



In this issue:

Jim Brady Local
#19 Works to
Enhance Métis
Culture

COVID-19 Métis
Student
Supports Update

DTI Boosts Student
Self-Confidence
and Success

Payroll Cutoff
Calendar

HIGHLIGHTS

Hingley Named New
Superintendent of
Sask Rivers
Schools
1

Ile-à-la-cross
Robotics Club
Wins Sask
Championships
2

Sewing Métis
Culture into
Masks
3

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

Hingley Named New Superintendent of Sask Rivers Schools

By James Oloo and Sheila Pocha

Mrs. Jennifer Hingley, a graduate of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), has been appointed the new superintendent of the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. The Division operates 33 schools in the Prince Albert area and serves more than 9,500 students from kindergarten to Grade 12.

In its June 9, 2020 media release, the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division stated that Jennifer will be starting her new position as the superintendent of schools in August 2020. Jennifer is currently the principal at Brownell School in the Saskatoon Public School Division.

Jennifer graduated from SUNTEP Saskatoon in 1996 and has been working as an educator since then. The SUNTEP Saskatoon Class of 1996 included Frank Aubichon – the brother of Sheila Pocha. Sheila, who is the current Head of SUNTEP Saskatoon, remembers the SUNTEP graduation that year: “I could see the sparkle in Jennifer’s eyes as she demonstrated a devotion to her Métis culture and the program!”

“I believe Jennifer will continue to make positive differences on behalf of all children in K-12 education,” said Sheila.

Jennifer has held a number of leadership roles in Saskatoon Public schools since becoming a classroom teacher in 1997 at Lester B. Pearson School. She was the Project Leader for the Okiciyapi Partnership where she facilitated the development of the *Working in Harmony: A New Way of Learning and Leading*. The teacher resource for K-3, 4-8, 9-12 provides models of how to include Métis and First Nations content in the curriculum. She also served as Learning Leader: First Nations and Métis Education for Saskatoon Public Schools, and as principal of Howard Coad School in Saskatoon.

Sheila, a former educator with the Saskatoon Public School Division, noted, “During my years as a principal, I admired Jennifer for her positive work ethic and advocacy for improved educational practices for our Indigenous children in schools. She always demonstrated strong educational leadership in all of these varied leadership roles and was not afraid to speak up on behalf of Indigenous children and staff!”

A passionate educator and proud SUNTEP alumni, Jennifer has mentored many, including her children. We

are proud to have her son Jayden Hingley in SUNTEP Saskatoon. Jayden will start his second year with us in the fall of 2020.

Jennifer previously represented the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation on the Canadian Teachers’ Federation Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education. We are very proud of Jennifer and want to wish her the best of congratulations.

Saskatchewan Rivers School Division is the third largest school division in Saskatchewan. It employs over 470 teachers, 370 support personnel, and owns 90 buses that serve over 2,000 students daily.

In 2020, as we mark 40th anniversary of Gabriel Dumont Institute, it is remarkable to note that close to 1,400 Indigenous teachers have graduated from the SUNTEP. Most of the graduates work as teachers, principals, and superintendents. Their influence is being felt not only in the classrooms as teachers, but also in educational leadership and policy in schools and across school divisions in Saskatchewan and beyond.

Continued on page 4



Jim Brady Local #19 Works to Enhance Métis Culture

By Valerie G. Barnes-Connell

Jim Brady Local #19 Corporation began investigating opportunities to enhance Métis cultural awareness and highlight Métis identity. Beginning on February 5, 2020 with an evening of conversation with members about the interests they have, there were a variety of classes started before the COVID-19 pandemic emergency started.

People gathered to learn finger weaving, beading, and moccasin making. An Old Tyme Dance, scheduled for Saturday March 21, was postponed due to the pandemic.

