



THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE COMMUNICATOR



Marilyn Belhumeur, Leah Dorion, Karon Shmon, and Darren Prefontaine
at First Nations Studies Conference 1998, GDI Archives

The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to document the achievements of management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

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LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE, LOOKING FORWARD WITH HOPE AND CONFIDENCE

By Karon Shmon, Director of Culture and Heritage

At this time, I wish to express my gratitude to the Institute for giving me the privilege of working in such a culturally affirming and career fulfilling position. I have often remarked to people that working at Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) is a huge mental health break because I do not have to explain what I think and say every day, like I did while working in mainstream education. The Institute's founders set a clear mission for the Institute, and it has held up for 45 years. The difference GDI has made for Métis individuals and families cannot be measured. Even coming to GDI for a brief time is life changing. We feel a sense of community and belonging here because we are with other Métis who understand and share our worldview. Our non-Métis colleagues are our allies as we work to fulfill the dream of those who came before us while clearing a path for today's Métis and those to come in the future.

Many of us at GDI are aware that our ancestors, as recent as our parents and grandparents, did not have the opportunity to finish high school or to follow their desired career path. Even for the few who were able to do so, this meant they were likely to be working in environments that were still systematically operating under models established with colonial, and often racist, views of Indigenous Peoples. Staying the course at work was just as challenging as staying in school when your potential goes unacknowledged and you are not affirmed or encouraged to dream of your future and to go after it with confidence and the support of others.

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HOW TO ASK SOMEONE'S PRONOUNS?

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect including respecting the pronouns they go by. Try to have an open mind when meeting someone new instead of assuming what pronouns you think they should use. One way to ask someone about their pronouns is to tell them yours first, for example:

"Hi, my name is Gabriel, and I use he/him pronouns. How should I refer to you?"

If you are unsure what pronouns someone uses, you can refer to them by name until you have the opportunity to get clarity. For more info visit: pronouns.org

MICHIF WORDS OF THE MONTH

KIIYAAM

Accept

FAAMII

Family

KATAWASHISHIHK

Loveliness

KISHKISHI

Remember

POON ATOOSHKEW

Retired from work

WELLBELLY COLONICS, HOLISTIC WELL-BEING ROOTED IN HERITAGE

by Jacob Dumont, GDITE Administrative Coordinator - Special Projects

WellBelly Colonics, a thriving holistic health business in Saskatoon, was founded by Brianne Uhryn, a proud female Métis entrepreneur. Brianne's journey, deeply rooted in her heritage, showcases a unique blend of clinical expertise and cultural appreciation.

A registered nurse with international experience, Brianne's passion for digestive health was ignited by her personal battle with endometriosis and the discovery of colon hydrotherapy in Australia. This led her to establish WellBelly, which was driven by a desire to offer holistic care she felt was missing in Saskatchewan.

Brianne's Métis background shaped her approach to starting the business. "My elementary school vice-principal, who was First Nations, introduced us to so much about dance and cultural performances," Brianne shares. "That experience resonated deeply, opening my eyes to different paths of healing." This connection continued through her nursing education, which included a dedicated course on Indigenous studies, and her work at St. Paul's Hospital, serving a significant Indigenous population. She actively embraced cultural practices, "cherishing braiding the girls' hair and helping them feel culturally at ease, respecting their preferences for treatment, and accompanying them to smudges." These experiences solidified the importance of cultural practices in healing.

Navigating the complexities of launching a business without prior experience, Brianne found invaluable support in the Gabriel Dumont Institute's Pathways for Entrepreneurship program.

Another crucial resource was the now defunct Power Up program through YWCA, an intensive, which was an intensive 11-week business course designed for women. "I essentially built the business concurrently with taking the course," Brianne states. "It provided me with knowledge ranging from obtaining a Saskatchewan business licence to understanding PST and GST, and even establishing my online presence and booking system." The Blue Moose Media Course, funded through GDI, also proved to be highly impactful. "It changed my approach, as I was dedicating an excessive amount of time to social media, which was becoming draining," Brianne reveals. "Learning how to effectively leverage it to reach my target market, understand SEO, and grasp other industry slang I had previously been unfamiliar with was incredibly beneficial."

WellBelly Colonics embodies Brianne's commitment to empowering clients through education and self-care, providing a unique service informed by both research and a rich cultural understanding. Her journey highlights the transformative power of Métis entrepreneurship and the vital role of programs like GDI's in fostering Métis growth and cultural connection within the community. WellBelly is more than a business, it's a testament to holistic well-being rooted in heritage. 🌱



Brianne Uhryn, WellBelly Colonics
photo by Nicole Denbow



UPCOMING APPLICATION DEADLINES



Class 1 Driver Training (MELT)

La Loche

Ongoing



Early Childhood Education Level 2

Online

Ongoing



Continuing Care Assistant

Regina, Saskatoon, or Prince Albert

Ongoing



Adult Basic Education

Various

Ongoing



For a full listing of all current programs and to apply online visit

WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS

PRACTICAL NURSING STUDENTS HOST PEDIATRIC HEALTH AWARENESS EVENT

by **Candy Schiele, Program Coordinator & Practical Nursing Faculty**

Second-year students at the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) Practical Nursing Diploma Program organized and hosted a Pediatric Health Clinic in March, aimed at educating children and families on health topics.

