



THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE COMMUNICATOR



HEO Class of 2025 at Palmber Lake

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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DIGGING INTO THE FUTURE: FROM PLAYTIME TO PROFESSIONAL HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

By Daniel Downs, DTI Program Coordinator

As one reflects on his/her childhood, there are a variety of memories that surface that potentially change the course of one's life as an adult. The ability to travel as a youth often instills the desire for adventure as an adult; looking through a telescope at a distant planet can allow one's thoughts to drift into a world of either science or fantasy; and playing with Tonka trucks in the grass, mud, and dirt of one's backyard has the ability to instill a love of heavy-iron in a child. The one guarantee about being a child is that one does not stay a child forever. But some very lucky individuals carve a path to adulthood and get to live out their childhood dreams.

In every program I run with the Dumont Technical Institute (DTI), the question gets asked of an applicant, "Why do you want to take this program?" Some answers relay a sense of excitement at

employment possibilities; others relay a sense of duty or responsibility to one's community. When it comes to DTI's Heavy Equipment Operator Programs, the answer is universal, "They have loved heavy equipment since they played with them as a kid!"

What used to be a one-off program in DTI's lineup has turned into a programming staple over the last several years; continuing into the 2025-2026 program year. There are few programs that can (in such a short period) provide as many opportunities as possible for both the student and community.

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Above: SREDA SOAR Competition winners, photos by Brendon Demerais
Below: DTI BBQ, photos by Bethani Groat



GDITE ENTREPRENEURS EXCEL AT SREDA SOAR 2025

By Brendon Demerais, Employment Services Manager-Entrepreneurship

The 2025 SREDA SOAR competition once again celebrated the spirit of Indigenous entrepreneurship in Saskatchewan and the Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment (GDITE) was proud to be part of it as a sponsor. This year's event was a resounding success, highlighting the innovation and determination of Métis entrepreneurs who are shaping the province's economic future.

Three current GDI Pathways for Entrepreneurship clients, Paul Langlois and Anna and Natasha Gagnon, took home top honours at the event. Paul, owner of Langlois Electric (langloiselectric.ca), earned second place and a \$10,000 prize for his growing electrical business known for its professionalism and commitment to high-quality service across Saskatchewan.

Sisters Anna and Natasha, co-owners of PYT Studios (pytstudios.com),

captured first place and \$15,000 for their innovative hairstyling and esthetics studio that blends Métis culture, artistry, and creative expression. Their success story demonstrates how entrepreneurship and cultural pride can work hand in hand to inspire community impact and economic growth.

GDITE's sponsorship of SOAR reinforces its mission to advance Métis participation in Saskatchewan's economy through entrepreneurship and education. Seeing clients thrive on such a prominent stage affirms the long-term value of programs like Pathways for Entrepreneurship, which provide tailored business training, advising, and ongoing support.

GDI congratulates Paul, Anna, and Natasha on their outstanding achievements. 🌟

DTI BACK TO SCHOOL BBQ WELCOMES STUDENTS

By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator

September 24, 2025 — Dumont Technical Institute (DTI) extends heartfelt gratitude to The Lions Club for sponsoring a warm and welcoming Back-to-School BBQ for students and their families at the Saskatoon Campus.

The event brought together people from across the Institute to kick off the new academic year with good food, laughter, and connection. The Lions Club generously provided the food and supplies, and served everyone, allowing students and staff to relax, mingle, and enjoy a well-deserved break after a busy start to the semester.

The turnout was fantastic! Students and their families celebrated the

beginning of a new term. Many staff members even returned after hours to join in the fun. The campus courtyard was full of life, with children playing, friends chatting around picnic tables, and the smell of grilled burgers and hot dogs filling the air.

The atmosphere was cheerful and relaxed, as people shared stories, caught up with classmates, and welcomed new faces to the DTI community. The event offered a wonderful opportunity to meet peers and feel a sense of belonging.

