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Pride Perseverance Possibilities



GDI Communicator

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

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GDI Launches New and Improved Website

By Gareth Griffiths

GDI has launched the Institute's new website at www.gdins.org. The new look website is sleek and stylish, modern and user friendly; and has new features and images.

The first website for the Institute was designed 10 years ago as part of the Great Plains installation. There were many issues with this site, including an overwhelming number of text based links, difficulties in updating, and inconsistent page design.

In 2008, a project to replace and revamp this site was undertaken. It was agreed to take a two phased approach, beginning with a new interim website design followed longer term by a new, graphical layout.

This interim design was produced in-house, and was a lot cleaner and easier to use. It was designed on a content management system called Drupal that ensures that common features such as background and font size are consistent on all pages, allowing users to edit just the text and formatting for the page without needing web design experience.

Attracting and keeping visitors interested in this digital age is a real challenge. Most people decide from the first few mouse clicks whether they are staying or leaving the website. This was one of the main goals for improvement.

The redesign process was in late 2012 by the Website Steering Committee consisting of Gareth Griffiths (IT Coordinator and chair), Lisa Wilson (Director of GDI), Tim Metz (Program Coordinator, GDIT&E), David Morin (Curriculum Developer) Jessica Sandell (Admin Coordinator, DTI), and Gordon Holtslander (IT Support Tech).

Meetings of this committee took place between January and March 2013, when the design specification was finalized. This was emailed to various web design companies as a Call for Proposals. Proposals were received, and the committee shortlisted two, inviting them to present their proposal to the committee. A decision was made to commission Island Collective, a local Saskatoon firm to undertake the project in June 2013.

Work began on the project management phase as well as background and layout tasks such as the site strategy, site map and wireframes. This was completed in October after which the committee undertook an extensive re-write of all current page information to fit into the new site framework, and created content for new sections. This was done in conjunction with a copy writer from Island Collective.

A beta release was available by the end of November 2013 to allow the committee to provide feedback to the developers and iron out any bugs. After this, the site was ready for launch, and went live on December 13th.

As an indication of the work involved, over 200 pieces of content has been created or updated to fit in the framework for the new site, including news/events, programs, and shop. Also we have uploaded almost 1,200 high quality photos taken by En Vogue Photography. I would like to acknowledge the hard work put in by all members of the committee throughout this project.

So what's next? We are currently working on migrating the intranet to this portal. This will involve the importing of all Policies and Procedures (220 documents currently) as well as the Standard Forms and Templates. We will also have to create an account for all current staff members. This work is expected to be completed by the end of January.

We are also developing enhancements for the Shop. We are investigating the possibility of using a third party Payment Gateway to allow credit card payments to be processed online, as well as automating the shipping costs. Also coming will be the Analytics on the back end to allow for visitor statistical analysis. Stay tuned for future updates. 



Biggest Loser: GDI Saskatoon Challenge

By Cindy LaPlante and James Oloo



Colin Azure, RN
Former Client of Sheena Yew
GDI Training & Employment
Photo by James Oloo

In January 2014, students and employees at the Gabriel Dumont Institute Central Office came together as a team to start a Biggest Loser weight loss challenge. The GDI Saskatoon challenge aims at promoting healthy lifestyles and is influenced by the popular television show *The Biggest Loser*, a reality show that has motivated many people to get healthy and therefore lose weight.

Perhaps equally motivating is actually starting a Biggest Loser challenge within the workplace or place of learning. Such an initiative is likely to promote a healthier lifestyle; and with a supportive environment,

more and more participants are likely to stick with the challenge.

The first step in getting Biggest Loser GDI Saskatoon started was to create a team willing to get into the competition and be accountable to other team members. In total, 34 students and members of staff have signed up for a 16 week competition and are making the effort to get healthy in 2014. Exercising at lunch, weekly weigh-ins, and healthy encouragement are all part of the process. The final weigh in will be on April 28.

