishinikashon Mandi Elles. Regina, Saskatchewan d'ooshchiin. Hello! My name is Mandi Elles. I'm from Regina, Saskatchewan. I am a Métis woman, mother and educator. My family's rich Métis and First Nation roots extend from Lestock, Sask to Fort Belknap, Montana, USA. I graduated from SUNTEP Regina in 2012. I am the third graduate in my family and we are the first to obtain post-secondary degrees.

I work as a Cultural Arts educator at Seven Stones Community School. My aunt Dawne Elles is an Aboriginal Advocate teacher at Thom Collegiate while my cousin is employed on her reserve, Payepot First Nation. We have many other relatives that have completed GDI education and trades programs. Our individual experiences at GDI include crossing paths with many very special teachers and friends on our journey that have been true supporters of the successes in our lives and careers. SUNTEP/GDI provided us with a strong Métis culture based educational experience that inspired us to incorporate our Indigenous knowledge into our everyday teaching practices.

SUNTEP was a very natural career choice for me. Lifelong learning is an extension of Métis culture within our family life and communities. Our traditional ways of learning and teaching to others are all interconnected and bring balance to our personal lives as well as our communities. My father's educational experience in Saskatchewan during the 1970's also led me to choose education as my life's work. As a young Indigenous child, he was disconnected from lessons and teachers and ran away from school many times.

My own education was void of Métis and First Nation history and holistic learning until high school. I had many great teachers who influenced me and made me want to become a teacher. My family's stories are not uncommon today and many of our Indigenous students are still feeling lost at school. This is one important reason that motivates me to continue using Indigenous language and culture in my classroom. Students can relate to the lessons being taught, share background knowledge and are able to make meaningful connections between school and their own lives. It is also an open invitation for all non-Indigenous students and teachers to become a part of the learning process while gaining insight into traditional Indigenous ways of knowing.

I always endeavor to blend our traditional teachings, stories, and languages together to create a unique, holistic experience for my students. Our learning comes from practical use of basic Michif-Cree language, hands-on land based lessons, ceremony and plant medicine teachings from Elders. Our students and my own children are being nurtured by this natural way of connecting their spirits to Mother Earth and in return may learn a deep respect for themselves, others and the world around them.

It is through this sharing of common values and teachings that we connect to our Indigenous students and strengthen their sense of pride and purpose. Our Indigenous students may choose to continue this work by becoming educators in the future. Although my daughter is far from university years, she has already begun to share Michif history and language lessons in her classroom!

Indigenous educators play an integral role in Canadian educational systems as the nation's goal is to promote reconciliation by bridging gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Indigenous educators bring a perspective in the classroom that can empower Indigenous students while enhancing reconciliation with non-Indigenous peoples. *Continued on Page 4.*



Success Story: Garrison Parker

By Dumont Technical Institute



Garrison Parker second year student, Dumont Technical Institute Practical Nursing Program, Saskatoon
Photo courtesy of Dumont Technical Institute

Garrison Parker left school without a high school diploma, and as time went by, started thinking about his future. He then came to Dumont Technical Institute for advice.

Garrison soon joined the Dumont Technical Institute's Adult Basic Education (ABE) program in which he excelled and graduated with a high school diploma. He is currently enrolled in the Dumont Technical Institute practical nursing program in Saskatoon and is expected to graduate in May 2017.

Garrison noted that "Dumont Technical Institute accommodated my needs through the flexibility of its ABE program. I upgraded while working full time." He stated that, "DTI staff is supportive and understanding of the

challenges faced by older students who are returning to the classroom. Their support and encouragement, together with the family-atmosphere at the Institute has been very good."

Garrison's future career goals and aspirations include working as a flight nurse with STARS Air Ambulance. We are confident that he can achieve whatever he puts his mind into. We have seen him grow over the years and admire his motivation and desire to succeed. Garrison's future looks bright and Dumont Technical Institute is glad to have been a part of that journey.

A recent article by PayScale Human Capital, 'Soon, a High School Diploma Won't Get You a Job Anywhere,' drew a lot of

comments in the social media. The article pointed out that while there are industry leaders without college education, "(T)he cold, hard truth ... is, a college (education) is now more important than ever." This is evident by Garrison's experience.

