



THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE COMMUNICATOR



The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to document the achievements of management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

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2026 USASK Indigenous Achievement Awards



Exceptional Student Award Recipient: Ashley Lafontaine, SUNTEP Saskatoon



DTI Practical Nursing Pediatric Fair

LEGEND

- DTI**—Dumont Technical Institute
- GDC**—Gabriel Dumont College
- GDI**—Gabriel Dumont Institute
- GDITE**—Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment
- GDSF**—Gabriel Dumont Scholarship Foundation
- NSITEP**—Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program
- SUNTEP**—Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program

ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT BRONZE MEDALS AWARDED TO EIGHT OUTSTANDING WOMEN

By Bethani Groat, Communications Coordinator

The Institute is proud to recognize eight outstanding Métis students with the Order of Gabriel Dumont Bronze Medal: Santanna Debray (SUNTEP Prince Albert), Jody Gardiner (GDITE Canoe Narrows), Christina Lavallee (DTI Meadow Lake), Zanna (Cherry) Martin (SUNTEP Regina), Jennifer McKay (SUNTEP Saskatoon), Marsha Morin (NSITEP Air Ronge), Maddison Nikolaisen (DTI Prince Albert), and Angela Phenix (GDITE Regina). The Bronze medal was introduced in 2010, and it is awarded to GDI students and alumni who have distinguished themselves through academics, leadership, and involvement in the Métis community.

“We are proud to recognize eight exceptional women with the Bronze medal this year,” said Brett Vandale, GDI CEO, who further stated, “Métis women have always been leaders,

keeping the stories, cultural traditions, and family histories alive over the generations. These students have demonstrated a commitment to continuing that legacy through their leadership in their respective learning communities.”

This year’s recipients are...

Story continues on Page 2...

Left to Right Top Row: Marsha Morin, Christina Lavallee, Angela Phenix, and Jennifer McKay

Left to Right Bottom Row: Jody Gardiner, Maddison Nikolaisen, Santanna Debray, and Zanna (Cherry) Martin.





UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR FALL 2026



Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP)
La Ronge
Ongoing



Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)
Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert
Ongoing

Apply early to ensure your spot in these popular programs!
WWW.GDINS.ORG/UNIVERSITY

MICHIF WORDS OF THE MONTH

LI MOOND
People

KAYSHISHKOW
Quickly

LI PAYN'D RAAZAYN
Raisin bread

AEN NIPAYNG KROSH
Safety pin

LII TAX KA TIPAHUHK
Taxpayer

NISHTOOHTAMIHK
Understand

PIIKISHKWAYHK
Verbal

ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT BRONZE MEDALS AWARDED TO EIGHT EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

Story Continued from Page 1

Santanna Debray is in her final year at SUNTEP Prince Albert, where she has demonstrated strong academic achievement, work ethic, and a deep commitment to student well-being and cultural responsibility. She is a strong advocate for 2SLGBTQI+ students, and she has taken a leadership role in Métis Week, Dene Week, and Truth & Reconciliation initiatives. Despite personal challenges, she remains an inspiring leader committed to creating inclusive learning environments.

Jody Gardiner is a proud mother of four and is a GDITE client from Jans Bay, SK. Her educational journey has been shaped by her perseverance and deep commitment to support her family and community. Completing her second year in DTI's Mental Health and Wellness program, Jody is looking forward to pursuing a career in the addictions field, where she hopes to support others on their healing journeys with empathy and cultural understanding.

Christina Lavallee is an engaged and supportive presence in DTI's Mental Health & Wellness diploma program in Meadow Lake. After many years away from formal education, she decided to relocate to Meadow Lake to pursue a future as a mental health and addiction professional accompanied by her service dog Poseidon. Christina has maintained strong academic standing while continuing to care for several people in her life and navigating her own challenges.

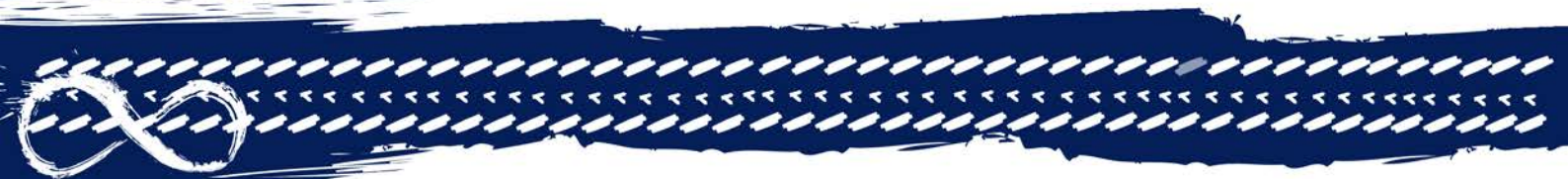
Zanna (Cherry) Martin is a second-year SUNTEP Regina student reconnecting with her Michif roots from Green Lake, SK and Boggy Creek, MB. Cherry received the Regina Guiding Principles Award from her

classmates, which recognized her embodiment of Métis values. She has a passion for arts education, drama, and advocating for Métis youth who are reclaiming their cultural practices. Cherry is a mixed media beadwork artist, and she facilitates Indigiqueer programming for youth.

