

# 2023 - 2024

# Annual REPORT



Michif Child  $\infty$   
Family Services



# WHO WE ARE

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- Métis families and communities are cornerstones of the Métis Nation and the service delivery system must reflect the vision.
- The family is the center of Inuit culture and cooperation and sharing is a basic principle in Inuit society.
- Responsibility for decision-making regarding Métis and Inuit children lies with the family, extended family and community whenever possible.
- The organizational structure promotes and supports community governance at all levels.
- The service delivery system will encompass both formal and informal elements.
- The service delivery system must be operated in an efficient and effective manner.
- The service delivery system will be outcome-based and will reflect the core founding principles of Michif Child and Family Services.

## VISION

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Métis and Inuit families and communities are nurtured through love, respect, honour, strength and heritage within their distinctive cultures.

## MISSION

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Métis and Inuit families and communities have the right and responsibility to care for children within their cultures. Michif Child and Family Services will work to strengthen the capacity of families to care for children through culturally relevant community-based programs.

We believe in the inherent strength of our families and in the need to build on the capacity of our community to care for and nurture our children.

# PRESIDENT DAVID CHARTRAND

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This past year has seen many successes for our children, families, and, indeed, our Nation.

We saw a historic win through the Lafontaine Class Action which won compensation for children formerly in our care from 2005 - 2019 who had the provincial government claw back Children's Special Allowance benefits that were supposed to benefit them. I had promised to return every penny of those dollars to those children and we will be doing that and more! We look forward to being able to provide more updates as this process unfolds.

In another historic event, on June 3, 2023, the Red River Métis unanimously voted in support of the Red River Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Treaty which is yet another step forward in our journey of Self-Government and Self-Determination. This agreement, among other things, confirms what we have known for decades: it is our responsibility, as the National Government of the Red River Métis, to take care of our children, youth, and families.

This Treaty was built on the backs of our Ancestors, Elders, and other leaders who came before us and is yet another positive step for our Nation.

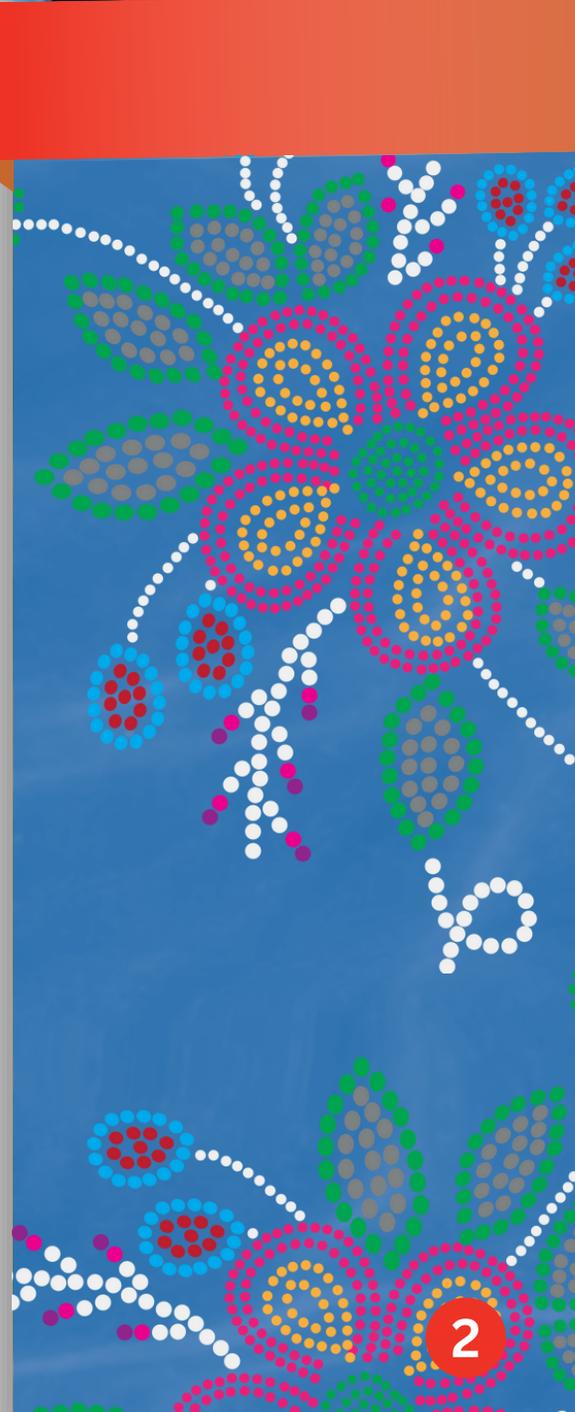
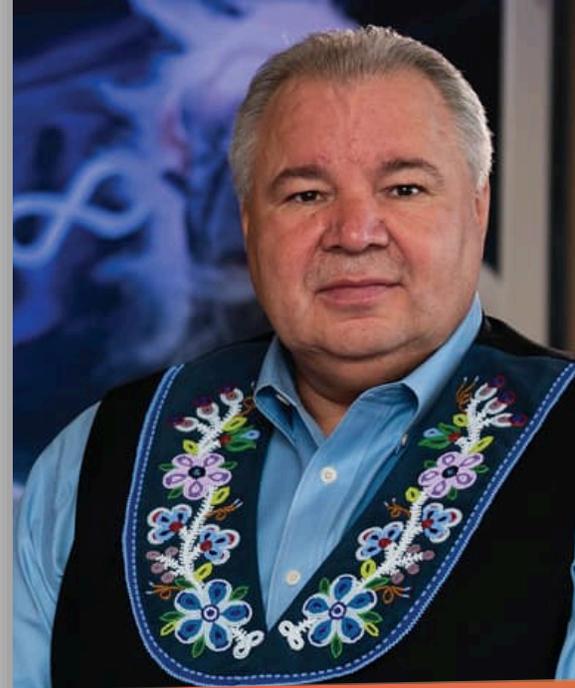
I know that our Métis CFS agencies are among the best of the best. You work miracles despite the limited tools at your disposal. We hope that we can utilize the upcoming Treaty and Coordination Agreement to help expand the toolbox and give you even more opportunities to strengthen our families.

