

Meet a couple of graduates of the Metis Spirit Program

By GRN Staff

"If only the Metis Spirit Program was there when I turned 18."

Maggie Klatt is doing quite well these days. She has a job and a place to stay and is pursuing educational opportunities that will eventually set her up for life. But when she turned 18, the former ward of Child and Family Services was sent out to cope with a very complicated world and even the basic business of living was overwhelming.

"What family cuts their kids off just because they turn 18 and society now says they are an adult?" Klatt asks. "Most sons and daughters remain at home while they choose their educational and career options and then pursue those opportunities. But CFS cuts kids off at 18 and you're on your own."

The Manitoba Metis Federation recognized that Metis youth between the ages of 18 and 21 still need guidance and support so it established the Metis Spirit Program and the program has been a success right out of the gate.

"What 18 year old kid really knows the ins and outs of finding a good job or even how to prepare a good resume?" asks Ryan Flett, who, like Klatt, benefitted from Metis Spirit and remains involved to help others by offering peer support. "This world is constantly changing and getting more and more complicated. You cannot be expected to have all the answers just because you turned the legal age of adult."

"MMF President David Chartrand responded right away to the idea and we are just about to wrap up our first year of operation," says Dianne Cross, Metis Spirit Co-ordinator. "We recently graduated 15 Metis Spirit youth at our Metis youth celebration held every four months when our kids in care turn 18 to get them off to a good start. The Metis Spirit program holds regular monthly meetings and we are there at any time to provide daily support and advice just like a family."

The MMF hopes that Maggie Klatt, Ryan Flett and all of the others who participate in the Metis Spirit program are part of an ever-expanding group of Metis youth who will overcome obstacles to achieve success. They will become our Metis community of tomorrow.