Cindy LaPlante, an Instructor at Dumont Technical Institute, is in charge of

registration, collecting money, and participant weigh-ins. The cost of participating in the challenge is \$10 per month for four months. The Winner of the Biggest Loser GDI Saskatoon will be the individual who loses the largest percentage of body weight. We decided that this measurement would be fair to all participants no matter their current weight. The winner will receive all the money that is collected by January 31, 2014 or \$1,320.

We would like to wish all participants good luck. Congratulations on your decision to become a healthier you in 2014. For more information, please contact Cindy at cindy.laplante@dti.gdins.org.



Managing Your Emotions at the Workplace

By Jim Edmondson

Each of us has certain human freedoms that cannot be taken away. These include choosing how we react in certain situations, our attitude, and how we let things affect our life. We have all been in situations in the workplace where these are tested, such as; being assigned additional tasks when we are already at capacity, a co-worker is not doing their job or “fair share” of the work or they are confrontational or argumentative. In our personal lives we may deal with these types of situations by “shouting”, hiding in a corner or feeling sorry for ourselves. But at the workplace such acts are often frowned on, could adversely affect both your and the Institutes’ professional reputation, and impact your productivity.

Stressful situations are commonplace in all workplaces and are more evident when we work in close proximity to others on a daily basis. As the stress builds, it is often becomes harder and harder to manage our emotions in the workplace. We all operate in pressure situations and often how well we cope with those pressures is reflected in the service we provide our clients and the Métis communities. How we handle our emotions and react to unpleasant situations is critical to how we function both at work and in our private lives.

It seems that everyone focuses on negative emotions and controlling them. That is because most people don’t need to devise

strategies on how to manage their positive emotions. After all, feelings of joy, excitement, compassion and optimism usually don’t affect others negatively and are generally welcomed. As long as we share our positive emotions in a constructive and professional manner, they make the workplace more enjoyable.

Common Negative Emotions
Studies show that common negative emotions experienced in the workplace include frustration, worry, anger, and dislike. Frustration usually occurs when we feel stuck and unable to make progress. This could be caused when a co-worker is slowing down progress on a project, a disorganized boss or co-worker or simply being ignored.

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Mitchell Venne, BSc
(Mechanical Engineering)
Former Client of Audrey Arcand
Photos courtesy of Audrey Arcand



Success Story: Valine Gaudet

By Dwayne Docken and James Oloo

Valine Gaudet is a GDI Training and Employment client in the GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Initiative. The second year apprentice electrician has been working with GDIT&E Employment Counsellor Dwayne Docken over the past two years. We sat down with Valine to discuss her experiences since coming to GDI and joining the male dominated trade.

Valine's first impression of GDI was a good one and

has stayed with her ever since she saw the signs of GDI outside the building and walked in. "I came to the building and was greeted with smiles and encouragement." On that day, Valine knew that she wanted to become an electrician; but she did not know how.

She identifies certain key things that she does often at work. "Math is so important and used every day in the field." She notes that reading blue prints and the code book is part of her daily routine.

Valine loves her job and plans to get her journey person certification and start her own company. Stating that GDI "set (her) up for life," Valine asserts that having a Métis organization like GDI is very important. "The more we help build our community through education the stronger the Métis nation will be." She concludes, "thank you GDI for your great support." Congratulations Valine and best wishes on the road to journey person certification. 🌐



Valine Gaudet
Year II Apprentice Electrician
GDI Apprenticeship Initiative

IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

In December 2013, we received 43 new IT requests to the support system, of which 37 are completed and closed (86% closure rate). Overall, we closed 50 work orders in December. There are currently 44 open Work Orders. Should you have any questions or experience difficulties with issues regarding IT, we encourage you to contact us at support@gdins.org.

New Website

As mentioned elsewhere, the new website is now live. The launch has gone extremely well, and members of the Website committee are now capable of controlling and managing the content of this site.

Some minor rewrites are ongoing but should be completed by the end of January. As mentioned last month, the initial feedback has been very encouraging; comments such as "spectacular," "very current," and "easy to use" have been received. It will be a joy to manage this site.