I would like to extend my sincerest thank you to the Michif Child and Family Services Board of Directors, chaired by Chairperson Echo Finlay, and staff for their hard work and dedication to support your Red River Métis Government as we usher in a new era of child and family services.

I would especially like to thank Minister Mona Buors for her insight, guidance, and the direction she brings in her role as Minister of Métis Child and Family Services.

Meeqwetch,

David Chartrand, President  
Manitoba Métis Federation





# MINISTER OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES MONA BUORS

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I am proud to be the Minister Responsible for Child and Family Services for the Red River Métis as we continue to distinctly separate ourselves from the historic child welfare system. While our progress has been slowed, the vision and destination remain the same - a truly Red River Métis child welfare system founded on our traditional values.

When a coordination agreement with Manitoba and Canada is complete, we will work with other Red River Métis Government departments to deliver meaningful prevention programs and the child and family services system will legally reunite children with families with supports in place. While this remains a work in progress, the Children's Special Allowance Class Action Lawsuit is coming to a conclusion. The conclusion being a resounding victory for every person who was ever in the care of the Red River Métis child welfare system. The filing of the Lafontaine Class Action ensured that all the people formerly in the care of our agencies could receive compensation – including for the time they were in the care of other agencies. The filling of almost every seat in the court room by the agencies and Authority was a sight to behold!

Along with many members of Cabinet, I had the pleasure of attending an Aging Out Ceremony in Brandon this past year. It is always touching to hear the stories from and about the youth being celebrated.

I would like to thank the Agency's Executive Director, Margaret Marin, the executive team and staff of the Agency for their dedication towards constant improvement. I also thank Board Chairperson Echo Finlay and the rest of the Board of Directors who provide leadership and direction to the agency. And finally, I would like to thank President David Chartrand and the Cabinet of the Manitoba Métis Federation, the National Government of the Red River Métis, for their support as we continue forward into these new times.

Merci,

Mona Buors  
Minister Responsible for Métis Child and Family Services  
Manitoba Métis Federation

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER KARLA HILDEBRAND-EDEN

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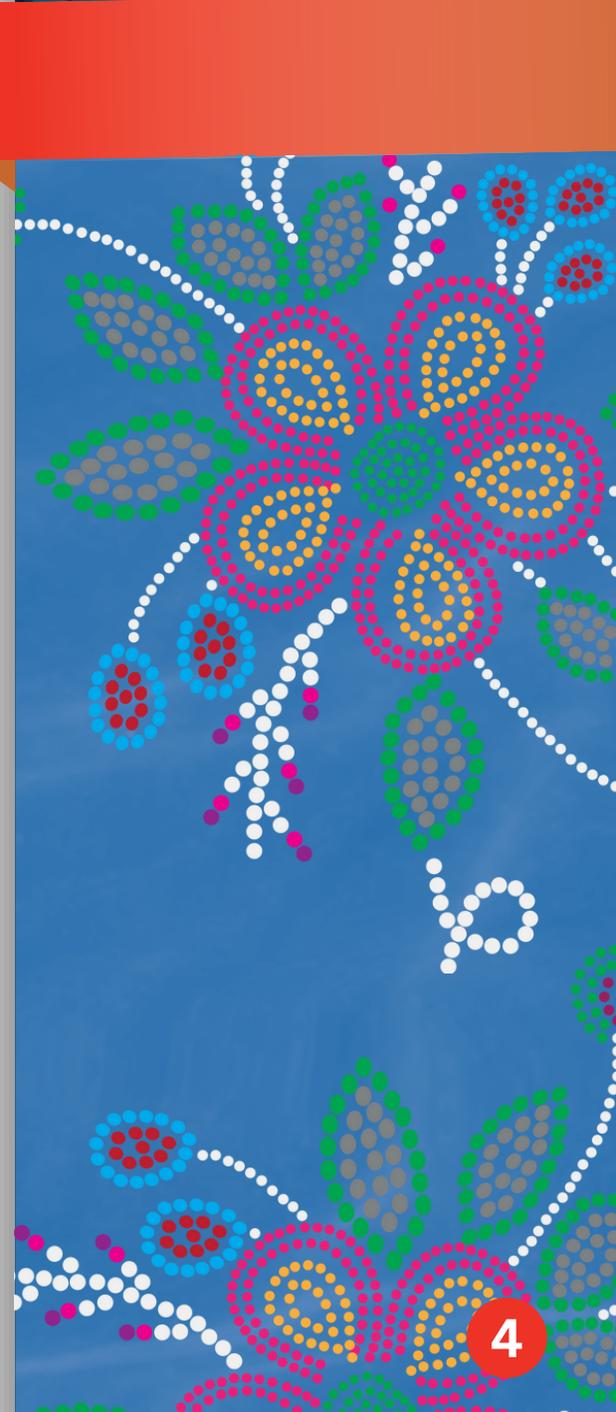
On behalf of the Métis Child and Family Services Authority and our Board of Directors, we would like to commend Michif Child and Family Services on their dedication throughout the 2023/24 fiscal year.