Jennifer McKay is a Métis mother, recent graduate of the SUNTEP Saskatoon, and teaches Pre-K at Westmount Elementary School. She incorporates Michif and other languages into her daily teaching practice to support language awareness and celebrate diversity. She served on the SUNTEP Student Representative Council, where she helped to plan events like the Louis Riel Day dinner, and she continues to share her passion and leadership skills in her classroom.

Marsha Morin is a proud Métis woman from Beauval, SK, and she is a dedicated NSITEP student who has earned Dean's Academic Honour Roll multiple times from the University of Regina. Marsha has been jiggling since childhood and has travelled nationally to compete, teach, and share her passion for dance. She relocated her family to La Ronge to pursue her teaching career, and her daughter remains her greatest inspiration.

Story continues on Page 3...





UPCOMING DTI PROGRAM DEADLINES

	Continuing Care Assistant Prince Albert May 15	
	Practical Nursing Prince Albert May 15	
	Office Administration Regina or Saskatoon May 22	
	Adult Basic Education Various Ongoing	
	Early Childhood Education Level 2 Online June 30	
	Early Childhood Education Level 3 Online June 30	
	Heavy Equipment Operator Various Ongoing	

For a full listing of all current programs and to apply online visit WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS

ORDER OF GABRIEL DUMONT BRONZE MEDALS AWARDED TO EIGHT EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

Story Continued from Page 2

Maddison Nikolaisen is completing her final semester of DTI's Practical Nursing diploma program in Prince Albert. She is a proud member of Métis Local 269, where she teaches Métis jigging to youth and has served as camp leader for the local's summer camp, helping organize cultural trips to Batoche, teaching Michif, and leading Métis art activities. In her nursing program, Maddison is recognized as a leader who is thoughtful, compassionate, organized, and supportive of her peers.

Angela Phenix is a Métis mother, scholar, educator, occupational therapist, and GDITE client. Most of her career has been spent working in northern remote communities in Canada. She has co-authored several publications, presented nationally and internationally, and co-chaired two national committees on

Indigenous Health and Truth & Reconciliation. Angie is currently completing doctoral work at Queen's University while she works in the School of Rehabilitation Sciences as an Assistant Professor at the University of Saskatchewan.

The eight recipients will be invested into the Order as of May 1, 2026, and they will each be presented with their medal at private ceremonies in each of their home communities. Bronze medal recipients are selected through an internal nomination process from each of GDI's educational programs, including SUNTEP, NSITEP, DTI, and GDITE. To date, over 112 individuals have been invested into the Order by GDI. The Order of Gabriel Dumont is one of the highest civilian honours bestowed by the Métis nation. 🌐

2026 USASK INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

By Céline Grimard, GDI Communications Officer

On the afternoon of Tuesday, March 10, 2026, the USASK Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement hosted the 2026 Indigenous Achievement Awards ceremony, recognizing outstanding Indigenous students and community leaders.

Representing the SUNTEP Prince Albert cohort were three remarkable award recipients: Jo-Rain Ross, Payton Smith, and Emry Price. Surrounded by their loved ones in a packed room, the women waited proudly until their names were called and each stepped forward to accept their award.

Jo-Rain Ross received the Award for Resiliency, Payton Smith was honoured with the Award for Community Engagement, and Emry Price earned the Award for Academic Excellence.

Congratulations to these outstanding women on their well-deserved recognition. The SUNTEP Prince Albert faculty are incredibly proud of all three award recipients and their continued commitment to excellence in their studies, communities, and future careers. 🌐





GDI PRESS NEW RELEASE

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT AWARD RECIPIENT: ASHLEY LAFONTAINE, SUNTEP SASKATOON

by Sheila Pocha, SUNTEP Saskatoon Program Head

Ashley Lafontaine is a SUNTEP Saskatoon student. Ashley is an incredible person who demonstrates dedication and a consistent joyous ambition towards the teaching profession. Ashley leads and supports others respectfully, loyally, and conscientiously.

Ashley has earned great distinction in each of the four years she was in the Bachelor of Education program and has been on the Dean's Honour Roll. She has received recognition for her academic excellence through USASK and their Undergraduate Scholarships for the past three years.