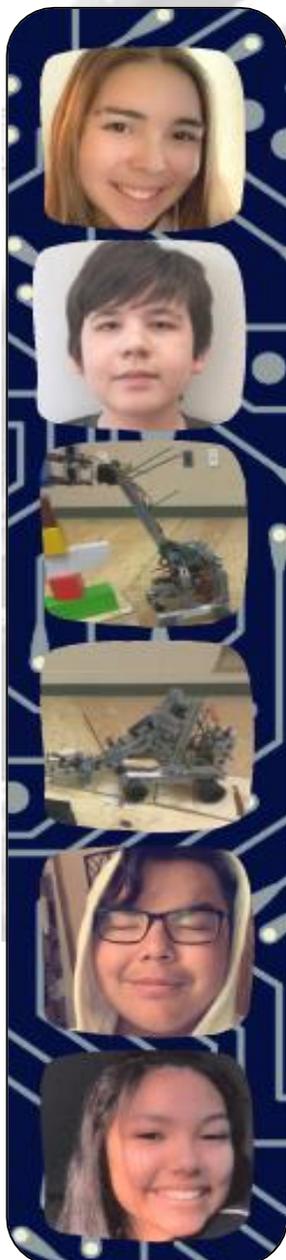
Initial plans included knitting, crocheting, learning the Michif language, and tentatively organizing a trip to Batoche in the summer. Other ideas include learning about Métis culture, art, and history.

Options suggested also included music, dance, land-based learning, loom work, traditional cooking, woodwork, hunting and fishing. A summer camp men's programming were also ideas presented at a gathering.

Funding for the programming came through the Métis Nation— Saskatchewan Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP).

All events take place at the Kikinahk Friendship Centre and all people are welcome.

This article first appeared in the Spring 2020 edition of *Community Connections*, a publication of the Kikinahk Friendship Centre, La Ronge, Saskatchewan. 🌐



Rossignol High School Robotic Huskie Squad

Île-à-la-Crosse Robotics Club Wins Sask Champions

By James Oloo

Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) has been sponsoring the Rossignol High School Robotic program in the Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan for almost a decade.

It took the Rossignol High School Robotic Huskie Squad teams eight months to design, build and test four robots in preparation for this year's competitions.

The Robotic Huskie Squad registered perfect scores at the Northern Regional Competition for Skills Canada on March 11, 2020. They proceeded to the provincial championships, Skills Saskatchewan competition, which was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Rossignol High School Robotic Huskie Squad was named the 2020 Skills Saskatchewan Provincial Champions, and thus qualified for the Skills Canada National Championships. "It is unfortunate that we would have been heading out to Vancouver for the Nationals, but this is not possible because of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dave Dalton, the math and science teacher who is also the coach of the Rossignol High School Robotic club. "We had a very good chance of winning there too."

The competitions involved designing, building, and programming a robot. The robot would then build a bridge and contrast a House Post (a Traditional symbol of Pacific

Northwest Indigenous Nations). As well, the robot was expected to navigate a maze, pick up a totem pole, and deliver it to the starting point of the maze.

Robotics enables students to develop skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The students also get hands on experience in engineering, designing, constructing, and wiring, as well as building interpersonal skills, teamwork, and dedication.

In his letter to GDI, Dalton stated, "From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your support over the years. There is no doubt Rossignol High School has the best Robotics Program in Saskatchewan and we are going strong." 🌐

COVID-19 Métis Student Supports Update

By Desirae Barker

In April 2020, the Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation launched the COVID-19 Emergency Bursary for Métis Students.

Funds for the bursary were gathered from internal sources and a \$17,000 contribution from Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship (SIOS).

As of June, 408 Métis students have been granted bursaries for a total of \$192,350 under the program.

On June 4, GDI partnered with the MasterCard Foundation to further support students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership gifted GDI with \$250,000 in immediate support.

All emergency funds received are used to provide: immediate access to technological solutions for distance learning, laptops and internet service to students, access to mental health and wellness resources, and direct supports to help meet basic needs like rent, childcare, and medications. 🌐





Photo Courtesy of Jennifer Hingley

Hingley Named New Superintendent ... *Continued from Page 1*

Under the leadership of Geordy McCaffrey, Executive Director, Gabriel Dumont Institute has been able to anticipate and respond effectively to both community needs and the labour market trends by building and nurturing partnerships that are beneficial to our students and the Métis community.

Last year, the Institute launched the new Northern

Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP) in partnership with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the University of Regina in La Ronge, Sask.

