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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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Dealing with Grief Following a Community Loss

By Jim Edmondson

It is not uncommon for individuals and communities as a whole to experience grief reactions and anger after a community tragedy. Grief is the normal response to sorrow, emotion, and confusion that comes from losing someone or something important to you. Most people will experience a natural occurrence of grief after the death of a loved one, but grief and anger can be the result of other types of losses as well.

In situations of community loss like the tragedy that occurred in La Loche, Sask., people may experience a change in their outlook. This can manifest itself in the loss of their sense of safety, a change in their trust in those who live in their neighborhood, or their trust in local government. The trauma and grief of a community tragedy can be experienced by all involved or connected to a community.

Grief reactions to tragedy Often, after a death or loss of some kind, many people express feeling empty and numb, or unable to feel. Some people complain that they become angry at others or at situations, or they just feel angry in general, even without a reason. Some of the physical reactions to grief and anger may include the following: Trembling or shakiness; muscle weakness;

nausea or lack of appetite; trouble sleeping; and dry mouth.

People experiencing grief may also have nightmares, withdraw socially, and may have no desire to participate in their usual activities, work, or school.

How long do grief reactions last? Grief lasts as long as it takes the individual to accept and learn to live with the changes that have occurred in their community due to the tragedy and its aftermath. For some people, grief lasts a few months; for others, it may take more than a year. It's different for each person depending on his or her health, coping styles, culture, family supports, and other life experiences. How long people grieve may also depend on the resilience of the community and the ability of its members to take on roles and responsibilities that will help restore the basic needs of the community, such as getting children back to school and businesses back to working again.

What can individuals do to cope with their grief? Talking to others who understand and respect how you feel such as family members, faith leaders, and people you trust is a helpful way to ease your individual

grief. Recognize that although you might still have these feelings over a long period, they will likely be less and less intense over time. It's important to make sure to exercise and eat healthy meals. Do the things that you used to enjoy doing, even if you don't always feel like it. This will help you get back into your routines. Allow yourself to feel joy at times and to cry when you need to. Even though they may be experiencing grief, some individuals also exhibit positive changes from their experience of loss. Some tend to become more understanding and tolerant; have increased appreciation for relationships and loved ones; and grateful for what they have and for others. Some people have experienced enhanced spiritual connection; and others have become more socially active.

If you have lost a loved one or if you have been exposed to a community tragedy, feelings of grief and anger are a normal reaction. But, if these feelings persist, be sure to access resources to get help, these resources are available at: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/social-services>. GDI staff can access counselling through our Employee Assistance Plan at 1-800 387-4765 or at <http://workhealthlife.com>.



Looking Back...

In the summer of 2007, GDI Finance Department operations were moved from Regina to Saskatoon. Then Finance Director Stacey Bucsis stated:

"The relocation of the Finance Department to Saskatoon ensures that services and functions of the Department can be coordinated with the Saskatoon Head Office."

In the fall of 2007, Dumont Technical Institute was honoured with the Premier's Award for Excellence in Public Service as part of the Adult Basic Education Redesign Task Team.

In January 2008, Dumont Technical Institute Program Coordinator Claudette Moran was invited to present at the Organization for Economic Co-operation (OECD) on the role and on recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

In March 2008, GDI hosted a National Michif Language Conference in Saskatoon.

In January 2009, GDI and McNally Robinson Booksellers co-hosted a Métis Literature and Culture Night in Saskatoon.

A Moment of silence at GDI to remember La Loche

By James Oloo

At 9:00 am on Friday January 29, 2016, Gabriel Dumont Institute and other educational institutions across Saskatchewan observed a moment of silence to remember the victims and those affected by the gun violence that occurred in the community of La Loche a week earlier. GDI locations with flags also had them flying at half-mast.

Canadians from coast to coast also remembered La Loche. From NHL games in Canada and the United States, to the Australian Open Tennis Championships in Melbourne, many people took a moment to remember La Loche. In Ottawa, Members of Parliament held a moment of silence on January 25 for the four killed and seven injured.