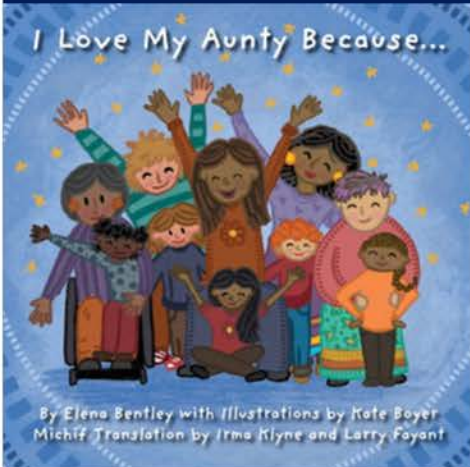
Ashley is extremely proud of her Métis identity. She is increasingly aware of how important it is to be able to culturally assert her identity for the purpose of teaching and mentoring youth, and to prepare for anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning, both of which she planned and delivered well in her student teaching and extended practicum. Ashley demonstrates commitment and an honorable conscientiousness towards mentoring and dedicating time to help all youth prosper and feel a greater sense of belonging.

Ashley contributes beyond our SUNTEP and USASK community through meaningful volunteer work. One of the most impactful ways she has given back is through her work in an inner-city community. She volunteers with the Riversdale Community Fridge, an initiative entirely run by volunteers and community donations in which the most vulnerable can have access to food without judgement.

During Ashley's journey in teacher education, and ultimately her student teaching, she dedicated her planning specifically for her students and built positive relationships with her students in both the English and French streams. She was able to implement the Michif language into her planning and delivery and witnessed positive learning among her students. She met each of her students at their level of learning and all students demonstrated joy for their teacher, often calling her for support and encouragement. One could easily see the sparkle in her students' eyes, but also in her eyes, making it obvious she receives great joy in teaching and in working with youth.

Ashley consistently demonstrates more than commitment to Indigenous teacher education and education overall. She leads with grace, persistence, integrity, respect, and the utmost professionalism. She is known among her cohort, within our program and on campus, as a conscientious and passionate learner. She completed an outstanding extended practicum at George Vanier School, where she created life-long relationships with her colleagues and with her students. Her well-planned lessons and unit plans presented her middle-years students with experiences of important learning outcomes consciously planned to ensure that they could understand equity and inequality. Ashley's commitment to pulling Indigenous educational outcomes from the Saskatchewan curriculum, while bringing in her own perspectives based on her cultural identity as a Metis woman, is impressive.

Ashley's exceptional contributions to education, culture and community make her a truly deserving recipient of the Exceptional Student Award. 🌟



I Love My Aunty Because... shares the important role aunts play in Métis culture. Elena Bentley captures the love different nieces and nephews have for their aunts and their role in their lives. From aunts who make the best bannock, to aunts who tell the best stories, to aunts who are the smartest teachers, readers are sure to find an aunty they can relate to. *I Love My Aunty Because...* is beautifully illustrated by Kate Boyer who captures the relationships shared in the story. The story is translated into Southern Michif by Irma Klyne and Larry Fayant.

A book launch will be held at McNally Robinson at 2 p.m. on May 16th, and the event will also be streamed on YouTube.



The book is available to purchase online at:

WWW.GDINS.ORG/SHOP





CALL FOR BOARD MEMBER NORTHERN REGION I

All appointments to the GDI Board of Governors must be of Métis ancestry, and they will serve for three years with the possibility of renewal.

**Deadline to apply:
May 19, 2026**

More information on eligibility and how to apply on our website at:
GDINS.ORG/NEWS

UPCOMING EVENT

13TH ANNUAL
GABRIEL DUMONT SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

∞ GOLF ∞
MAY 29, 2026

TOURNAMENT

MOON LAKE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
905 VALLEY ROAD, SASKATOON

READY TO SUPPORT MÉTIS STUDENTS REACH THEIR GOALS?

Staff Registration is now open. \$200 per player

Regular \$375 per player or team of 4 for \$1,400

REGISTER ONLINE AT:
WWW.GDINS.ORG/GOLF

LETS GET SOCIAL



Stay in touch on our socials:
Gabriel Dumont Institute
@GDINS_ORG

WWW.GDINS.ORG

DTI PRACTICAL NURSING PEDIATRIC FAIR

By Lauren Tweidt, DTI Faculty

As part of their pediatric clinical experience, DTI's second-year Practical Nursing students hosted a two-day Pediatric Fair for college staff, students, friends, and family. Each booth focused on a different aspect of child development, including physical assessment, street safety, literacy and emotional development, physical activity, healthy eating, and dental care. The DTI Early Childhood Education program also hosted a booth highlighting the importance of play in early childhood development. The event welcomed children of all ages and featured interactive games and learning activities. Each station offered prizes and treats donated by local sponsors, including the Saskatoon Fire Department, SGI, and several local dental offices.