The Institute is looking forward to celebrating the fourth graduation of its Community-based Master of Education program I the summer of 2021. The master's program is

offered by the Institute in Prince Albert in partnership with the University of Regina.

As Geordy McCaffrey noted in a radio interview with MBC's Ken Landers on February 7, 2020, "We remember that there were leaders who did so much before us who did the heavy lifting to ensure that we have a Métis institution. We respect their hard work and sacrifice." 🌐

DUE TO COVID-19, THE 2020 GDI GOLF TOURNAMENT HAS BEEN CANCELLED. THE TENTATIVE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S TOURNAMENT IS MAY 28, 2021. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW CLOSER TO THE DATE.



Sewing Métis Culture into Masks

By Desirae Barker

As the role of face masks becomes more prominent as a means of protection against COVID-19, Angela Bishop, a Saskatchewan Métis woman began creating homemade masks with an Indigenous flare.

Understanding that staying at home and social distancing is not always possible, especially in Indigenous communities where overcrowding and poverty are very real obstacles, Angela began sewing handcrafted masks. The masks were then donated to Indigenous Elders, Elders, veterans, knowledge keepers, and frontline workers in care homes.

With her masks becoming increasingly popular, Angela started thinking of ways to make them more reflective of Métis culture. In May 2020, she approached Gabriel

Dumont Institute (GDI) for donations to help make this possible. GDI readily provided 125 lanyards with a Métis sash imprint that would be sewn onto the masks.

"When we created the face masks, we wanted people to take pride in wearing them," says Angela. GDI was happy to help provide a design that would promote a sense of community culture and solidarity during these times.

Angela along with a group of community mask makers has sewn over 5,000 masks, and provided them to people free of charge. More than one of the masks were donated to communities under lockdown in northern Saskatchewan.

The Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN—S) commended the efforts of the sewers with new sewing machines in recognition of

their work and contributions to such an important cause. "One of the things that makes me so proud of our group is that notwithstanding all of these challenges that they were facing, they were there for our communities," said Angela. "One individual at risk is a family at risk, is a community at risk, is our Nation at risk."

The group has been sewing masks since early April and has found innovative ways to continually improve their craft. For Elders and veterans who wear hearing aids and may have experienced difficulties with the masks, the group fabricated ear savers to help. They've also created many other custom masks.

With donations made by GDI, MN—S, and other Métis organizations, Angela stated that she would continue to make masks until she runs out of material. 🌐



Photo Courtesy of Karon Shmon





Mental Wellness Student Support Program

keep.meSAFE's innovative Student Support Program (SSP) helps students by promoting early intervention and 24/7 access to mental health support. We help students manage their mental health so they can fully participate in academic life and complete their studies. keep.meSAFE is the first support program to use linguistically and culturally matched licensed clinicians, providing your students a welcoming place where they are comfortable to seek help.

Did You Know?

- 50%** 50% of students have felt overwhelming anxiety, making it hard to succeed academically
- 31%** 31% of post-secondary students have felt so depressed that it was difficult to function

Program Features

- Full integration with on-campus resources
- Master's level counsellors experienced in supporting domestic and international students
- Access to a counsellor who understands their culture in their preferred language
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- Free My SSP app with direct access to counsellors and self-directed multilingual resources
- Outcomes based success measures to report on results

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DTI Boosts Student Self-Confidence and Success

By James Oloo

Dumont Technical Institute is the Adult Basic Education and Skills training branch of GDI. It has been delivering programs across Saskatchewan since 1992. Under the strong and effective leadership of Brett Vandale, DTI has recorded growth in partnerships, programming, enrolment, and completion rates.

For example, DTI is the second largest training provider for practical nurses in Saskatchewan by number of graduates. Over the years, DTI has partnered with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice to deliver Adult Basic Education programs to inmates, thereby playing a key role in enabling inmates to transition to life in the community after serving their sentences.

In this article, we examine what DTI has been doing right, relative to some of the best practices suggested by renowned educators Debbie Zacarian and Michael Silverstone in their latest book, *Teaching to Empower: Taking Action to Foster Student Agency, Self-Confidence, and Collaboration* (ASCD, 2020).