This agency has gone above and beyond, and continually provides support, empathy, and culturally-relevant practices to the communities they serve throughout Manitoba.

We would like to thank the Michif Child and Family Services' Executive Director, Margret Marin, the Michif CFS board, the executive management team, and the staff for their tireless efforts in providing care to our Red River Métis children, youth, and families. The work you have done over this past year will have ever-lasting impacts on the families we serve.

Whether it be the various programs, the participation in legal battles, or the small acts of kindness to comfort children in their most difficult times, your agency continues to be leaders in delivering child and family services.

Respectfully,  
Karla Hildebrand-Eden  
Chief Executive Officer





## BOARD CHAIR ECHO FINLAY

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Greetings, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Michif Child and Family Services Annual Report.

I would like to acknowledge President David Chartrand, our Manitoba Métis Federation Government, and especially Minister Mona Buors for the work you do. We are fortunate to have strong advocates guiding us as we strive to provide the best possible care and support for our fellow Red River Métis families.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the staff of Michif Child and Family Services. It takes incredible people to do the work you do, and I hope every employee in our agency realizes that you are making a difference. Our Board works closely with Executive Director Margaret Marin, and we appreciate the passion for child advocacy that she models while providing leadership to the agency.

There are many moving parts making up the CFS system, and I would need a lot more paper to acknowledge everyone involved. Please know that our Board is thankful for every person that is part of our work, including our Elders, our Youth, fellow Agency and Authority Board members, and the Authority staff at all levels. It takes a village to raise a child!

Sincerely,

Echo Finlay  
Chairperson  
Michif CFS Board of Directors

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARGARET MARIN

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I am pleased to present our annual report for the 2023–2024 fiscal year. This year, we have navigated various changes within the child welfare system while advancing our own legislation and collaborating with leadership to highlight the importance of these changes. Our active engagement with families, youth, and children in the Red River communities has been vital in gathering feedback from our stakeholders to ensure these changes positively impact all involved.

I extend my gratitude to Chief Executive Officer Karla Hildebrand-Eden and Associate Chief Executive Officer Desiree Gillespie, their Authority Executive, and all their staff. Your unwavering support is crucial in facilitating these changes. Special thanks also go to Scott Maksymyk, Executive Director of Metis Child and Family Community Services, and his executive team, management, and staff for your continued partnership as we evolve with the child welfare enhancements.

The Red River Metis community has demonstrated remarkable resilience, adapting to adversity and embracing change—a vital trait in our cultural and historical context. This year, we have enhanced cultural awareness through events, activities, life books, and family finding initiatives for our families, youth, and children.

A significant achievement this year was the success of the Lafontaine Class Action concerning the Children’s Special Allowance (CSA), marking a milestone for all former children in care. We remain committed to ensuring that every individual impacted by this case receives the compensation they deserve.

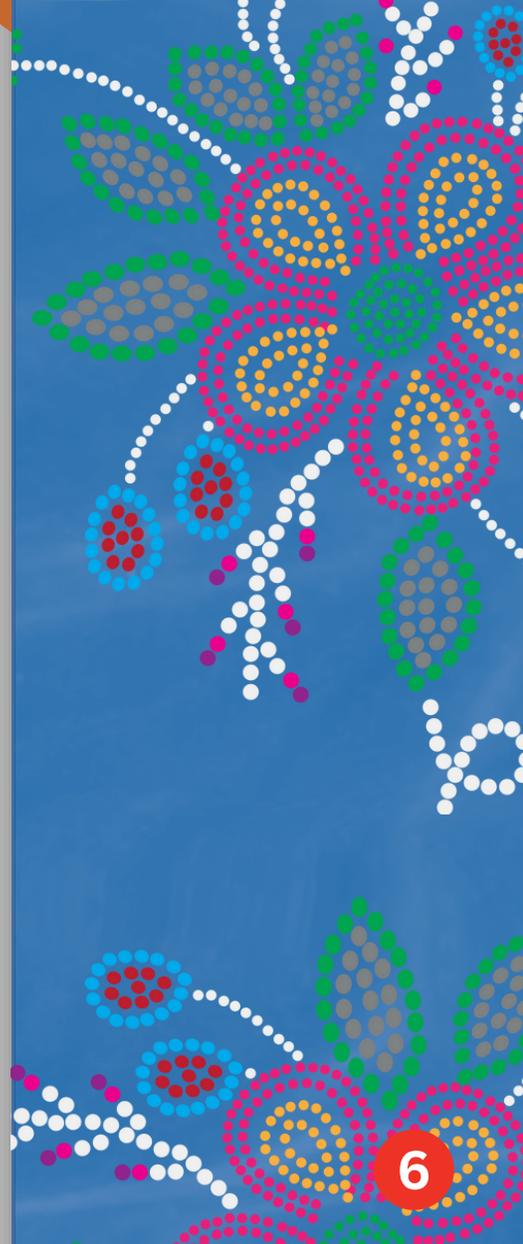
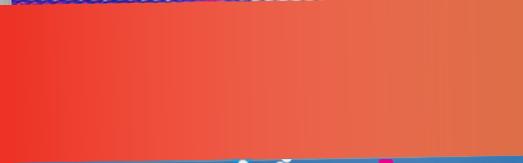
We are profoundly grateful for the continued support of David Chartrand, President of the MMF, the National Government of the Red River Metis, and Mona Buors, Minister of Family Services. Your strong leadership has been pivotal for the future of our programs and services across all our communities. A sincere thank you to our Board of Directors and Chair, Echo Finlay. Together, we will persist in serving our communities with dedication and passion.