Historically, La Loche has been an important centre for the Métis people of Saskatchewan. Many of the Institute employees and students have relatives and friends in the community. The Institute also offers programs in La Loche. The tragedy hit very close to home, and on behalf of the Institute, we send our thoughts and prayers to La Loche. 🌐

Written Communication in the Workplace

By Jim Edmondson

This is the third instalment of the three-part series on communication. It highlights the importance of effective written communication in the workplace.

A well written communication involves expressing yourself clearly, using proper language that resonates with the intended audience; constructing a logical argument; and presenting the message clearly. The following are some tips for effective writing.

Clarity is crucial, know your goal and state it clearly. Do

you want the reader to do something for you or are you merely passing along information? Do you want a response from the reader or do you want him/her to take action? Your purpose needs to be stated in the communication. Avoid information that is not relevant.

Tone can help written communication be more effective. Certain forms of communication, like memorandums to supervisors or co-workers and proposals to other entities require a formal tone. Writing to someone you know well is usually done in a

more informal tone. The kind of tone depends on the audience and purpose of the writing. Be aware that tone, especially in emails can be misinterpreted and cause unintended issues, be wary!

It's critical that in the communication, you explain in clear terms what you want the reader to do. They cannot oblige if they do not understand exactly what it is you need or want. Also, the reader may not want to try to help if the communication is vague and sloppily written.

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Students Get Cultural Experience at Publishing Dept

By Chantelle Julé

"Culture is the sum of the attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguish one group of people from another. At Gabriel Dumont Institute, Métis culture, traditions, and history guide our organization" (GDI Website). What separates GDI's Adult Basic Education and Skills Training arm - Dumont Technical Institute - from other educational institutes is that in addition to academics, students also learn the

significance of their culture. We strive to empower our students to believe in who they are, where they came from and where they are going.

The Saskatoon Practical Nursing students participated in cultural experiences at the GDI Publishing Department over the course of their first semester. The students really enjoyed their time spent at the GDI Publishing Department while learning about their

culture, traditions and history of our organization. Several students commented that this was their first hands-on experience with Métis culture.

The students' first cultural session included learning the history of the Sash, an iconic symbol of the Métis people. The students were then led in a traditional finger weaving workshop by GDI Publishing employee Bonnie Hrycuik.

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Written Communication in the Workplace *Continued from Page 2*

When communicating to an individual asking for assistance or something specific, it is always advisable to include why it is beneficial to them to provide what you ask or to help you.

Language needs to be simple. Try not to overuse clichés, jargon, and expressions or try to impress with big words. Wherever possible keep sentences and paragraphs short and concise.

Less is more when it comes to length. Leave out words that do not contribute to the main focus of the communication. This could obscure your point. Unless the reader is engaged within the initial paragraph or two, often they lose focus and the intended message or point can be lost.

Using an active voice will strengthen your writing. Active voice is where the verb of a sentence is, the subject is doing the acting, as in the sentence "Jim hit the ball." Jim (the subject of the sentence) acts in relation to the ball. Sentences that are written in the active voice will flow better and are easier to understand. Long, complicated sentences will slow the reader down.

Good grammar and punctuation are very important aspects of any written communication as they help avoid miscommunication and poor reception of the message. It is always a good idea to have someone else proofread your writing before you send it if at all possible. If you cannot do that, then try reading it out loud.

There are three main elements of all written communication: structure (how it's laid out), style (how it's written), and content (what your writing is about). Structure and layout are generally fairly simple to learn but quality content is often the struggle that many people encounter when writing.

Structuring

A good structure in any written communication will help you to express yourself more clearly. The following are some tactics to consider:

Clarify your thoughts and the purpose of your communication before you start writing. In business communications, clarity is more important than style. Therefore, identify the key points, facts and themes.

Decide on a logical order for what you have to say. Clear, salient points in a logical order have a better chance of acceptance and uptake.

Always try to compose a strong introduction and ending. The first line or paragraph will make an immediate and positive impression on the reader; the second will remind them of the purpose and remain in their mind after they have finished reading.

Use short paragraphs and sentences rather than long, rambling ones. Keep to one idea per paragraph and put your point in the first line, then add the supporting information. Too much unneeded filler information often results in mixed messages or the perception of lack of focus.