Zacarian and Silverstone identify strategies that if employed by educational institutions, could empower individual students and give them “tools to become an active learner, thoughtful community member, and engaged global citizen.” These include creating inclusive and empowering physical learning spaces; establishing self-directed

learning and promoting positive interdependence; promoting student self-reflection; teaching the skills of collaboration; and partnering more effectively with families and the community to support student empowerment.

But first, student agency is used here to mean that students have a voice, and in most cases, choice, in what and how they learn. Student agency, together with guidance from instructors and counsellors, as well as a positive learning environment are highly valued at DTI.

Empowering Spaces

DTI has long recognized the importance of a stimulating physical classroom environment to learning. Classroom environment affects student morale, the feeling of classroom community, and provides students with a sense of familiarity and empowerment. DTI classrooms not only provide these and more (such as learning resources, small class sizes, and beautiful spaces that make our students feel good to be at school), but they also affirm and celebrate Métis culture, heritage, and language.

Self-Directed Learning

Like many Indigenous students in Saskatchewan, many DTI students, especially in the Adult Basic Education program, were ‘pushed out’ of the regular kindergarten – Grade 12 school system before completing high school. As adult students, they bring with them to DTI not just various strengths and funds of knowledge, but many

are juggling life commitments such as family, work, and are back in school to acquire specific skills.

Self-directed learning is a common instructional strategy used in DTI programming. GDI programs, including those offered by DTI, prioritize teaching the student, and so create space for student voice, interests, and initiative to be acknowledged and nurtured.

Promote Self-Reflection

Taking time to reflect is important for everyone as a way of creating greater self-awareness. When applied to an education setting like DTI, self-reflection involves allowing students opportunity to take a moment and think about what they are doing, what they are learning, and how that is contributing to their overall goal. It enables the student to identify how things are going and areas that may need improvement.

Speaking with instructors at DTI, at least one thing stands out. It is always about the students. “Our job involves teaching,” an instructor told me, adding that, “But our focus is on learning and student success, not on teaching.” That focus involves encouraging active participation by every student.

DTI students are often asked to write self-reflection assignments (reflective writing), and during exit interviews at the end of their education, they complete questionnaires that ask them to reflect on their time at DTI and their plans for the future.

Continued on Page 5



DTI Boosts Student Self Confidence ... *Continued from Page 4*

Collaboration Skills

From classrooms to playgrounds and organized sports, the importance of engaging our students in collaborative activities speaks for itself. DTI is intentional in promoting effective student collaboration.

With smaller class sizes and instructional design that incorporates teamwork, DTI encourages student collaboration through group projects, and helping students to understand importance of active cooperation among themselves and what an effective collaboration looks like.

As well, remote learning has been necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This has created opportunity for student collaboration beyond the classroom.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute awarded over \$192,000 in emergency bursaries to 408 students under the COVID-19 Emergency Bursary for Métis Students, and approximately 100 students borrowed laptops or Chromebooks from DTI to support their at-home studies.

DTI instructors have leveraged digital tools to enhance student collaboration by creating interactive walls for discussion and student engagement.

Examples of these digital tools are Flipgrid, Wakelet, and other resources.

These digital tools allow students to share ideas, give each other feedback, and create resources.

Family Engagement

Historically, many Indigenous families and communities have not always had a positive school experience.

Education, and particularly the residential school system, was a tool for colonization, abuse, and pain inflicted on Indigenous peoples (see for example: Residential School Shame: The TRC Report).

One of the reasons for the ongoing disparities in educational outcomes for Indigenous (versus non-Indigenous) populations is that schools have not found effective ways to build positive and meaningful

relationships with Indigenous students, families, and communities.

Dumont Technical Institute is owned by the Métis of Saskatchewan and offers community-based programs.

The Institute values community partnerships that support student empowerment and success. It is not uncommon to find DTI students who are the second or third generation in their family to attend DTI.

DTI has implemented most of the strategies identified in Zacarian and Silverstone's 2020 book. It had an impressive student population of 940 last year, and the future looks bright. 🌍

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, July 2020

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

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

Employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance

Payroll must receive contracts prior to payroll cutoff date, otherwise the employee will be paid on the following pay period.



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[https://gdins.org/student-
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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.