Events like this highlight what makes DTI so special—its strong sense of community and the dedication of those who work and learn here. 🌟

MICHIF WORDS OF THE MONTH

MAZHII

Magic

NAMOOYA WIIHKAAT

Nevermore

MAAYINAKWUN

Ominous

LII PORTEUR

Pallbearer



GDI CELEBRATES KARON SHMON'S CAREER



On October 17th, 2025, the Gabriel Dumont Institute hosted an afternoon tea to celebrate the career of Karon Shmon. The room was full of warmth, respect, and admiration for her dedication to the Métis people over her long career. Karon retired from her role as Director of Culture and Heritage in the summer, but she continues to serve as GDI's Cultural Advisor. Maria Campbell opened the event with kind words about Karon's role as a teacher. Laura Burnouf, Brett Vandale, and David Morin shared personal stories of how Karon has served the community and personally shaped their careers.

UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



Multi-Sector Safety Training Program

Beauval

Ongoing



Adult Basic Education

Various

Ongoing



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

WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS

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STUDENT SUCCESS STORY: BETTY-ANN DUROCHER

By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator

At 49 years old, Betty-Ann Durocher graduated from the Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP) with her Bachelor of Education in May 2025. In 2024, she received the Order of the Gabriel Dumont Bronze Medal for her leadership and language revitalization work. She has always been enthusiastic about working with little people, and she was working at an infant centre as an Early Childhood Educator when she learned about NSITEP.

Originally from Pinehouse Lake, Betty had to uproot her life to move to La Ronge for school. She applied for funding to attend school from GDI, and she received her funding in time to apply for a home in La Ronge. Her daughter enrolled in the local high school, and they were both able to settle in for school in the fall. She was nervous about going back to school as an adult, but everything worked out to make her transition easy, which is how she knew she was on the right path.

Betty says that going back to school helped her feel proud to be Métis. Her Indigenous identity was in the background of her life before taking the NSITEP program, and she says now "it made me realize that I am a strong Indigenous lady and I should be proud of my language and my culture." Betty speaks Cree fluently and grew up hearing Cree spoken around her but she was shy to speak it around non-Cree speakers. Now she is proud of her culture and her language, and she tries to use Cree greetings and introductions whenever she can.

One of her biggest accomplishments at school was completing a presentation to her class entirely in Cree. "I was so proud of myself," Betty said because she had to learn another dialect of Cree. She grew up speaking



the y dialect of Cree, and she learned the th dialect to teach in the classroom. "I loved the experience," Betty enthused. "If I have the opportunity I would go to teach in Cree." After getting her teaching degree, Betty is excited to teach the young ones her language and help pass that knowledge. Her long-term goal is to take back her language to her home community and teach preschoolers to be proud of their language from an early age.

Betty says that she and her NSITEP classmates have become friends and they stay in touch. They still text each other to give advice or offer a ride. "We all depend on each other," Betty said of the close-knit class. In her first year, Betty completed a family tree of her biological family, a side of herself she hadn't really explored as an adopted child. She said the experience led her to trace family ties back to other classmates, and she was excited to find out that "we're all connected somehow." She can now share that knowledge of her family with her daughter, and she is proud to be part of the NSITEP community.

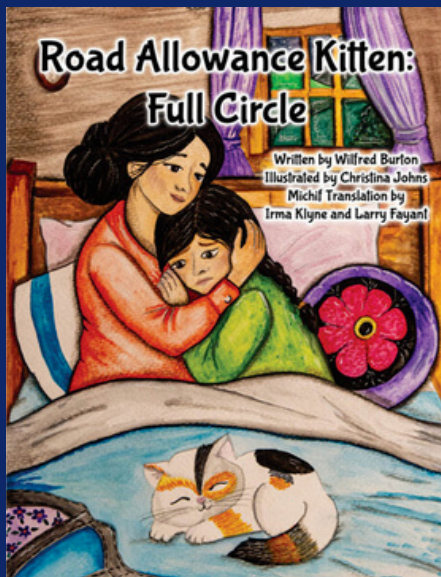
One of the other aspects of the program that Betty will cherish is the land-based learning opportunities. "Morris would take us out on the land and find something to teach us a lesson on" Betty said warmly. "The outdoors is a great lesson on it's own rather than buying a lesson plan."

Story continues on the next page...



GDI PRESS ANNOUNCES NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK

GDI Press is proud to announce the release of *Road Allowance Kitten: Full Circle*, by Wilfred Burton, illustrated by Christina Johns, with Michif translation by Irma Klyne and Larry Fayant!



