



MARCH/APRIL 2010

# MÉTIS CONNECTION

NEWS AND MORE FROM THE METIS COMMISSION

## PRACTICE ADVISORY

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**THE MÉTIS FLAG** 2

**WARRIOR CAREGIVERS: A FATHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON PARENTING** 2

**EMPATHY AND KNOWLEDGE** 3

**4 QUICK PLACES TO FIND MÉTIS CULTURE** 3

**HAVE YOU READ IT?** 3

**MARCH AND APRIL CALENDAR** 4

The Practice Advisory from the Métis Commission is in its last draft and nearly ready for distribution. What does it say, you ask? Basically, it stresses the importance of notifying the Commission with both court documents and any reportable circumstances for a Métis child in care.

As well, the Practice Advisory points out the importance of notifying the Commission of any involvement with a Métis child or family, from the beginning of involvement, rather than waiting until the child has been removed from their home.

Thank you to Colleen Lucier, who has been indispensable in

partnering with the Commission to write this document.

We hope this will clear up any confusion of when social workers are required to notify the Métis Commission. As the Commission is the Designated Aboriginal Community for Métis children in BC (CFCSA—Schedule 2), the answer is frequently, "Yes, we should be notified." You will find details in the Practice Advisory itself.

Watch for this Practice Advisory coming your way. If, after reading it, you have questions, please call us at 250-372-8688. We would be happy to provide clarification.



## THE IDENTITY QUESTION...



**I had a call from a social worker today asking if a teen with whom she was working was Métis or not. You see, his mother could not produce his birth certificate, and the teen really didn't know. His mother has said he is Métis, but he is not registered, so is he? Or isn't he?**

This question comes up on a daily basis for Métis children in

care...are they Métis if they identify as Métis, but are not registered and cannot trace roots? The simple answer is "Yes."

According to the CFCSA, for child welfare purposes, a child with aboriginal ancestry who identifies as aboriginal is an "aboriginal child". The explanation in the Act is a little more involved, but the outcome is the same (CFCSA, Part 1-Definitions

and Interpretation)

Eligibility for citizenship registration is a separate matter, and the best people to answer citizenship questions are the Métis Nation British Columbia Registrar's Office. Information and contacts can be found on their website:

[www.mnbc.ca/citizenship/](http://www.mnbc.ca/citizenship/)



### WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

- We will be sending a newsletter and posting it on our website every two months.
- Please feel free to print and distribute if you wish.
- We welcome feedback! What would you like to see...what would be helpful to you?

**DID YOU KNOW THAT THE MÉTIS FLAG IS THE OLDEST CANADIAN PATRIOTIC FLAG?**

The flag was first used by Métis resistance fighters prior to the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816. It is the oldest Canadian patriotic flag indigenous to Canada. The Union Jack and the Royal Standard of New France bearing the fleur-de-lis are older, but these flags were first flown in Europe. As a symbol of nationhood, the Métis flag predates Canada's Maple Leaf flag by about 150 years! The

flag bears a horizontal figure eight, or infinity symbol. The infinity symbol represents the coming together of two distinct and vibrant cultures, those of European and indigenous North America, to produce a distinctly new culture, the Métis. The flag symbolizes the creation of a new society with roots in both Aboriginal and European cultures and traditions. The sky blue background of

the flag emphasizes the infinity symbol and suggests that the Métis people will exist forever.

(information from [www.metiscommission.com](http://www.metiscommission.com))



**NEWS AND IDEAS FROM BC'S MÉTIS SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**KIKINO CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES' WARRIORS PROGRAM**

**WARRIOR CAREGIVERS: A FATHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON PARENTING**

In Métis and/or First Nations' culture the warrior was the protector, provider and caregiver for the entire family. The Warrior Caregivers group was designed with this concept in mind.

A need was recognized in the community that there were no parenting programs exclusive to a father's needs and there are also few resources that work from a Métis lens with the Medicine Wheel as a training tool.