Dumont Technical Institute was founded in 1992 as part of Gabriel Dumont Institute on the principle that the Métis people of Saskatchewan should have access to quality Adult Basic Education and skills training at a Métis-owned post-secondary and cultural institution. For more information about the practical nursing program, please contact Candy Schiele, Program Coordinator, at candy.schiele@dti.gdins.org or 1-877-488-6888. 🌐

J. Lafond: GDI Apprenticeship Newest Journeyperson

By James Oloo



Jennifer Lafond receives an award from the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Manager Brett D'Amour
Photo by James Oloo

Jennifer Grace Lafond is a Métis woman and the latest GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project client to earn a Journeyperson Certification. She passed the interprovincial journeyperson cook examination earlier this month.

The journeyperson cook exam is developed by a national committee of worker and employer representatives. To write the exam, a candidate must either successfully complete an apprenticeship training requiring a combination of three years and 5400 hours on the job including technical training; or meet tradesperson eligibility requirements of 4.5 years, including a total of 8100 hours on the job. Jennifer has worked as a cook and catering-business owner for many years.

In early 2016, she heard from her employer that because of her Métis heritage, she could be eligible for assistance from Gabriel Dumont Institute to work towards a journeyperson certification. She soon visited Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment where she met Employment Counselor Dwayne Docken. As she puts it, "Dwayne has been a fantastic person. He provided me with great information and very helpful advice. He is very encouraging and has been a great help in my journey."

Jennifer says that after she was accepted into the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, she realized how hard it was to go back to school and that most of the lessons covered were new to her. But,

"If you have supportive people around, have determination and work hard, things will be alright. They turned out well for me," she said with a smile.

She credits her paternal and maternal grandmothers (one was Métis and other First Nations) for her career choice and work ethics. "I enjoy feeding people, and I've realized that as a cook, you are just as good as the last dish you put out. You must have passion to do the job - the preparation, presentation." Jennifer goes on, "I learned at an early age while growing up at the farm. If you are going to do anything, give it your best. It is a good philosophy to live by."

Continued on Page 3.



Who Is it That I Really Am?

By Vanessa G. Johnson

Vanessa is a third year student in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) in Saskatoon. She submitted the following spoken word poetry.

Who is it that I really am?
I am the daughter of an educator and the daughter of a man of the trades. I am the "wild child". I am strong-willed, stubborn and ambitious.

I also have a quiet and sensitive side. Although I am fiercely independent I can't wait to help someone grow and learn.

I am the granddaughter of a man who knew the land and the skies. He taught me how to connect myself to the earth and what that

connection means. I am a niece of Gabriel Dumont, I know where my fighter spirit comes from; it was bred into me. I am the granddaughter of the Parenteaus who fought alongside Dumont. I also descend from Vikings. The fight in my heart is not fair; I have no weakness in these bloodlines.

Who is it that I really am?
I am a university graduate; I am a current SUNTEP student. I have learned who I am through trial and tribulations. I have learned who I am through my journey in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program. Learning Indigenous content and connecting the dots of its relevance is beyond words. Feeling the connection to the Indigenous content, seeing my family name in

the articles I read helps to bring the reality to who I am, and where I come from.

Who is it that I really am?
I am a strong, intelligent, and courageous Metis woman. I am growing and learning and connecting the dots of all of my Metis and Indigenous heritage.

Who will I be?
I will be a Metis educator and teacher to students. I will help lead young Indigenous students to their full potential. I will be and currently am an example of indigenous potential. I am of humble beginnings and I have experienced much more than most my age. I will bring my experiences to my potential and I will break barriers in my career. Because, this is who I really am. 🌐

Brittany Olson: A Success Story

By Dumont Technical Institute

Brittany Olson has been a part of Dumont Technical Institute as a student since 2009 when she joined the Continue Care Aid program. She successfully completed the program in 2010, and was accepted in to the Dumont Technical Institute practical nursing program in Saskatoon and is expected to graduate in May 2017.

Brittany has always wanted to work in the healthcare sector. Upon graduation, she plans to work as a licensed practical nurse and possibly return to school at a later date to pursue further studies so that she may become a registered nurse or a registered practical nurse.

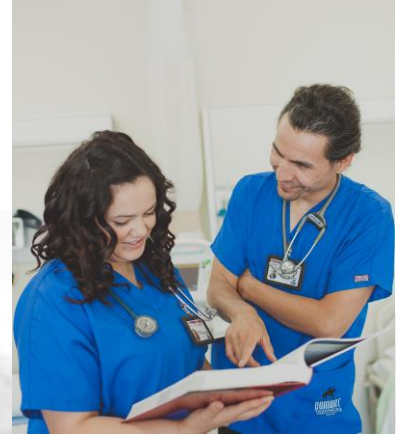
Although Brittany has overcome many obstacles that come with balancing a family and school, she always has a caring, friendly attitude. According to DTI Program Coordinator Chantelle Jule, "Brittany is a dedicated and committed student, she is able to manage a busy work load, and puts everything into perspective well. Not only is she a great student, but she is also excelling in her current career as a Continuing Care Aid."

