



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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## Ms. Germann: SUNTEP Brought My Family Closer Together

By James Oloo

We recently sat down with Helen Germann, a high school teacher and graduate of the Gabriel Dumont Institute's Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), to discuss her experience as a SUNTEP student and how SUNTEP prepared her for her current career.

Helen started by honouring her Mom Louise Berthelette who was from a French-speaking family in St. Boniface, Manitoba. Louise did not know how to speak English until the age of 16. She moved to Regina in her early adulthood, and later to North Battleford where Helen was born and raised.

As Helen recalls her childhood, "Growing up, I knew that I was Métis." However, "I never understood what it meant to be Métis, nor did I know anything about Métis culture." This started to change when Helen, who was then working at a high school in North Battleford as an Educational Assistant, heard about SUNTEP from "a few of my lifelong friends who had previously graduated from SUNTEP." Helen applied and was accepted into the SUNTEP program.

"It wasn't until I attended SUNTEP that I was able to

really delve into Métis history and culture. In fact, my Grandmama Giselle Berthelette encouraged me to put together a portfolio regarding my experience and what I had learned in the teacher education program, and I was able to share it with our entire extended family."

Helen regards her time at SUNTEP as a turning point in her life. "The most inspiring part of being in SUNTEP is that it helped my extended family grow closer, through my research in our lineage and history. It reconnected and educated more than just myself. Further, because of the opportunity SUNTEP gave me, my own family has benefitted, and my sons are motivated to aim higher in life." Helen graduated with a bachelor of education degree from SUNTEP in 2010 and became the "first person on my Métis side of the family to obtain a university degree."

Now a teacher at the Living Sky School Division in North Battleford, Helen stated that she always knew that she wanted to be a teacher. "I loved working at the school and with children." But realizing that dream involved a lot of sacrifice. As she recalls, "I commuted daily to the University of Saskatchewan to attend classes, while raising two young sons." The driving distance between Saskatoon and North Battleford is about

140 kilometers each way. Helen asserts that "Attending SUNTEP was the best decision I ever made. The faculty and staff were extremely knowledgeable and supportive. We were like a family." This was especially important for many students like her who were new to the city and did not have close friends or families. She continued, "SUNTEP was a place where we all felt at home, we belonged."

A teacher since graduating from SUNTEP, Helen stated that "My employment secured a better life for my family. I am also proud to model the importance of post-secondary education for my sons and students. I speak of SUNTEP often to my high school students."

In discussing how her life changed for the better because of her teacher education degree, Helen states that she has and continues to recommend SUNTEP to her students, friends, and relatives for several reasons. "First of all, SUNTEP provided us with several student-teaching opportunities in the K-12 school system. This allowed us to develop hands-on experience that in turn gave us an advantage to securing employment after graduating."

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# Beat the End of Summer Blues!

By Jim Edmondson



St. Mary's School Jiggers  
Saskatoon  
Photo by Bonnie Hrycuik

Regrettably, it's that time of year again. The air outside is getting colder, the sunny days are slowly getting shorter and being replaced by dreary days. Summer has ended and autumn is upon us.

If you are a teacher or a parent of school-age children, it's back to school time. For many, gone are late evenings out on the deck or spending time at the cabin. The garden is done for the year and soon it will be dark when we go to work and dark when we leave at the end of the day. This can be quite depressing.

Below are some tips on how you can turn that frown upside down, and overcome the end of summer blues.

Embrace the changing season and enjoy the autumn as leaves are changing colour and falling to the ground. Go out there and step on some crunchy leaves or romp around in them with your kids or dog! Is there any sound more satisfying than stepping on a dead, crunchy leaf? Here's an interesting

fact: if you are stressed out, then one of the best therapies is to run around and frolic on some massive piles of leaves.

We don't always take the time to appreciate what is right in front of us. Have you ever noticed that there is something about the way that rain smells in the fall? I think that spring and summer rain do not compare, almost cleansing!

Start wearing your warm and cozy sweaters! One of the best parts of autumn is the layering up of sweaters and socks and scarves. There is sitting out on the deck or inside if you like and taking that first sip of a steaming cup of coffee on a brisk fall day. Savour every bit of it!