The two-day event served as a community outreach initiative and contributed to 30 practicum hours focused on caring for infants and children. Students look forward to this component of the maternal and child health course and were excited to choose their topics from a curated list to develop their stations. This opportunity allowed them to apply their learning in a practical, community-based setting. The event featured a range of interactive and educational booths, designed to promote wellness through learning.

Some of the key stations featured during the event included:

A Child Development Station—At this station, students assessed various areas of child development. Children took part in a mini checkup where nursing students checked things, like their blood pressure, heart rate, height, and weight. It was all done in a friendly environment to help families feel comfortable and safe.

A Car Seat Safety Station—this booth provided parents with information on car seat safety, covering types and styles of car seats, age-appropriate use, when it's safe to transition to forward-facing seats and proper installation.

Nutrition Station—Children learned about the benefits of healthy eating and uncovered the hidden sugar

content in everyday foods and drinks. The station featured fun, age-appropriate activities to encourage smarter food choices.

Dental Health Station—Here children received guidance on maintaining oral hygiene and the importance of proper dental care. Each child took home a dental care package containing a toothbrush, toothpaste, and fluoride products, generously donated by public health.

Before leaving the clinic, children stopped by the snack and balloon booth, where they chose from a selection of healthy snacks and watched as colorful balloon animals were crafted to take home as a special gift.

These interactive stations allowed children to dive deeper into various health-related topics through hands-on play and exploration, sparking curiosity. The event welcomed over 50 children and their caregivers. Both parents and children left with increased health knowledge, while nursing students gained invaluable experience in pediatric care. Events like this highlight the importance of community engagement in nursing education and support the growth of the nursing students. 🌍





THE LATE SOPHIE MCDUGALL HONoured WITH CANADA POST STAMP



Sophie McDougall nee Boyer (1928—2023) was a beloved Elder, Michif language-keeper, teacher, and mother of 13 from St. Louis. She was commemorated in a Canada Post stamp unveiled on June 17th. She was chosen because of her efforts to preserve Michif and working with kids. She translated many children's books into Michif to pass on the language.

Sophie was from St. Louis, a direct descendent of the original five Métis families to settle there. She taught in North Battleford before starting her own large family. She served as an Elder with the Prince Albert Métis Women's Association, and in 2023, she received the Order of Gabriel Dumont Gold Medal for her lifetime of service to the Métis Nation.

The stamp was issued as part of the Indigenous Leaders series. Sophie's stamp will be available across Canada and online as of June 20, 2025.

LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE, LOOKING FORWARD WITH HOPE AND CONFIDENCE

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The call for “an institute of our own” was made to create environments where our people could thrive as they acquired knowledge, skills, and qualifications, something they could achieve while being themselves—Métis. The second, and equally important, part of GDI's mission is to help our citizens strengthen and reclaim their culture and heritage. For almost a century, we went unacknowledged while numerous attempts to assimilate us forced Métis families to deny our heritage for cultural safety. Our heritage was at stake because our languages and cultural ways were deemed unimportant and not worth knowing. While non-Indigenous Canadians had their own versions of who we are and what our shared history is about, we quietly remained Métis. Unlike non-Indigenous Canadian, this is our country of origin, so there is no homeland to which we can return to bolster our cultural identities. It has always been here, on these lands, so what remains is of vital importance. GDI is critical to ensure both parts of the mission are achieved. It is wonderful to say we are succeeding.

One can certainly find a sense of purpose while working at GDI. All our roles are important. We are on a journey that requires setting a course in the right direction, using the right vehicle, and finding capable drivers who can reroute when needed, avoid rough roads, and adapt to unanticipated changes. The Métis have always done this. Like the Métis communities of the earlier times, a group of people with diverse and complementary skills makes the journeys and communities stronger.



Karon Shmon, 2023
Photo by Juli Labrecque

It has been my pleasure to work at GDI. I am extremely proud to work here and to have experienced the growth and finesse the Institute has acquired in its relatively short history. I have met many wonderful people because of working here. I was able to grow professionally in a wide range of areas because we have a small department which requires a diverse range of skills. We are fortunate to have governors and senior leaders who nurture and encourage such growth.

I am very pleased that David Morin was the successful candidate in the search for a successor to lead the Department. Dave will start his new role as Director of Métis Culture and Heritage on July 1. At the same time, I am transitioning to a part-time position (0.2 FTE) as Cultural advisor and mentor for GDI.

I admit that the transition will be a challenge for me. I am fully confident in the abilities of those who remain. I can look back with pride at what was accomplished while I was here. I can also look forward with optimism as GDI and its dedicated staff continues to help the Métis of Saskatchewan thrive.