Brittany thanks Gabriel Dumont Institute "for the opportunity that has been life-changing." She says, "I choose DTI because I love the atmosphere regarding

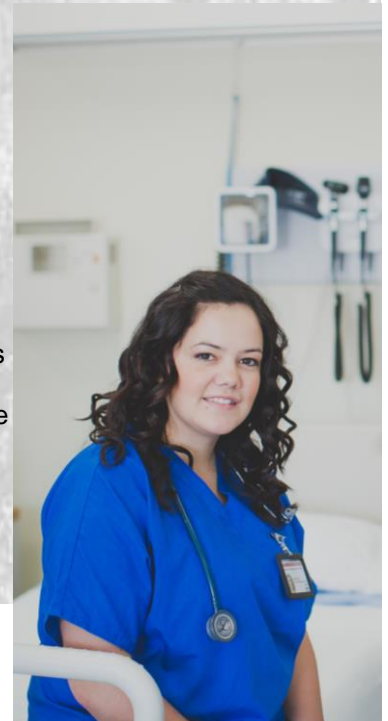
education. Everyone is so wonderful. It's like a family. Plus, the smaller classes make the learning much more fun." Brittany's favourite things about Dumont Technical Institute are the happy positive staff that loves to hear about student accomplishments and watch them succeed.

Dumont Technical Institute offers practical nursing programs in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. To date, it is the second largest producer of practical nurses in Saskatchewan. For more information about the nursing program, please contact Candy Schiele, Program Coordinator, at candy.schiele@dti.gdins.org or 1-877-488-6888. 🌐

DTI Practical Nursing Program



Brittany Olson and Garrison Parker
Dumont Technical Institute
Practical Nursing Program,
Saskatoon
(Please see pages 2 and 3)



Brittany Olson
second year student,
Practical Nursing program,
Saskatoon
Photos courtesy of
Dumont Technical Institute



Sixth Annual Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation Golf Tournament will be on May 26, 2017 at Moon Lake Golf & Country Club, Saskatoon



Lafond Becomes a Journeyperson ... *Continued from Page 3*

Jennifer noted that, “GDI gave me financial support for tuition and to buy books, which can be quite costly. They were patient with me and were always ready to provide encouragement and motivation. They had faith in me which made it easier to see myself as journeyperson cook long before I became one.”

Jennifer believes that “it helps a lot for an Indigenous person to get support from Indigenous people and organizations like GDI. There is a level of understanding

and trust that is necessary to have success. That was evident in my interactions with GDI.”

Jennifer says that “being a journeyperson cook feels good.” She has recommended the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project to others. “Anything worth having needs some work and sacrifice. Go for it. Once you get your (trades) ticket, no one can take it from you.”

Jennifer plans to continue working at her current position with the health region and may go back to school later to earn a blue seal certification. According

to the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission, the Blue Seal Certificate, or Achievement in Business Competencies Program, is a credential offered to individuals with a valid Saskatchewan journeyperson certificate in a designated trade in Saskatchewan.

For more information about the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project, please contact Chelsie Scragg at (306) 242-6070 or apprenticeships@gdins.org.

Uncertainty: The Hidden Enemy in the Workplace

By Jim Edmondson

The immediate impact of the recently released Provincial and Federal budgets has cultivated a fear of job loss and restraint that hangs over workplaces like a cloud of worry. “Perceived job insecurity,” as it is often referred to, may be here to stay, and research shows that it has even more wide-ranging and serious effects on workers and companies than was once thought.

All of us know that just about nothing is worse than uncertainty and the dread of being unemployed can actually be worse than the reality of losing your job. When people know they will lose their job, they deal with it,

thus minimizing the impact of the loss. However, a more challenging situation is when people are in an insecure position, because they feel powerless.

Regrettably, there are many people in that position today. A Gallup poll conducted in August 2015 found that almost one-third of workers feared being laid off, compared with about half that number in August 2008. Research indicates that job insecurity affects physical and mental health, increases burnout, reduces job satisfaction and decreases work performance. Some have theorized that a little insecurity isn't a bad thing because people might work

harder to keep their jobs. But studies show that any amount of job insecurity isn't good.