Keep doing some of the things you started to do this summer. Did you start working out more to get a chiseled beach body? Did you start painting? Or going out for weekly underwater-basket-weaving-wine-pairing nights? Then keep it up! Not only will it make you feel like your summer is still going, you will

keep having fun, stay fit, or keep stress levels down this season. Plus, if you keep it up with your workouts, you won't feel as guilty for eating literally everything you can at Thanksgiving dinner.

Get excited for Halloween. Halloween is perfect for all you kids at heart who still yearn to dress up and trick or treat. Come on, admit it. I know I still do! Get into the spirit, carve some pumpkins, decorate your home, and plan your Halloween party! Oh, and don't forget to buy some orange spray paint and an over-priced suit so you can dress up as Donald Trump. Because let's be honest, making fun of that character this Halloween will be the highlight of this season.

What about pumpkin flavoured everything from Lattes to Tim Hortons donuts, is there anything better? Well if you did have symptoms of the end of summer blues, I hope that these tidbits will be helpful in bringing you out of it or at least letting you look at autumn in a better light. Happy fall everyone! 🍁



Helen Germann, a SUNTEP graduate and teacher in the Living Sky School Division, graduated with a Master of Education in Educational Administration from the University of Saskatchewan this month  
Photo courtesy of H. Germann

## SUNTEP Grad Helen Germann ... Continued from Page 1

Helen continued, "As an Indigenous teacher, I am confident and able to incorporate an Indigenous perspective into most of the curriculum I teach. I feel blessed to be able to give the excitement and knowledge back to the youth in my community, and more specifically connect closely with our Indigenous students."

Helen noted that for Indigenous students, having

an Indigenous teacher has many advantages that lead to positive educational outcomes.

Helen discussed her teaching philosophy and emphasized her belief that "all students have the ability to learn. As well, teachers should have positive, empathetic and respectful relationships with students and parents as this fosters learning and builds confidence and promotes student success."

Helen has recently completed a Master of Education in Educational Administration degree at the University of Saskatchewan and will convocate at the end of October. "I am truly grateful for the life-changing opportunity, leadership skills and pride that SUNTEP and Gabriel Dumont Institute gave me. I plan to 'pay it forward' by focusing on improving education in our community including enhancing the success of my Indigenous students," she said. 🍁



## Dreaver-Charles Credits SUNTEP for Career Success

By James Oloo

Kristine Dreaver-Charles took time to share with us her experience at the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), and the program's impact on her career. Kristine is a member of the Mistawasis First Nation and was born and raised in Prince Albert. Her mom is Métis, with historic connections to Red River. Kristine's parents have Cree and Scottish ancestry.

Kristine described her connection to SUNTEP stating, "SUNTEP was the first university program any of my family attended. My aunt and cousin were early graduates of SUNTEP Prince Albert. I attended SUNTEP Saskatoon, graduating in 1996, and my nephew, Tanner Pedersen, is a first year student in SUNTEP Regina. So three generations of my family will have had the opportunity to benefit from SUNTEP."

SUNTEP was the only post-secondary education program Kristine applied to as she was completing high school. "I believe it really helped me knowing that my aunt and cousin had successfully

completed their bachelor of education degrees through the SUNTEP program."

Kristine further reminisced, "Starting university takes a lot of courage for students. It's an unfamiliar and very big place that has its own way of doing things." SUNTEP Saskatoon is housed in the University of Saskatchewan, a campus with over 20,000 registered students. She noted, however, that "small class sizes at SUNTEP were great. It was helpful that in our early years, we took our classes with the same small group of students."

Kristine's decision to become a teacher was mainly influenced by her own teachers. "I had some really great high school teachers who inspired me and as I watched them teach I thought maybe I could do what they did." Further, Kristine noticed the lack of Indigenous teachers in her classrooms. "Throughout my schooling, from kindergarten to Grade 12, I had just two Indigenous teachers. One was a SUNTEP intern in elementary school and one was my Cree

language teacher in high school." Kristine reminded us how significant it was that Saskatchewan's teacher education programs such as SUNTEP are changing that narrative for learners today by graduating relatively more Indigenous teachers.