The Warrior Caregivers group was developed with a holistic healing model in mind. There is an introduction phase followed by four modules designed in a specific order:

1. Personal Growth & Healing: In this module we assist fathers with developing as individuals. (4 weeks in length)
2. Relationship Building with Their Partner and/or the Child(ren)s Caregivers: In this section we work with fathers on communication, conflict resolution and working together for the best interests of the child(ren) (4 weeks in length).
3. Relationship Building with Their Child(ren): Education is supplied in the areas of child development, healthy communication and culture based parenting (4 weeks in length).
4. Development of Community

Connections: Working with fathers to identify needed supports for after completion of the program is necessary to increase their potential success as a role model and parent to their children. This will culminate in a closing ceremony with the gifting of a Métis sash (4 weeks in length).

Using the Medicine Wheel model we are working in all four quadrants (mental, spiritual, emotional and physical) during the modules in order to build on father's parenting capacity.

From Kikino's website: <http://www.kikino.ca/programs.html>

**"The warrior was the protector, provider and caregiver for the entire family."**



**GREATER EMPATHY COMES FROM GREATER KNOWLEDGE**

*Don't judge me until you've walked a mile in my shoes... " Isn't that how the old saying goes?*

This is the cornerstone of empathy...the ability to truly put ourselves into someone else's shoes...to see things from their point of view. The quality of empathy, though, is directly related to a person's knowledge of any given situation. Let's take the Métis people, for example...

To have empathy for the Mé-

tis families involved in child welfare, workers have to be able to see things from the families' points of view. Can we though? In Canada's schools, Métis history is given lesser attention than most, and much of what is taught can be biased or very heavily weighted on Rebellion. Add to the Métis history, the individual family's personal history, and you have an incredibly complex knowledge require-

ment on which to base grounds for empathy. Before all of us in the social services field can make the claim of having empathy, we have to re-educate ourselves on Métis social history and cultural values.

Before you are confident that you have empathy, have you educated yourself on the Métis history and culture? Walk a mile in Métis shoes or moccasins.



**4 QUICK PLACES TO FIND MÉTIS CULTURE**

Are you a social worker, planning for Métis children, and having a difficult time finding Métis culture in BC? If we lived in Winnipeg, it would be much easier to find Métis culture; in fact, it would be impossible to miss it! I don't know about you, but I don't plan on moving, though, so here are a few great cultural resources we can access easily, while living in BC:

1. Your local Métis Service provider – Service providers have a wealth of cultural knowledge and connections.
2. MNBC website— At [www.mnbc.ca](http://www.mnbc.ca), you can find not only cultural information, but also the contact information for locals in your area.
3. The Métis Culture & Heritage Resource Centre website— This is a very informative site, run by the resource centre out of Winnipeg, MB. [www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.htm](http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/index.htm)
4. Last, but not least, call us at the Métis Commission. We can work to connect you with cultural resources for children and families in your area.

**Are you a social worker, planning for Métis children, and having a difficult time finding Métis culture in BC?**

**HAVE YOU READ IT?**

In each issue, this column will feature an article or book that pertains to Métis child welfare.

This month, the article is one that is a 'must read' for anyone working with Métis children and families: "Identity lost and found: Lessons from the sixties scoop" by Raven

Sinclair. Sinclair explores transracial adoption practices with Canada's aboriginal children. She compares the 'Sixties Scoop' with current child welfare practices, and points to continued high numbers of aboriginal children in care, referring to current practice as the "Millennium Scoop".

Sinclair's article discusses the importance of cultural knowledge and connection. She challenges social work to be "proactive, adaptive, and creative."

You can find this article online: [http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/vol3num1/Sinclair\\_pp65.pdf](http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/vol3num1/Sinclair_pp65.pdf)



Visit us at;  
[www.metiscommission.com](http://www.metiscommission.com)

The Métis Commission for Children and Families  
of British Columbia

#1-166 Oriole Rd.  
Kamloops, BC V2C 4N7

Phone: 250-372-8688

Fax: 250-372-9111

E-mail: [bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com](mailto:bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com)

The purpose of this newsletter is to share news on a regular basis amongst those who serve BC's Métis families in child welfare. If you have events or other newsworthy items you'd like to include, please email or call Michele at The Métis Commission (contact information at left). We look forward to hearing from you.



## MARCH AND APRIL CALENDAR

### March 8-12

Spring Break

### April 2

Good Friday

### April 5

Easter Monday

Our Calendar is very sparse for this issue! Do you have events (workshops, gatherings, etc.) coming up in May or June? If so, please email the information to [bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com](mailto:bestpracticecoordinator@metiscommission.com) before April 26th, and we'll put it into the next issue's calendar for you.