I also want to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our staff, management, and executive team. Their hard work has positively impacted many lives, and we are proud to have them as part of our team.

As part of the Métis family, we recognize that every thread in our sash represents our workplace culture and the support we provide. It’s essential to understand the profound difference we make in the lives of the families and communities we serve.

In closing, as we move forward and finalize changes to our Métis child welfare system, the support and dedication of our staff will continue to pave the way for those we care about today, tomorrow, and always.

Respectfully,  
Maggie Marin  
Executive Director



# OUR BOARD

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**Echo Finlay** - Chairperson  
**Jeannette Brown-Porter** - Vice-Chairperson  
**Mackenzie Legault** - Treasurer  
**Vicki Campbell** - Secretary  
**Ethel McKay** - Director  
**Eldon Campbell** - Elder  
**Marguerite (Marg) Bagley** - Ex-Officio  
**Charlotte Nolin** - Ex-Officio (alternate)

# EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

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**Margaret Marin** - Executive Director  
**Quinton Sanderson** - Director of Service  
**Kisty Argue** - Director of Service  
**Jared Folkerts** - Director of Service  
**Dina Bone** - Executive Assistant  
**Paul Duguay** - HR Advisor  
**Samer Barahmeh** - Finance Manager

# SUPERVISORS

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**Angie Kuzyk** - Dauphin Family Service  
**Nina Crawford** - Resource  
**Echo Harkiss** - Swan River Family Service  
**Denise Tomkins** - Intake  
**Melanie Rey-Clark** - Portage Family Service  
**Troy Caruk** - Dauphin Family Service

**Harold Delaronde** - Program  
**Jolene Reimer** - Brandon Family Service  
**Maurae Carnegie** - Program  
**Sharon Stieben** - Program  
**Kaitlen Epp** - Admin  
**Margaret Bartlett** - The Pas/Thompson  
Family Service



# OUR BOARD



## OFFICES

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### Dauphin

505 Main St. S Dauphin, MB, R7N 1L3  
204-638-7896  
Resource Office: 204-622-3520  
202 Main St. S  
Toll Free Intake: 1-866-834-4242

### The Pas

Box 1288; 456 Fischer Ave.  
The Pas, MB, R9A 1I2 204-627-2060  
toll free: 1-855-627-2060

### Thompson

309-83 Churchill Dr.  
Thompson, MB, R8N 0I6 204-677-0120  
toll free: 1-877-257-4972

### Swan River

605 Main St. Swan River, MB, R0I 1Z0  
204-734-3927  
toll free: 1-877-676-7920

### Brandon

141 Rosser Ave. Brandon, MB, R7A 0J6  
204-727-8540

### Portage La Prairie

27 Royal Rd. S Portage La Prairie, MB,  
R1N 1T8 204-239-8720

# PROGRAM SUMMARY





# INTAKE

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During the 2023 – 2024 year the Intake Unit continued to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect as well as provide advocacy and support for families within the Parkland area. The Intake Unit consists of six Intakes Workers, one Case Aide and one Child Abuse Coordinator.

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Three Intake Workers have been trained in conducting Child Abuse Investigations which has increased the Agency's capacity to respond in a timely manner to disclosures of child abuse. The Intake unit continues to support families with new children by providing an Infant Kit to those families who are in need of some extra assistance.





# FAMILY SERVICE

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Our family service teams have developed a unique approach to networking and collaboration that has proven highly effective. We have successfully welcomed and invited families to participate, aiming to establish lifelong connections and shift decision-making to families. This approach has significantly enhanced child safety, family preservation, and overall family functioning, setting us apart as effective service providers.

One of our main goals has been to ensure long-lasting relationships between children in foster care and their families. This has been made possible by implementing practices from a Family Engagement approach, where we engage with families intentionally and purposefully. As a result, 24 children successfully reunified during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Our team's curious and empathetic approach has led to a greater understanding and respect for different cultural practices, values, and beliefs as we serve a diverse population. We include traditional teachings in case plans, work closely with young people, and provide educational opportunities to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone.

The continued sponsorship of the Youth camp by the Northwest Métis Council, in combination with supplementary workshops and youth-centric events, has presented invaluable opportunities for youth engagement. The team has continually augmented their skills and knowledge through staff training initiatives, ensuring optimal support to families. This year has been characterized by growth and enthusiasm as we continue to have the honour of walking alongside our children, families, and each other.

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“We were SO HAPPY when your dad told us the news, about the message he got,  
and phoned us after he spoke to T.  
So THANKFUL for your kind-hearted worker.”

*- A letter a grandmother wrote to her granddaughters after a  
Family Service Worker re-established connection.*



# FAMILY ENHANCEMENT

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The Family Enhancement unit aims to empower families and enhance family functioning to ensure the long-term well-being of children. The goal is to work with care providers to support growth and facilitate change through advocacy, connecting families with supportive relationships and through the provision of programming and educational materials to create strong and resilient families and communities.