In *Road Allowance Kitten: Full Circle*, Madeline, Rosie, and their cat, Kitten continue to share adventures. This time with a visit to a circus. However, Madeline is unexpectedly diagnosed with tuberculosis and is sent to a sanitarium to recover; sadly, a common experience for Indigenous Peoples in the early twentieth century. The family finds itself full circle, back on a road allowance in the valley so they can be closer to Madeline.

Road Allowance Kitten: Full Circle is a welcome addition to Wilfred Burton's acclaimed historical fiction series, which includes *Road Allowance Kitten* and *Road Allowance Kitten: Broken Promises*.

SHOP ONLINE:
GDINS.ORG/SHOP-GDI

STUDENT SUCCESS STORY: BETTY-ANN DUROCHER

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We can teach our children what is important right outside our doorstep." The NSITEP classes took canoe trips, hikes, fishing, and use natural resources as a learning tool.

Betty says she tried the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) program before it was cancelled, but she found the student experience much different than NSITEP. "The first time I handed something in was very intimidating," Betty remembers, "everything came back all red. There was no mentorship, only critique. NSITEP is a lot more about mentorship." She says it wasn't easy being a student who was older than a lot of her classmates, but the experience was worth it because

everyone was so supportive, and she made lifelong friends in the program. "I knew I was distant from my culture, but NSITEP made me realize who I am, and brought me back to my culture and identity." Her advice to anyone who is considering the NSITEP program is to just go for it. The application process may be intimidating, but you will gain so much more than a degree.

Betty says she plans on sticking around La Ronge after she graduates for her daughter to finish high school. She is passionate about making Cree accessible, and she wants to keep teaching to the pre-K and kindergarten age students. 🌐

MINI MÉTIS CULTURAL WORKSHOPS FOSTER INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CONNECTIONS

By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator

This fall, GDI Culture & Heritage has been hosting Mini Métis Cultural Workshops at the Saskatoon Head Office. The workshops invite staff to experience the beauty of history and tradition through hands-on activities and crafts. These workshops are offered over the lunch hour on Wednesdays, so all staff are free to attend them.

Tracey Verishine, one of the facilitators, said they are a great way for staff to manage stress and give the brain a break from computer work to do something creative. The workshops help foster inter-departmental relationships as people from different areas visit and get to know each other over the lunch hour. So far workshops have been held on leather pouch making, silk embroidery, mini slippers, and soup & bannock in a jar.

Workshops are typically held in the 917 Boardroom, and participation is voluntary and free of charge! Space is limited to the amount of supplies available, but the room can hold approximately twelve people. No pre-registration is required, but you can email Ryan Nordmarken to join the email list if you want to receive email calendar invites and workshop updates.

Upcoming workshops include:

November 5th - Applique Poppy
November 19th - Mini Mitt Christmas Ornament
November 26th - Dessert in a jar*
December 3rd - Wolf Willow Birch Bark Ornament
December 10th - Memory Bags

*Workshop will be held at 1003 Boardroom instead of 917 🌐



The staff and students at DTI Regina Campus put together an Orange Shirt Day display to honour National Day for Truth & Reconciliation on September 30th.



SUNTEP Regina students have the chance to attend the Rideau Hall Foundation Teacher Education Summit: The Path Forward in Winnipeg, MB with Brett Vandale, Marlee Proulx, and Jeannine Whitehouse. The conference included Métis, First Nations, and Inuit educators, Elders, youth, and leaders from across the country to connect and reflect on the path forward. The experience was inspiring and empowering for many attendees who learned from trailblazers such as Dr. Lorna Williams, Dr. Zoey Roy, and Dr. Ronald E. Ignace.



GDI COMMUNICATOR—PAGE 5

DIGGING INTO THE FUTURE: FROM PLAYTIME TO PROFESSIONAL HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR

Story Continued from Page 1

Students are given the opportunity to gain certification in equipment, leading to incredible employment opportunities. Communities receive the opportunity to have work completed that may otherwise be unachievable financially for them or would at least not be seen as a priority for their budgets.