Kischi Maarsii!
Karon Shmon



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY AT BATOCHE



RUSSELL FAYANT ON RECLAIMING MÉTIS LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

by Lily Chu, University of Regina Faculty of Education

Russell Fayant, Métis educator and faculty member at SUNTEP Regina, has made it his life's mission to reclaim his language and empower others to do the same. A recent recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Indigenous Scholars Award, Fayant speaks with candor and passion about the revitalization of Michif, a language he calls "the language of reconciliation." In this special feature for National Indigenous History Month, he shares his personal journey and invites educators to join the work of cultural reclamation.

Read more at:

www.uregina.ca/education/news/2025/russell-fayant-on-reclaiming-metis-language-and-identity.html

Top to bottom: 1) David Morin, Elder Harriet St. Pierre, Karon Shmon, and Tracey Verishine. 2) Donny Parenteau. 3) Derrick Morin, Bonnie Hryciuk, and Christine LaPrise. 3) Children watching the Northern Spiritwood Drummers and Singers perform the Honour Song. 4) Donny Parenteau playing for a crowd of children, teachers, and caregivers. All photos by Bethani Groat.



Russell Fayant and Irma Klyne.
Photo by Lily Chu



"Michif is the language of reconciliation because it incorporates the diverse worldviews of settler society as well as the Indigenous community in equal parts."
- Russell Fayant

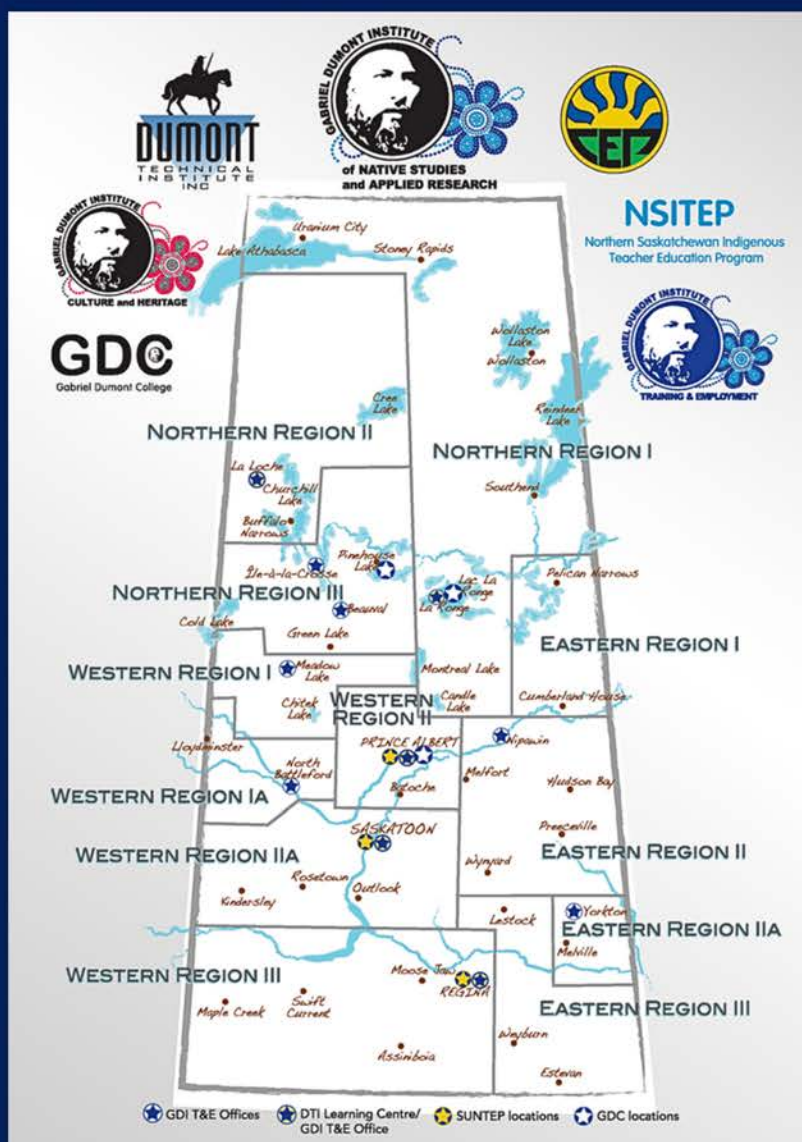
JULY 2025 FINANCE & PAYROLL CUTOFF CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		Canada Day Stat Holiday		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	MNU Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student Jul 11 Direct Dep Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Jul 15 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	ISETS Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		Staff Payday Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student Jul 18 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	MNU Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student Jul 25 Direct Deposits		A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Jul 31 Payday	ISETS Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable	
27	28	29	30	31		
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student Aug 1 Direct Deposits		Staff Payday Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run		

EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS DUE AT PAYROLL UPON JOB ACCEPTANCE. PAYROLL MUST RECEIVE CONTRACTS PRIOR TO PAYROLL CUTOFF DATE. IF RECEIVED AFTER THE CUTOFF DATE, THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE PAID ON THE FOLLOWING PAY PERIOD MTRS DUE BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH



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If you would like to submit an article for the *Communicator* please contact Bethani Groat communications@gdins.org