Photos by Céline Grimard

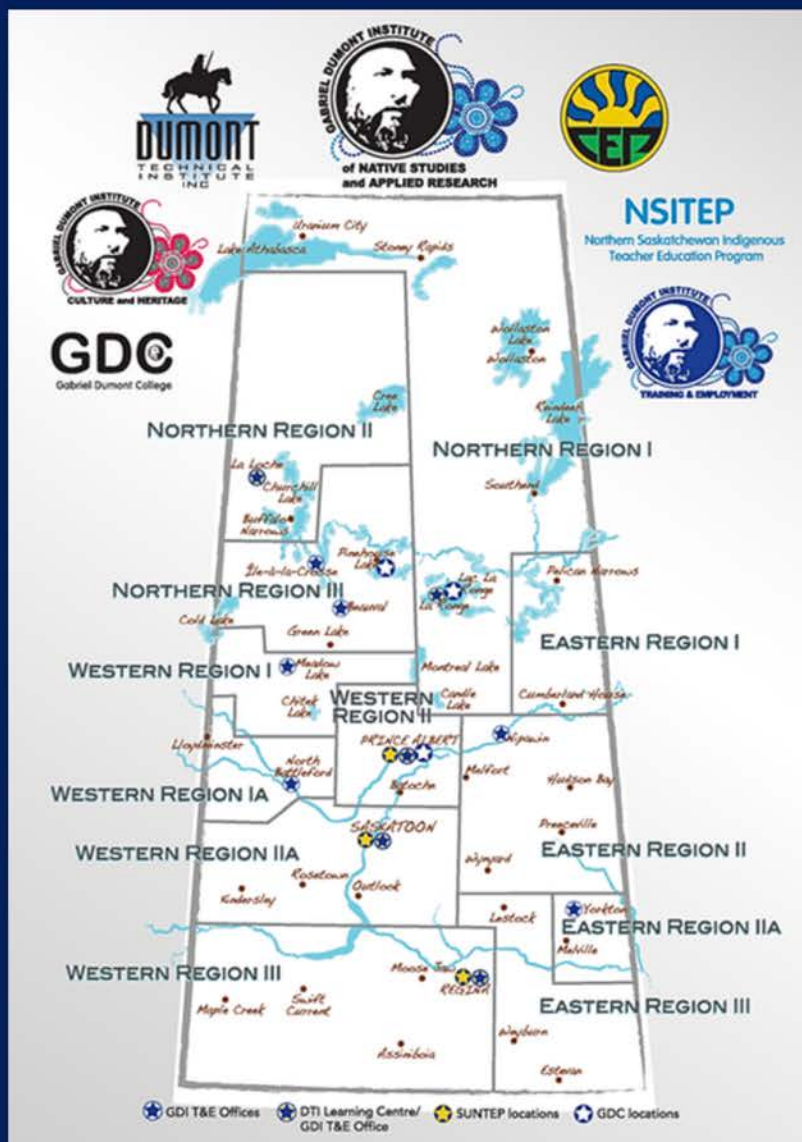
MAY 2026 FINANCE & PAYROLL CUTOFF CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
					ISETS Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 8 Accounts Payable	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student May 8 Direct Deposits	Accounts Payable Payment Run - Noon for Friday Prmts		Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 15 A/P - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for May 15 Payday	MNU Student Payday
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student May 15 Direct Deposits	Accounts Payable Payment Run - Noon for Friday Prmts		ISETS Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 22 Accounts Payable	Staff Payday
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	Victoria Day Stat Holiday	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on MNU Student May 22 Direct Deposits	Accounts Payable Payment Run - Noon for Friday Prmts		Cutoff @ 4:30 for May 29 A/P - Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for May 29 Payday	MNU Student Payday
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on ISETS Student May 29 Direct Deposits	Accounts Payable Payment Run - Noon for Friday Prmts		ISETS Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Jun 5 Accounts Payable	Staff Payday
31						

EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS DUE AT PAYROLL UPON JOB ACCEPTANCE. PAYROLL MUST RECEIVE CONTRACTS PRIOR TO PAYROLL CUTOFF DATE IF RECEIVED AFTER THE CUTOFF DATE, THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE PAID ON THE FOLLOWING PAY PERIOD MRTS DUE BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH



CONTACT US



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info@gdins.org

Previous issues of the *Communicator* can be found online at www.metismuseum.ca

If you would like to submit an article for the *Communicator* please contact Bethani Groat communications@gdins.org