The team is committed to providing support to families through voluntary services and bridging the gaps in community-based resources and services in rural settings through agency-based supportive programming by walking alongside families offering strength-based, solution-focused, culturally sensitive supports through a trauma-informed lens.



## MICHIF COMMUNITY ADDICTIONS RESPONSE TEAM

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The Community Addictions Response Team has continued to provide supportive services to families that Michif walks along side. The unique approach that CART operates under ensures that families have the ability to access addiction and mental health services with a considerably reduced wait time. CART currently employs a Case Manager and a Peer Family Mentor who work closely with families to mitigate child safety concerns allowing children to remain in the home, or ensuring safe access to children who are living in a safe family plan arrangement. CART workers aim to increase a family's support network and reduce obstacles and barriers that prevent families from achieving their goals.

# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Resource Development is responsible for the recruitment, licensing and support of Places of Safety and foster homes. Each year looks different as new homes are added and some close due to various reasons such as reunification, aging out, or transfer of guardianship. This year has seen a continued trend of having more Places of Safety and kinship foster homes than general homes, which is exciting as it means that as an Agency, we are successfully keeping our children in care with caregivers who are related or known to them, preserving the family unit and their culture.

The Resource team consists of five workers who cover a large part of the province. It can be a balancing act for workers to visit current homes, conduct home studies, and manage new placements; but they are dedicated to supporting our families as they care for our children.

Resource staff are privileged to share in both the good and tough times with our families, supporting them through their caregiving journey. There is nothing more encouraging for them than celebrating a youth's high school graduation, a family being reunited or seeing a family gain guardianship. We are thankful for our current homes, but we struggle to find enough placements for our children, both kinship and general. We would be pleased to welcome you to the caregiving family.

This past year, through a grant from the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, the Resource team provided 43 comfort kits to children and youth to improve their experience when coming into the care of the child welfare system, by giving them a backpack filled with items that aid in bettering their well-being, safety, and sense of security.



# GROUP CARE RESOURCES



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Between Sunrise House in Brandon and Four Winds and Northern Lights in Dauphin, Michif has 12 emergency bed spaces available for children and youth who need a safe and welcoming home environment. These facilities are consistently at capacity which still provides opportunities for workers to be creative in their planning with the families they walk alongside as open spaces are not always available when needed. While there have continued to be challenges in filling Child and Youth Care Worker positions within the Dauphin area, collaboration between staff from Dauphin and those from Brandon helps to ensure continuity of service, quality care, and support to the children and youth who reside in the homes.

Both teams have worked together to create home-like environments for the children and youth by offering regular recreational and cultural opportunities. Group care facilities continue to be at the forefront of a general lack of placement resources for children and youth across the Provincial child welfare system. Due to a lack of kinship foster homes and bed spaces in specialized programs, children and youth have had to stay in our facilities for longer periods than we would like. The Agency continues to examine internal practices to return children and youth to their families or to try and facilitate a timely transition into longer-term placements.

# MICHIF CONNECT

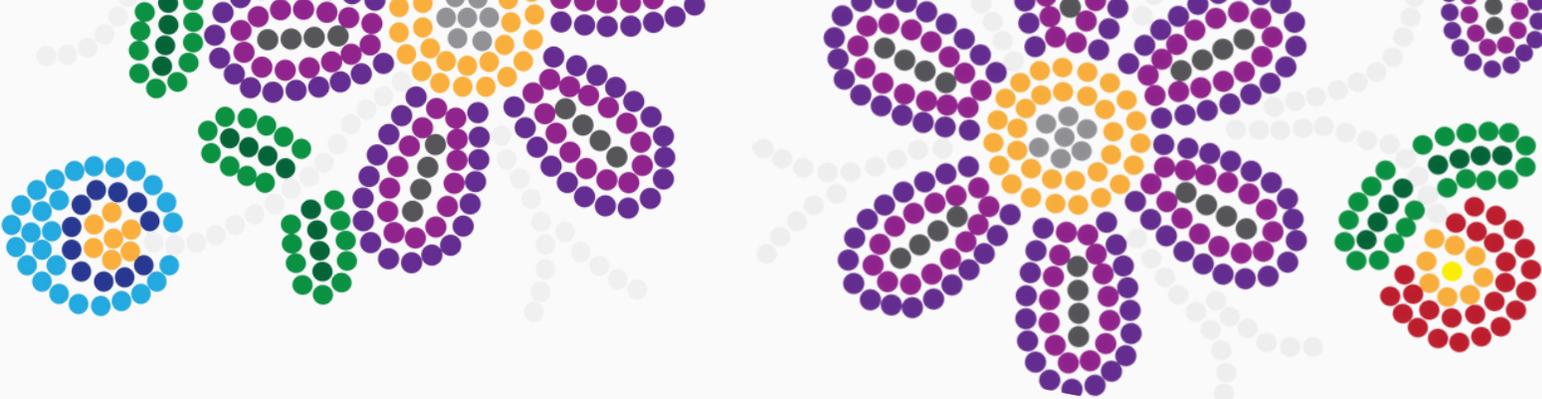
The Michif Connect program is an agency-wide initiative transforming how frontline staff work with families and communities in how child welfare is practiced. This reflects the Agency's commitment to a more collaborative and family-centred approach – empowering families and communities to be active participants in planning and decision-making for the well-being of children and youth while understanding the historical impact of the child welfare system.