After completing her studies at SUNTEP, Kristine worked as a high school teacher for 18 years. As she recalls, "I found my first teaching position in Wollaston Lake, Sask. It was also the first time I lived on a First Nation and it was the first time I lived in the North." Kristine noted that, "It was a tough first year in an unfamiliar fly-in community, but I met some great people and learned a lot."

After that first year in Wollaston Lake, Kristine accepted a teaching position in Stanley Mission, Sask. "The high number of Indigenous teachers and staff in the Stanley Mission schools who were from the community was beneficial for students. It was also beneficial for teachers like me who were new to the area."

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## Driver Training Update

By Bonnie Hrycuik

Dumont Technical Institute has recently partnered with GDI Training and Employment to roll out a multi-year pilot project for the delivery of Class 5 driver training program. GDI Training and Employment provided the vehicle for the program to give our students the opportunity to practice their driving. As required by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), students will have both theory and practical instruction by

certified driver training instructors. Initial training which was held in Saskatoon was a success. Eight out of 10 candidates who took the exam passed on first attempt.

The driver training program is currently being offered in Meadow Lake to students attending the trades-focused General Education Development (GED) program and GDI Training and Employment clients. Plans are

underway to offer the Driver Training Program in northern Saskatchewan beginning early 2018.

Since its founding in 1992, Dumont Technical Institute has endeavoured to enhance the labour market responsiveness of training programs. It has recorded steady enrolment growth in its adult basic education and skills training programs over the years. 🌐

Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)



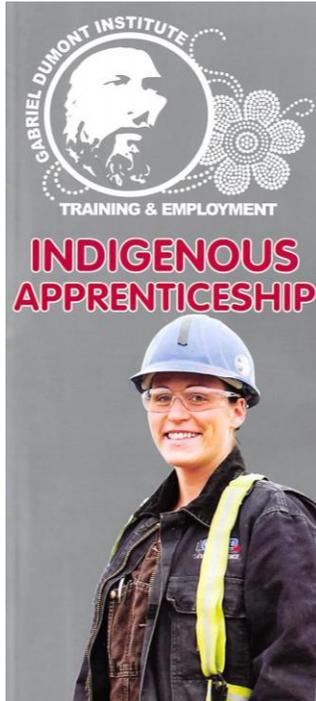
Kristine Dreaver-Charles graduated from SUNTEP Saskatoon in 1996. She is a PhD student at the University of Saskatchewan where she also works as an Instructional Designer. Photo courtesy of K. Dreaver-Charles



Bonnie Hrycuik, a SUNTEP graduate, is a Program Coordinator at Dumont Technical Institute. Photo courtesy of GDI Publishing



GDI Training & Employment  
Indigenous Apprenticeship



**To qualify for the GDI Indigenous Apprenticeship you must**

- ∞ Be an Indigenous person (Métis, First Nation or Inuit)
- ∞ Be unemployed or underemployed
- ∞ Have a genuine interest in working in the trades, and
- ∞ Meet eligibility requirements for registering as an apprentice.

\*If you do not meet eligibility requirements for registering as an apprentice, GDITE has programs available to assist you to become qualified.

apprenticeships@gdins.org  
1-877-488-6888

## GDI Team Participates in Annual Wheelchair Relay

By James Oloo

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Saskatchewan recently held its 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Wheelchair Relay in Saskatoon. Gabriel Dumont Institute sponsored the event at the Silver level and entered a relay team, The Sashy Wheelers, which included Team Captain, Bill Lehne, Team members Brody Parent, Gary Kichula, Dwayne Docken, and James Oloo.

Bill Lehne, an Employment Services Manager at Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment in Saskatoon is the President of SCI Saskatchewan. Bill has been

involved with SCI Saskatchewan since 1983. He noted that “The wheelchair relay is a signature fundraising event that creates public awareness on adversity faced by persons with disabilities.”

Up to 14 teams participated in the relay. Most of the participants were able-bodied individuals who have been impacted by spinal cord injury. Through a team effort involving the Institute employees and their friends and families, the Gabriel Dumont Institute Team collectively raised over \$5,000 for SCI Saskatchewan and was

recognized for being the highest fundraiser. A total of over \$20,000 was raised at the event. “It is emotional when you can have your colleagues join and support something that is so dear to your heart outside of work,” Bill said.