DTI's last Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) program was delivered in Palmbere Lake, SK for the residents of Bear Creek and Turnor Lake. This program was delivered with the support of Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment as well as Clearwater Clearlake Northern Region 2 (CWCL NR2). While touring the Palmbere Lake site, it was noted by CWCL NR2 that the goal of the program was to enhance the location for Palmbere Days, which takes place every summer, as well as to allow for greater year-round access to camping sites. The students

worked diligently to improve the site by creating a parking lot for future events, clearing brush and trees from overgrown campsites, widening roads and removing boulders, and creating an expansive beach access area, so that campers and Palmbere Days attendees can better enjoy the beauty of the lake and shoreline.

We hope to be able to continue this type of training for years to come! 🌍

THE INSTITUTE WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS FROM DECEMBER 24, 2025 – JANUARY 2, 2026.

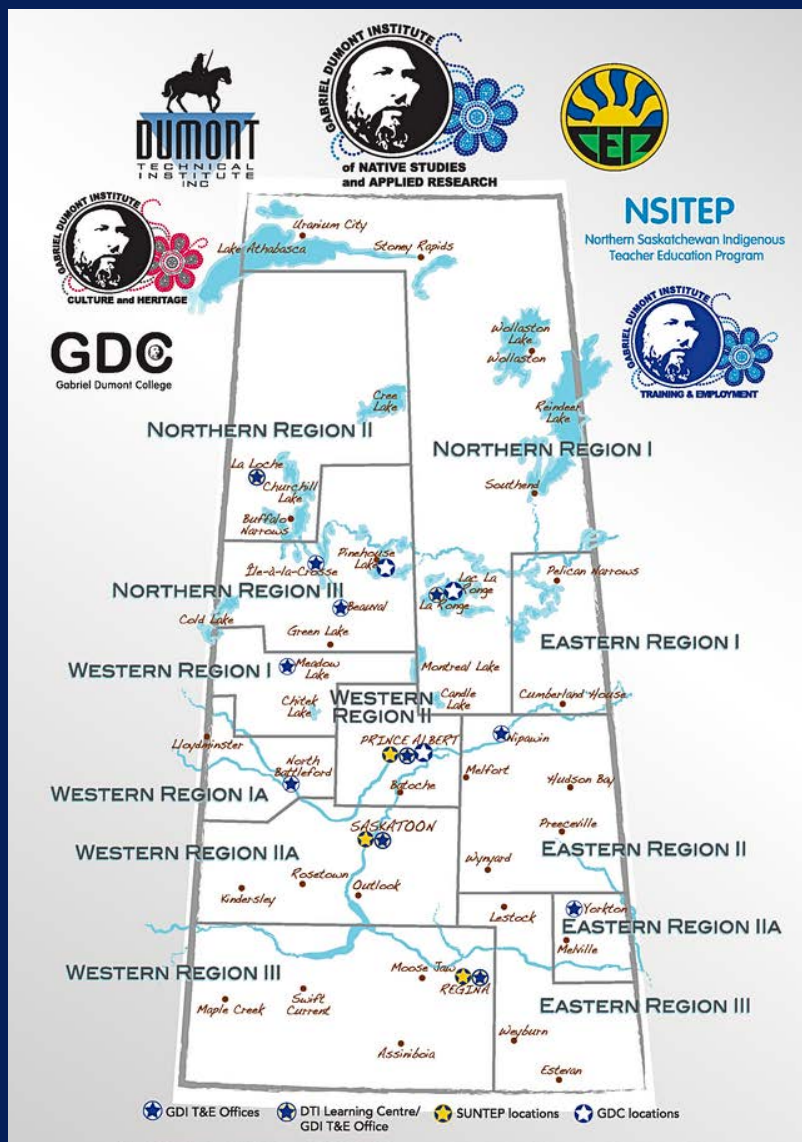
REGULAR HOURS RESUME ON MONDAY JANUARY 5TH, 2026.

NOVEMBER 2025 FINANCE & PAYROLL CUTOFF CALENDAR

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student Nov 7 Direct Deposits		A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Nov 14 Payday	MNU Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student Nov 14 Direct Deposits	Remembrance Day Stat Holiday		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable ISETS Student Payday	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Louis Riel Day	Stat Holiday	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student Nov 21 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Nov 28 Payday MNU Student Payday	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student Nov 28 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable ISETS Student Payday	
30						

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. MRTS DUE BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH.

CONTACT US



WWW.GDINS.ORG
1-877-488-6888
info@gdins.org

Previous issues of the *Communicator* can be found online at www.metismuseum.ca

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