Research shows that the most powerful approach for healing the effects of maltreatment and trauma is positive permanent relationships and this healing happens within networks and so Michif Connect offers a range of services to equip and empower staff to focus on network building and relationships.



# MICHIF SPIRIT

The Michif Spirit Program continues to support young adults from the ages of 18 – 26 who may still be connected to the Agency through an Agreement with Young Adults or have fully transitioned out of care. Referrals to the program have increased significantly over the past year with 69 youth currently being supported. The Michif Spirit Worker provides supportive services such as navigating services and resources, connecting young adults with community programs, advocating for young adults to reduce barriers in accessing programs, assisting youth in applying for Tuition Waiver funding or accessing funding through the MMF Métis Education and Training Department. A large number of young adults struggle to find affordable and safe housing; the Canada-Manitoba Housing Benefit has been the most sourced resource for youth this past year as it provides extra funds for youth in and from care who need help to pay for rent.

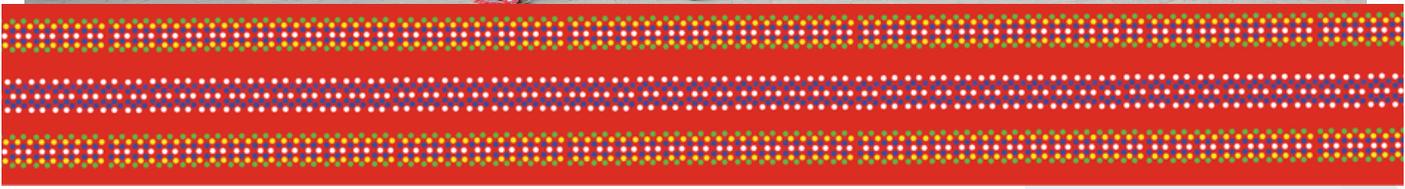


# AGENCY DAY

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On June 13, 2023 Michif CFS staff gathered at Elkhorn Resort in Riding Mountain National Park for our annual all-staff gathering. Executive Director, Maggie Marin gave an update to staff regarding some positive changes in how the Agency will work within the changes to child welfare legislation. It gave everyone time to reflect on where the Agency is going and the historical events that are occurring.

After celebrating staff who reached their 5, 10, and 15 years of service milestones, staff were able to take advantage of the numerous recreational options available in Elkhorn and Wasagaming by taking a couple of hours to do an activity of their choice – tennis, pickleball, paddleboard, kayak, yoga, walk, Métis dot art, bike ride, or mini golf.





# YOUTH CELEBRATION

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Michif CFS held their annual Youth Celebration in Brandon on November 9, 2023. It was a beautiful event that celebrated seven young adults as they transitioned from Agency care into adulthood. A new addition to this year's celebration was an afternoon activity for the youth, where they had the opportunity to go axe-throwing.

Youth, accompanied by their family members, friends, and supporters arrived in style to the event in a limo. The evening featured a performance by the Métis Prairie Steppers and music by Brad Moggie & High Moon. A highlight was having an MMF Communications crew on hand to film the event and feature it on the MMF's social media accounts.



## DIRECT SERVICE WORKERS

Direct Service Workers (DSWs) play an integral role in the Agency. The work that they do is often challenging and frequently involves long hours on the road. They provide one-to-one support to the families we walk alongside as well as supporting family visits and providing transportation across all regions.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, DSW's fulfilled 1,713 individual contracts. MCFS currently has DSWs based out of Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin, Swan River, and Thompson. There has been a focused effort over the past year to provide more training for DSWs to enhance their skills.

# CULTURE



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With a grant from the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada to put on events to help connect children and youth 'back to the land', Michif CFS held an event at the South Side Lodge near Winnipegosis on Oct 20, 2023. 27 people came out for a fun day including a guided marsh walk, fishing for perch in a pond, and viewing taxidermy in the lodge. The highlight for most attendees was plucking and dressing freshly harvested ducks and geese in the field. Everyone also enjoyed a fantastic traditional lunch at the Mossey River Inn.

This year saw the re-launching of Michif's Cultural Committee. The committee believes in the preservation of cultural identity for children, youth, and families and is proactive in implementing programs and services which provide a sense of belonging, community, and fun.

Several events were held throughout the year across the regions including Festival du Voyageur days, story times, a Métis music night, hosting book clubs, and establishing cultural libraries in each office.

# MICHIF CFS - OUT AND ABOUT

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- Over 800 people came to the first annual Métis CFS Christmas celebration which featured carnival rides, food, games, crafts, face painting, pictures with Santa, and more.
- Director of Service Kisty Argue and Family Service Supervisor Jolene Reimer managed to snag a selfie with Premier Wab Kinew at the Annual General Assembly in October 2023.
- Michif CFS entered two teams in the Métis Employment and Training golf tournament at the Scotswood Links on June 6, 2023.
- On December 13, 2023 the Michif CFS management team was present in the courtroom for the certification of the Children's Special Allowance class action lawsuit.
- A team of staff attended the 9th Gathering of Healing our Spirits Worldwide in Vancouver in September 2023.
- Michif CFS had a booth set up for Red River Métis Day at the St. Norbert Farmer's Market on August 19, 2023.
- On July 27, 2023 the Family Services team at the Portage la Prairie office held a Summer Pool Party for children in care, their families as well as some of the families that staff walk alongside.
- Maggie Marin, Executive Director, represented Michif CFS at the Manitoba Legislature on November 23, 2023 for the introduction of the Louis Riel Act which bestows the esteemed Métis leader with the honorary title of First Premier of Manitoba.