Shop

The online shop is now live on the new site. In the couple of weeks since launch, we have received 14 orders for 44 items worth almost \$1000. The shop can be accessed from shopmetis.ca, shop.gdins.org or www.gdins.org/shop-gdi.

Intranet

Work on the new intranet continues. The initial launch of this will include all current Policies and Procedures, standard forms and templates, company asset disposals, internal job postings, and an Online Payslips landing page. GDI Training and Employment staff will also have access to student job listings, and an apprenticeship listing system that is currently in the testing stage. To date, all policy documents and forms are uploaded. We are working on creating the staff user accounts and expect to have this live in February.

Online Payslips

The Online Payslip system is now live. Paper payslips are no longer being issued by HR. The system is available at

<http://services.gdins.org>. Once T4 tax forms are ready, they will also be imported into this system.

Reported Phishing Attacks

Please be wary of emails asking for personal information such as password (phishing attacks). One of the more recent ones reported was titled 'Special Shipping Problem' about a failed delivery and asking for more information by filling in an attached form.

To identify a phishing email, first check the 'From' email address. Usually this email has no reference whatsoever to the organization it claims to represent. In this example, the "From" address was walmart.support@esi.com.co. If this really was from Walmart, chances are the email would be ...@walmart.com or ..@Walmart.ca. Also, if there is a link in the email, hover over it, and look at the address it is sending you to. Again this usually bears no relation to the company it is purported to be. Please do not click such links; instead, delete all suspicious emails. 🌐



Joselyn Cosh
Catering Supervisor,
University Club, Saskatoon
And Former Client of Sheena Yew,
GDI Training & Employment
Photos by James Oloo



Taking Control of Your Emotions ... *Continued from Page 2*



Valine Gaudet
Year II Electrician Apprentice
GDI Apprenticeship Initiative

Whatever the reason, it's important to deal with our feelings of frustration soon; otherwise they are likely to lead to more serious negative emotions such as anger. To do this effectively, take a step back and evaluate the situation. Ask yourself why you feel frustrated and write down the answers. See if there is anything positive about the situation. If it is someone's actions that are causing our frustration, the actions are probably not deliberately meant to annoy you, or are not personal. So do not get mad just move on.

Lastly, remember the last time you felt frustrated about something. The situation probably worked out fine in the end, right! The feeling of frustration or irritation probably did not do much to solve the problem at that time, which means that likely they are not helping now either.

Worry or nervousness is often connected to situations that we have no control over. Worry can very easily get out of control and will often have a negative impact on our mental health, productivity and personal life. Some tips on how to deal with worry are discussed below. Do not

surround yourself with worry and anxiety. For example, if co-workers are gossiping or discussing matters not germane to their jobs or lives, just don't participate. Gossip tends to spread untruths and promote worry and worrying leads to more worrying which is not good for anyone.

Take a deep breath. This helps slow your breathing and heart rate. Breathe in slowly for five seconds then breathe out slowly for five seconds. Focusing on your breathing should relax you and enable you to think more clearly about the situation which in turn could help lessen the worry.

Focus your thoughts on ways to make the situation better. If you are concerned about something tangible, chances are that worrying is unlikely to alleviate the situation, instead why not try to brainstorm ways to make it better. Coming up with concrete solutions and presenting them to your supervisor will show your commitment to the Institute.

Write down your worries. This may help stop the worries from churning around in your head. The writings will allow you to

vocalize the worries and put a timetable in place to deal with them. By scheduling, you can give yourself a chance to think of alternative solutions or possibly ignore about them if they are trivial in nature.

Common Arguments in the Workplace

The most common arguments in the workplace are around resources, whether the work is valued, or workload. The arguments often do not just occur between an employee and his or her supervisor; rather they tend to occur between peers as well. Arguments between peers cause much more disruption in the workplace because they often results in anger, unwanted behaviors, actions or comments that poison the work environment.