As well as raising awareness about spinal cord injury and mobility solutions that are available, SCI Saskatchewan provides support services to people across the province facing mobility challenges.

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## SUNTEP Grad Kristine Dreaver-Charles ... *Continued from Page 3*

Kristine noted that “Having colleagues from within the community helped me be a better teacher and community member. This very much speaks to the importance of the NORTEP program and why its loss will negatively impact the North.” She continued, “I met my late husband there and I am very fortunate to have family in Stanley Mission.”

Kristine then moved back home to Prince Albert and spent the next nine years teaching online high school classes to students across Saskatchewan. She completed a Master of Science in Education degree online with a major in Instructional Media in 2009 through Wilkes University.

A little more than two decades after graduating from SUNTEP, Kristine considers herself “fortunate to have worked in the education field ever since. SUNTEP helped me develop a foundation in education that I have kept building on throughout my

career. When I graduated from SUNTEP, I never realized all of the great opportunities I would have because of my degree. My education has taken me in so many good directions.”

She stated that “I’m very proud of my many Indigenous students who have become teachers themselves. I also feel that Indigenous teachers and non-Indigenous teachers need to support each other and work together in ways that benefit not only themselves but also their students, schools and communities.” Kristine points out that “It’s a learning opportunity for everyone involved. It’s always helpful to have positive relationships with teachers, students, and parents.”

Reflecting on her experience, Kristine said, “Being a teacher is hard work and full of challenges but it’s also very rewarding. Nothing is better than that moment when you get to see your students have pride in their own accomplishments.”

Kristine credits SUNTEP for knowledge, skills, and experience that prepared her for careers both inside and outside the classroom. For the past three years, she has been working as an instructional designer at the University of Saskatchewan Distance Education Unit. Kristine works with professors and instructors from colleges across campus to design online classes. “I’ve helped design courses in astronomy, biomedical science, English, Indigenous studies and education administration. I’ve been fortunate to meet and work with very intelligent educators who are invested in their academic fields and committed to their students. It’s also been really nice to be back on the University of Saskatchewan campus,” she said.

Kristine is also working on her doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Saskatchewan. Her research interests include Indigenization and learning design in post-secondary education.



# The Sashy Wheelers! ... Continued from Page 4

GDI Wheelchair Relay Team  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Relay

Bill noted that young males continue to be at a high risk for spinal cord injury, and that SCI Saskatchewan will keep doing its part to raise awareness. He pointed out that for SCI Saskatchewan, "The whole spectrum of rehabilitation after spinal cord injury is a lifelong learning process, and is more than just healing, mobility, education or employment."

While passionately discussing plans for next year's wheelchair race, Bill stated that SCI will look for more growth, higher fundraising targets, and more wheelchair relay teams. Further, the

organization will engage in partnership development with the community and stakeholders including first responders.

On behalf of the SCI Saskatchewan, Bill thanked volunteers and sponsors of Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan and stated: "Do not wait for your ship to come in, swim out to meet it. Be a swimmer." Like swimmers, let us all dive in and meet Bill and the Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan as they do their best to increase awareness and support those living with spinal cord injury and mobility challenges in our province. 🌐



The Sashy Wheelers (from left): Gary Kachula, James Oloo, Brody Parent, Dwayne Docken, and Bill Lehne

Photo by Loyal Fan of Sashy Wheelers

## Payroll Cutoff Calendar, November 2017

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
				Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Nov 9 Direct Deposits		A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Nov 15 Payday	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	<b>Stat Holiday (Remembrance Day)</b>	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Nov 24 Student Payroll		<b>Staff Payday</b> Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Louis Riel Day Stat Holiday</b>	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Nov 24 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	<b>Student Payday</b> Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/P Invs - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Nov 30 Payday	
24	27	27	28	30		
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Dec 8 Student Payroll			<b>Staff Payday</b> Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run		

Employee contracts due prior to payroll cutoff date.

MRTS due by the 15th of every month, and employee contracts are due prior to payroll cutoff date.

If received after the cutoff date, the employee will be paid on the following pay period.



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Back issues of this newsletter  
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**  
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[https://gdins.org/student  
-services/library/](https://gdins.org/student-services/library/)

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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