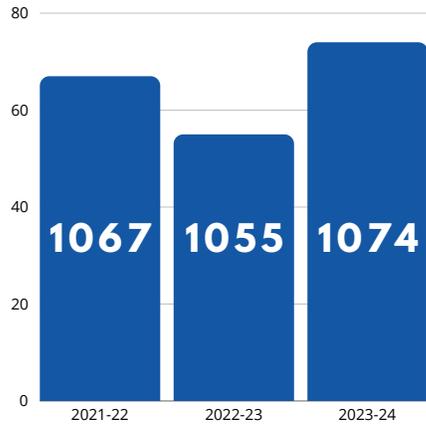
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In partnership with the Northwest Métis Council, MCFS held the annual Cultural Youth Camp at the Shell River Jamboree site from July 10 to July 13, 2023. Six youths attended and enjoyed four days of camping, hiking, medicine picking, land-based teachings, scavenger hunts, tie-dyeing, fishing, dancing, and fiddle playing.

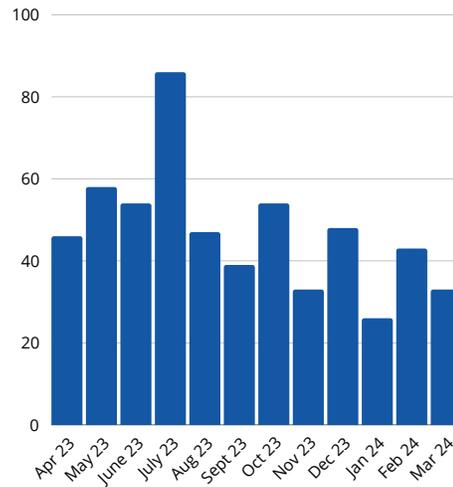


# AGENCY STATISTICS

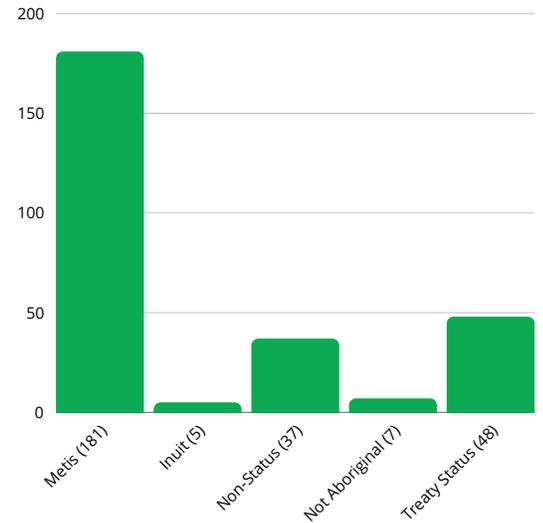
**TOTAL NUMBER OF INTAKES OVER THREE YEARS**



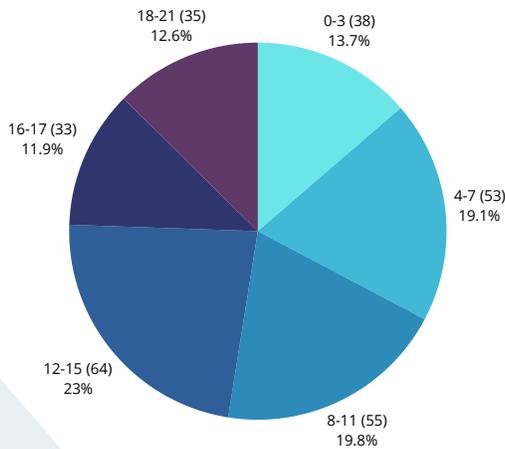
**AFTER-HOURS CALLS**



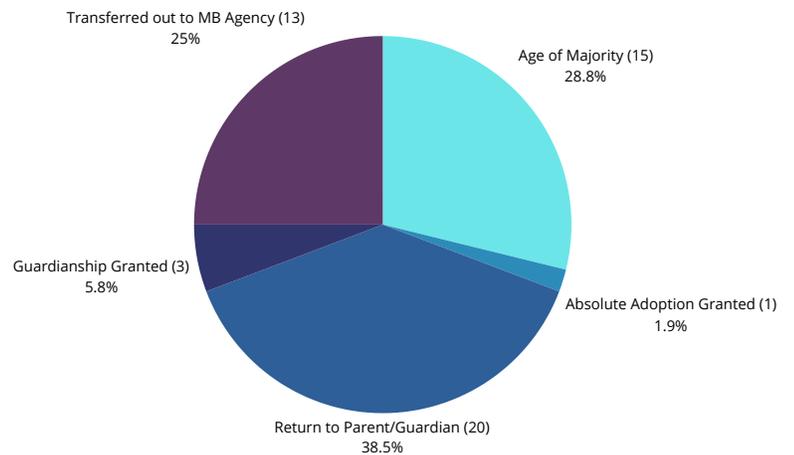
**ABORIGINAL STATUS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**