Remember, the best way to control or mitigate the effect that negative emotions have on your personal or professional life is to make every effort to control them so they do not determine how you act or are perceived. Do your part to help make GDI a great place to work. 🌱



Joselyn Britton
Year II Apprentice Chef
GDI Apprenticeship Initiative

GDI Awards Largest Amount of Scholarships Ever

By James Oloo

Métis Elder Maria Campbell once said, "The Métis and our stories and culture are a Red River Cart. GDI is a Red River Cart which is loaded down with our culture, our knowledge. We're going to go into that cart and go into a proud future." That prophesy is being fulfilled today.

In 2013, Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation (GDSF) gave 319 scholarships

worth \$175,400 to Métis students. This is the most number of scholarships ever issued by GDSF and by far the highest amount in scholarship awards in the history of GDI.

Director of Finance Cory McDougall noted that "The amount of scholarships awarded by GDI has been increasing every year since 2006. Since 1986, GDI has issued over \$1.2 million in

scholarships and bursaries to Métis students."

According to Cory, 2013 was a particularly strong year due to fundraising involving GDSF Golf Tournament and new partnerships such as the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship and others. It was also the first year that GDSF had a full time scholarship coordinator, Amy Briley. 🌱

Valine and Joselyn are clients of Dwayne Docken, Employment Counsellor, GDI Training and Employment, Saskatoon

Photos by James Oloo



Doug Recalls 12 Years at GDI that Changed His Life

By James Oloo

Over the past 33 years, Gabriel Dumont Institute has changed lives of many Métis people. GDI Publishing is an award winning reservoir of Métis knowledge and culture. Gabriel Dumont College is a pathway of choice for many Métis people who are pursuing university education. Dumont Technical Institute offers basic education and skills training to hundreds of Métis people annually enabling them to get skills and knowledge that are necessary for gainful employment. GDI Training and Employment has delivered on-demand skills training and employment interventions to over 6,000 individuals since 2006; and Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation has

issued over \$1.2 million in scholarships to Métis students. Each day, GDI staff work diligently and with deep commitment to the wellbeing of Métis students and Métis community as a whole.

One such Métis who has been touched by GDI both as a student and employee is Doug Pelletier. Doug moved to Saskatoon in 2001 to start a new life. He soon visited DTI and by 2003, he had completed Grade 12 diploma and a carpentry certificate from DTI. Of the DTI ABE program, he states, "I enjoyed school more than when I was a teenager. I found it easier, relevant, and enjoyable."

The same year, Doug got hired as the Custodian for GDI Central Office in Saskatoon. He notes that "I would not have had a high school diploma or my job if it were not

for Gabriel Dumont Institute and Métis people."

GDI was part of Doug's start of new life in Saskatoon. "GDI is like a family. I have had options to leave, but I don't think I'd be happier elsewhere." Doug is proud to be able to work for a Métis organization that values its employees and offers room for growth. "I have seen people start at GDI as admin coordinator and rise to become a program coordinator or Director."

Doug is responsible for performing custodial duties, repairs and maintenance tasks to ensure that GDI buildings and facilities are cleaned and maintained in a safe and healthy manner. Doug plans on staying with GDI for several years to come. "I enjoy my job. I like it here. This has been my longest job." Congratulations Doug.

Happy 10th anniversary. 🌐



Cody Stewart
Year III Apprentice Industrial
Mechanic Millwright
GDI Apprenticeship Initiative
Photo Courtesy of D. Docken

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, February 2014

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Buschnyski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Feb 7 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Feb 21 Student Payroll & for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Feb 14 Payday			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Stat Holiday Family Day	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Feb 21 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
23	24	25	26	27	28	
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Mar 7 Student Payroll & for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Feb 28 Payday			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.



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www.gdins.org

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can be obtained at:

[www.metismuseum.ca/browse/
index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/833)

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GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research

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GDI Publishing Saskatoon

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Saskatoon SK S7M 5W1
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Fax: (306) 244-0252

GDI Finance and Operations

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GDI Library Regina

Room 218 College West
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
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Phone: (306) 347-4124
Fax: (306) 565-0809

<http://gdi.voyager.uregina.ca/>

GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
Prince Albert, SK
S6V 1B2
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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.



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research