Let the key points to stand out by the use of headings, sub-headings and bullet points.

This will allow your reader to quickly scan your message for the main points. This is the principle behind executive summaries; it allows the reader to receive the critical points quickly.

Writing for specific reader

It is critically important that when conducting written communications you think about the readers by asking yourself the following questions:

How much information and detail does the reader require to get the message or provide the needed output?

Should you use specialist terms and language or is it better to reduce the language and expressions to a simpler vernacular in order to be understood by a generalist reader?

How formal or informal should your writing be? As stated above, tone is dependent upon audience and what level of sophistication the information is required.

Examples

A scientific paper aimed at an audience of non-scientists would have to be written in simpler and less technical language. A report in the Financial Times would be written in a very different style from one covering the same issue in the Star Phoenix. A lawyer giving advice to a client would not go into the same amount of details as to legal precedents and arguments as when they write a legal brief for the Supreme Court. As well, emails sent with job applications should be treated more formally than emails to friends and family! 🌐

The 2016 Gabriel Dumont Institute Annual General Meeting

will be held on Saturday, February 13, 2016, at the GDI Building, 48-12th Street East Prince Albert from 9:30 a.m.

Gabriel Dumont Institute Library and The Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples bring the **Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling** event on February 25, 2016 in Prince Albert.

Métis authors Leah Dorian and Norman Fleury will be there!

SASKATCHEWAN ABORIGINAL STORYTELLING 2016



Please join us for an incredible evening of Aboriginal Story Telling with Métis authors Norman Fleury and Leah Dorian!
Thursday, February 25, 2016, from 7 - 9 pm
Shananigan's Coffee & Dessert Bar
2144 6 Ave West, Prince Albert
This event is open to the public.

Event will be hosted by Ncolle DeGagne
Library Resource Facilitator
Gabriel Dumont Institute

For more information:
Ncolle.degagne@gdi.gdins.org
(306) 922-6466



IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

Staff Changes

I have great pleasure in announcing Bill Gray, our new IT Support Tech for Prince Albert and the North. Bill comes to us from Prince Albert Alarms, and has provided IT Support in the education sector with the Prince Albert Grand Council in the past. Bill is very keen to get back into education, and is already proving himself to be a valuable asset. He is based out of Prince Albert and you should see him coming to a site near you soon.

IT support system

In December 2015, 37 new Work Orders were received into Track-IT. Of these, 30 are now closed (81% completion rate). Overall we closed 35 Work Orders in the month (November was a tough month due to being a staff member down). There are currently 51 open Work Orders. Don't forget to email support@gdins.org for any new requests. In the event that an email cannot be sent for any reason, you can also call any member of the IT Team, who will log the support Work Order for you.

Website

Overall, there were 14,877 Page Views from 4,046 sessions (3,053 distinct users) in December 2015. 64% of these were new visitors. The website homepage saw 2,684 Page views (2,185 Unique Page views). Some highlights of activity; 24% of visitors to the home page clicked on What We Offer, 14% clicked on Contact Us, 11% clicked on Work with Us, and 10% went to the Search function.

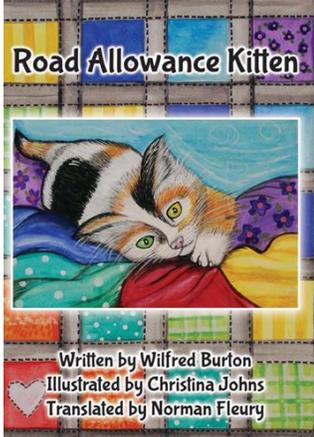
We are working on a restructure to the forms section of the website. A new section called General Forms is introduced, and will be the one place to go for things like PO Forms, Expense Claim Forms, etc. Also, some of the forms are being revised. The first one, which is available now, is a consolidated PO Form. This replaces the three company specific forms with one standard form. By selecting the company name, the logo will update automatically. Further, new functionality and comments are added. Please start using this form instead of the older ones.