**AGE OF OUR CHILDREN IN CARE**



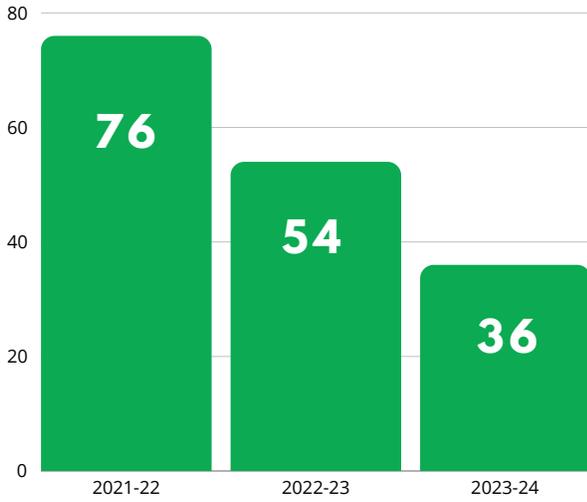
**REASONS FOR CHILD FILE CLOSURE**



**CASE COUNTS BY REGION**

	Voluntary Family Services	Family Enhancement	Protection	AYA	Child in Care	Child in Care - Supervision
Portage La Prairie	8	2	15	8	55	3
Brandon	11	4	23	11	36	1
Dauphin	10	1	71	4	101	0
Swan River	0	0	10	7	30	0
The Pas	0	0	3	1	12	0
Thompson	1	0	2	4	9	0

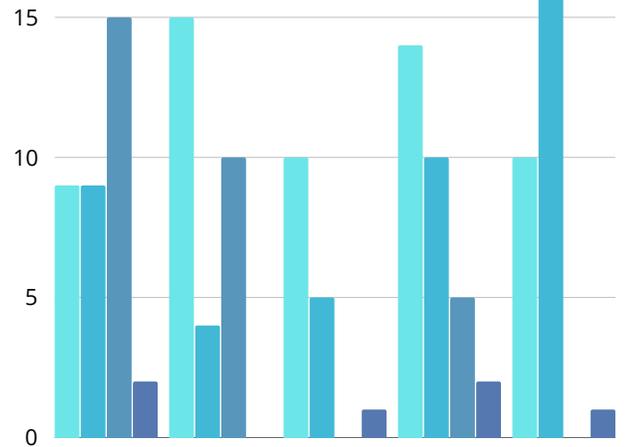
## NUMBER OF APPREHENSIONS OVER THREE YEARS



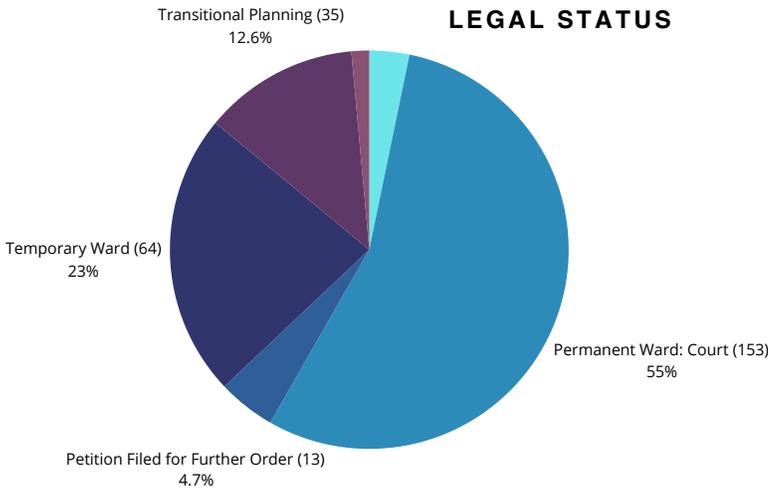
## FOSTER CARE HOMES BY REGION

- Licensed Kinship Homes (58)
- Licensed General Homes (44)
- Places of Safety-Kinship (30)
- Places of Safety-General (6)

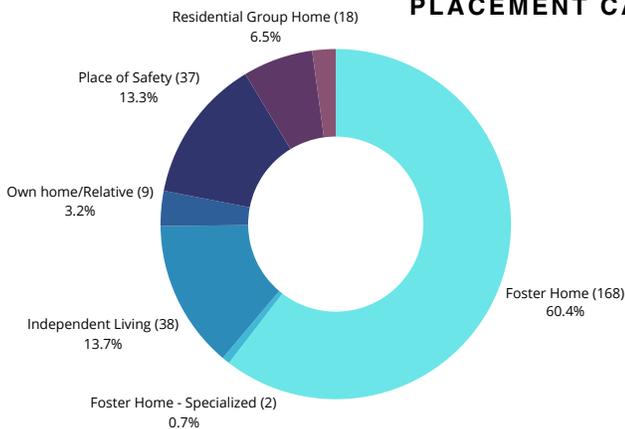
TOTAL FOR ALL TYPES AND REGIONS: 138



## CHILDREN IN CARE BY LEGAL STATUS



## CHILD IN CARE BY PLACEMENT CATEGORY



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth  
YES (Youth Employment Services)  
Assiniboine College  
Back to the Land grant – Children’s Aid  
Foundation of Canada  
MMF – Métis Employment and Training  
MMF – Southwest Region  
MMF – Northwest Métis Council  
MMF – The Pas Region  
MMF – Shell River Métis Association  
MMF – President David Chartrand’s office

Métis CFS Authority  
Ted and Loretta Rogers Foster Care  
Comfort Kit Program – Children’s Aid  
Foundation of Canada  
Dauphin Co-op  
Cochrane Saxberg Barristers and  
Solicitors  
Parkway Co-op  
M30 Athletics  
Dahleila Jane Bags  
Victoria Inn  
Heritage Co-op

## 2023-2024 Annual Report



Michif Child  
Family Services