There is also a real threat to employee safety. A study by Washington State University found that perceived job insecurity caused workers to pay less attention to safety and subsequently experience more injuries and accidents at work. Just as troubling is the fact that due to perceived job insecurity, employees are more reluctant to report injuries.

When people are anxious about losing their jobs, they might seem likely to access company wellness programs such as counseling.

Continued on Page 5



Mandi Reigh Elles a SUNTEP Regina graduate is an educator at Seven Stones Community School in Regina (Please see Page 1) Photo courtesy of Mandi Elles

GDI, an Institute of Our Own ... *Continued from Page 1*

GDI offers educational and careers services in an environment that honours and celebrates Métis history and pride. It is also a powerful tool in the decolonization process for many families. We are the living descendants of fur

trade voyageurs, Road Allowance and residential school survivors, proud warriors, language speakers, knowledge keepers, and natural healers. Who better to share our history, stories, and proud past by way of education than us?

GDI represents the true resilient spirit of Métis past, present, and future. I am very proud of GDI and the opportunity it gave me and my family. Pimatishi, kishkayhta ekwa ahkameyimo. Live, learn and persevere/ Ekoshi.



Uncertainty in the Workplace ... Continued from Page 1

GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project

But they're actually more reluctant to do so. A 2014 study by Texas A&M University involving a large energy company found that employees who were worried about losing their jobs were also less likely to use any support programs than those who felt more secure. The findings were surprising, because the company had experienced relatively few or no layoffs. Further, the company, like GDI, prided itself in its culture of supporting a balance between work and family. The study noted that the more employees are worried about their

job, the more their work permeates into their home life.

Perceived job insecurity makes employees think that any error or misstep will result in them losing their job. This can be stressful and often has physical manifestations such as stomach-aches, headaches, and difficulty sleeping. Usually, such fears are irrational and over blown in our perceptions. Therefore, the first thing to do is to make sure there is a real, imminent or impending danger of losing your job. The best way to ensure we have a job is to do our job to

the best of our abilities.

Uncertainty does not discriminate as to who it affects, even Millennials, those in their 20s and 30s, who are more likely to hop from job to job over their lifetime, are affected. From all accounts, job insecurity is unhealthy yet seems to be here to stay, but it should not be ignored. Understanding how it affects us and our productivity is critical to our overall well-being in today's uncertain economic situation. 🌐



Jennifer Lafond is congratulated by Dwayne Docken, Employment Counselor (left), and Brett D'Amour, Apprenticeships Manager, GDI Training and Employment (Please see Page 2) Photo by James Oloo

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, May 2017

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 12 Student Payroll	2	3	4 Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	5 Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	6
7	8	9 Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Pmts on Student May 12 Direct Deposit Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for May 15 Payday	10	11 Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	12 Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	13
14	15 Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 26 Student Payroll	16	17	18 Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	19 Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	20
21	22 Victoria Day Stat Holiday	23 Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student May 26 Direct Deposits	24	25 A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for May 31 Payday	26 Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	27
28	29 Cutoff @ 4:30 for June 9 Student Payroll	30	31 Staff Payday			

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.



Gabriel Dumont Institute/Dumont Technical Institute

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK
S7M 0R9

PHONE:
(306) 242-6070

FAX:
(306) 242-0002

E-MAIL:
general@gdi.gdins.org

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index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/833)

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GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

GDI Locations

GDI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

GDI Publishing Saskatoon

2—604 22nd Street West
Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1
Phone: (306) 934-4941
Fax: (306) 244-0252

GDI Finance and Operations

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 975-0903

DTI Central Office Saskatoon

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 242-0002

Toll Free (DTI):
1-877-488-6888

SUNTEP Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 764-1797
Fax: (306) 764-3995

SUNTEP Saskatoon

Room 7 McLean Hall
University of
Saskatchewan
106 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E6
Phone: (306) 975-7095
Fax: (306) 975-1108

SUNTEP Regina

Room 227 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4110

GDI Training and Employment Central Office

917 22nd Street West
Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9
Phone: (306) 242-6070
Fax: (306) 683-3508

Toll Free (T&E):
1-877-488-6888
Fax: (306) 347-4119

GDI Library Regina

Room 218 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina, S4S 0A2
Phone: (306) 347-4124
Fax: (306) 565-0809

<http://gdi.voyager.uregina.ca/>

GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
Phone: (306) 922-6466
Fax: (306) 763-4834



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