

Metis Spirit Program makes the right headlines

By GRN Staff



"They don't want to hear about this kind of thing, it's that simple."

Judy Mayer isn't talking about something bad, such as the way people hate to receive bad news. The Minister of Child and Family Services for the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF) is referring to "good news"

"When an organization does good work and manages its affairs responsibly, you don't read about it in the newspapers or see it on TV," Mayer says. "Our Metis Child and Family Services program (MCFS) is the smallest of any of its kind in the province but I believe it does the best work. Our staff and the youth and children themselves simply roll up their sleeves and improve their lives and life in the community around them."

"This doesn't make headlines."

Mayer, who is also the MMF Regional Vice-President for the The Pas region, points to the Metis Spirit Program as just one example of the good work which is being done by MCFS. Metis Spirit addresses a very serious gap which has existed in CFS programs ever since they began.

"Just because the kids turn 18 years of age doesn't mean they stop being members of our family," says Pat Alphonso-Cox, Supervisor of Metis Spirit. "Traditional families don't kick their children out at 18 or abandon them, but wards of child and family service programs are completely cut off when they reach so-called adult age. But ask yourself if you were ready to handle all of the things people have to deal with when we get on with the business of living."

"Metis Spirit stays in touch with the kids from the ages of 18 to 21 to help them find jobs, prepare resumes, perhaps a place to live, training, education and maybe

funding for that development," Alphonso-Cox adds.

Metis Spirit also holds gatherings that bring these new, young adults together for support, but just as much to socialize and share.

"Getting advice from your peers who may be going through the same thing is very effective," says Diane Scott, MS Co-ordinator. "Job referrals, leads on where to find housing, social, cultural and recreational activities, good schools and all those helpful hints and tips are readily accepted when they come from somebody your own age who may be struggling with the same situations."

"And new friends are always a good thing."

Metis Spirit is a new program and has been operating for less than a year. So far, about 20 Metis young adults have gone through the program.

This type of thing is not usually considered "front page news"

The program made it on to the front page of Grassroots News after our staff attended Graduation Ceremonies for 15 of the Metis Spirit participants which was held on Thursday, May 7th at the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre.

That is not only because Minister Mayer made a good case that, every so often, good news is a great story and is worthy of more attention than it usually gets.

The Graduation was simply so big that Metis Spirit became a bigger story than it first appeared to be.

The huge Bingo Hall at the Friendship Centre is very difficult to fill to capacity but this Grad made that Hall look packed. The accomplishments of the 15 Grads were celebrated by a huge throng of relatives and friends AND people from the community who turned out to support another successful initiative by the MMF.

The Metis Spirit Program is an example of just one, supposedly small initiative of the MMF Child and Family Services portfolio. The MCFS is quietly going about its business providing one-on-one and group services to children and youth and their families emphasizing accountability and positive results which are closely monitored and measured. Stable and effective management, including open and effective financial accountability is a priority.

This doesn't often make headlines but it is time that it did.