Electronic Funds Transfer

We are embarking on the process of implementing Electronic Funds Transfer processing for Payables and Receivables. This will mean that suppliers and staff (for expenses) are able to get their claims posted directly to the bank account rather than writing a cheque. The biggest advantage is that payments will be received faster and more efficiently, as well as the reduction in costs and lower environmental impact of cheque printing. This will be an opt-in process. On January 27, Director of Finance Cory McDougall sent out an email to all members of staff regarding options for payment by Electronic Funds Transfer. So far, the feedback has been very positive.

Closing thought

A Programmer's spouse tells him: "Run to the store and pick up a loaf of bread. If they have eggs, get a dozen." The guy comes back from the store with 12 loaves of bread. 🍞



Wilfred Burton, An award-winning children's author has a new book out. Based on a true story, *Road Allowance Kitten* sheds light into the history of the Road Allowance Métis and their forced removal from their humble, but beloved, homes on the road allowance.

The book is available at GDI Publishing Department, www.shopmetis.ca, or by contacting Ryan Nordmarken at (306) 657-5715 or ryan.nordmarken@gdi.gdins.org

DTI Students Get Cultural Experience Continued from Page 2

They experienced the way that sashes were historically made. The students made their own sashes and learned their various uses. The students were very captivated by the patience and intent that goes into finger weaving.

The second workshop included an overview of the Hudson Bay Company, focusing on the traditional Métis capote (Metis Voyageur coat), made from the Hudson Bay point blanket. The

students learned about the trade era and how the capote became a popular commodity. They learned the traditional blanket stitch, which is the stitch of creating a capote. They then received some point blanket material, and practiced this traditional sewing technique while creating their own pair of mittens. Joshua Beam, one of the nursing students said "To me the mitts are a symbol of our history. It is a great item to remind us of the Hudson Bay Company and

the history of our culture." We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the GDI Publishing Department for allowing our students to come and experience cultural teachings in a wonderful setting, surrounded by their beautiful history and culture. We would also like to extend a huge appreciation to Bonnie Hrycuik for sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for Métis culture with our students. 🍞



Photo by Joshua Beam



DTI Staff and Students Lay Flowers at La Loche Memorial



Victims killed in the La Loche shooting, January 22, 2016:
 Adam Wood, 35
 Marie Janvier, 21
 Dayne Fontaine, 17
 Drayden Fontaine, 13

Photo courtesy of Jennie Waldner

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, February 2016

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Feb 5 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Feb 12 Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Feb 19 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	Family Day Stat Holiday	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Feb 19 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Mar 4 Student Payroll	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Feb 29 Payday		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
28	29					
	Staff Payday					

MRTS due by the 15th of every month, and Employee contracts are due prior to payroll cutoff date.
 Payroll must receive contracts prior to payroll cutoff date
 Employee contracts due at payroll upon job acceptance

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Visit us at
www.gdins.org

Back issues of this newsletter
can be obtained at:

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

Follow us on Twitter!
@gdins_org



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GDI Finance and Operations

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SUNTEP Regina

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University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
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GDI Training and Employment Central Office

917 22nd Street West
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Fax: (306) 683-3508

Toll Free (T&E):
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Fax: (306) 347-4119

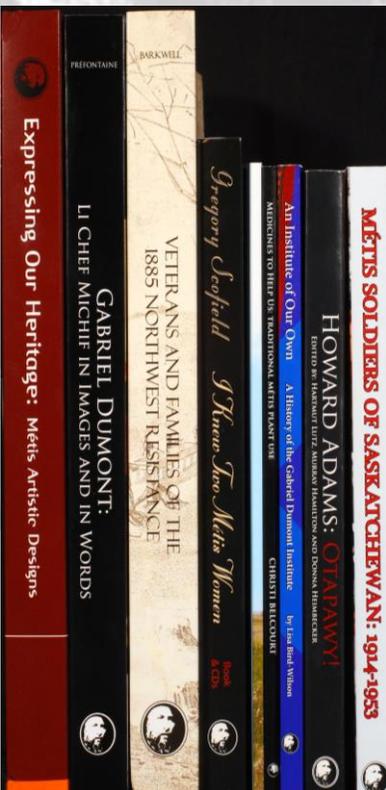
GDI Library Regina

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Phone: (306) 347-4124
Fax: (306) 565-0809

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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