

# MANITOBA

# *School Counsellor*

FALL 2020

**Manitoba schools hold parades to boost student morale during the height of COVID-19**

**The transition to post-secondary education during a pandemic**

**COVID-19, smoking, and vaping: A real-life exercise in critical thinking for your students**

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**Brandon Wosniak**, U of M student,  
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DAVID LANGSTAFF

Managing Editor  
SHAYNA WIIWERSKI

Technical Editor  
JAN STEWART

Sales Manager  
DAYNA OULION

Advertising Account Executives  
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ROSS JAMES

Contributing Writers  
DAVID GARVEY  
NICOLAS KLASSEN-WIEBE  
WAYNE MCNEIL  
HEATHER SPRATT  
LISA STEPNUK  
STEPHEN P. SUTHERLAND  
KATHY THEBERGE  
JACKELYN TSOURAS  
JULIE WALSH

Production Services Provided By  
S.G. BENNETT MARKETING

Creative Director / Design  
KATHY CABLE

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Email: david@delcommunications.com



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF MSCA

### *Jennifer Stewart*

I hope everyone has had a great start to this 2020/21 school year. I am sure there continues to be stresses of the unknowns and what is to come. Self-care has become even more important in these times and I hope you are finding some joy and fun whenever and however you can. The Manitoba School Counsellors Association (MSCA) wants to thank our members for working hard through these challenging times and continuing to support staff and students.

I would like to introduce you to our executive for this school year.

President – Jennifer Stewart

Vice-President – Jennifer Streilein

Secretary – Tashia Herring

Treasurer – Carolynne Pitura

Public Relations Chair – Shamain Hartman

Professional Development Chair – Tamara Briggs

Membership Chair – Cheryl Steeves

Awards and Scholarships Chair – Laurie Curry

Career Development Chair – Caitlin Gilmore

Journal Editor – Jan Stewart

Members-at-Large – Nicole Roche, Karen Bees, and Danielle Savage

Please feel free to contact myself at [president.msca@gmail.com](mailto:president.msca@gmail.com) if you have an ideas you want to share or questions.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy school year. ♦



Brooklands School, a K to 5 inner-city school in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (SJASD), were one of the first schools to hold a parade in the province.



Each car from Brooklands School was decorated with balloons, streamers, and signs, and several cars gave out treats like skipping ropes to keep kids active, as well as sidewalk chalk so they could draw messages. The parade was also used to convey messages to parents and students for package pick ups.

# BRINGING BACK COMMUNITY

## Schools in Manitoba hold parades and other events for students during the COVID-19 pandemic

BY SHAYNA WIIWIERSKI

When schools shut down this past March, little did kids know that they wouldn't be able to see their teachers again in real life for a while.

In order to help boost students' morale and bring a little school spirit, many schools across the province held parades and other events at a social distance this past spring. Brooklands School, a K to 5 inner-city school in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (SJASD), were one of the first schools to hold such an event in the province. They held their parade on April 17 and got the idea from social media after seeing similar events happening in the United States. Although the parade was a morale booster for students who hadn't seen their teachers for over a month, it was

also used to convey messaging to students and parents.

"One of the reasons we thought about the parade was we needed to get a message out to our families about coming to the school to pick up a learning package," says Rex Ferguson-Baird, principal at Brooklands School. "We were having a conversation with some of the teachers and this idea came up of just riding around and telling everybody."

The school ended up getting a divisional vehicle and school bus for the event, and most of the teachers, as well as coaches from the True North Hockey Academy who work with students, came out. Each car was decorated with balloons, streamers, and signs, and several cars gave out

treats like skipping ropes to keep kids active, as well as sidewalk chalk so they could draw messages.

The school had mapped out the route looking at the community and where students live. Ferguson-Baird says that they were able to do a continuous loop and managed to get by mostly everyone's homes. Samantha Amaral, vice-principal at Brooklands School, says that the event was truly incredible and they had a number of schools reach out asking about advice on holding their own parades.

"Being in this lineup of more than 50 vehicles of just going at a slow pace, kids were outside and grandparents were outside," says Amaral. "Families that live in the community but don't have a current connection to the





There were over 30 vehicles in Strathmillan School's parade, which happened on April 24, and teachers decorated their cars with messages, balloons, and stuffed animals.



Strathmillan also did a special delivery for their Grade 5 students who were moving on to middle school but didn't have the chance to say goodbye.

school, they were waving and happy, and I mean, it was right at the start of this whole COVID situation, or closer to the start, and people missed that connection. It was their chance to connect with the school, even though we were moving to do it."

Aside from the parade, Brooklands also added in other socially-distanced events for students, such as their sidewalk stories series, where teachers coordinated with families to come by their houses and sit outside at an appropriate distance and read a picture book to students. They also offered a weekly bicycle repair shop where teaching staff and educational assistants would repair students and families' bikes.

Because of the success of Brooklands' parade, that has inspired many schools around the province to hold similar events. Strathmillan School, a K to Grade 5 school also in the SJASD, held their parade on April 24.

"We have an amazing group of early years administrators and one of my colleagues, Rex Ferguson-Baird is a principal at Brooklands School in St. James. They were the first to do the parade and it was fantastic. They

have a small little community, so they made a little map and the teachers and EAs drove around and had their cars decorated and I thought 'wow, this is really impactful'," says Heather Palmer, principal at Strathmillan School. "He had talked about how excited the kids were and how the kids made signs and the parents were cheering and how it really lifted their spirits. So, when we decided to do that, we also wanted an opportunity to connect because we were hearing from parents that kids were worried. They were worried about their own safety and being healthy, but they also wanted to see their teachers and make sure their teachers were okay."

The parade lasted for over an hour and they also visited their feeder school and senior centres in the area that they have done choir performances at. There were over 30 vehicles in the parade and teachers decorated their cars with messages, balloons, and stuffed animals. Since there were over 300 kids that attend the school, they took each families' address and pinned them to a map to create a route that would be accessible for most.

In addition to the parade, Strathmillan

also did a special delivery for their Grade 5 students who were moving on to middle school but didn't have the chance to say goodbye.

"We really wanted to let them know that we really miss our Grade 5s and their leadership in our school, so we worked with parent council and designed a sign that said 'Strathmillan Stars, We Miss You a Strathmillion!'," says Palmer. "We went around and delivered those to our Grade 5s with a farewell message we had written. Typically we would do that in assembly, highlighting and honouring the contributions to the school, but this way we went house to house to do it."

Ryerson School in the Pembina Trails School Division used their parade to connect with students and families who had trouble connecting online. Ryerson is a K to Grade 6 school with 282 students, most of which come from diverse backgrounds. Kathy Bru, principal at Ryerson, says that 65 per cent of their families don't speak English at home, and the school has a number of Indigenous, Nigerian, and Yazidis students, the latter of which has no written language, which was a challenge for the school.

"They speak Kurmanji, but they don't have a written language, and so there is nothing you can put into Google





Ryerson School also held their parade on April 17 and got the idea from what they saw on social media being held in the United States.

Translate that will make sense for them," says Bru, adding that because of that, it was a challenge setting up families with online learning. "We had a lot of families who don't have access to devices and then several families who don't even have Internet. So all of that was a challenge, but our teachers and staff were tremendous in working hard to make sure we could connect with students as much as we could. We tried our best, but like most schools there were different levels of success, which was actually one of the reasons why we decided to do a parade."

Ryerson also held their parade on April 17 and got the idea from what they saw on social media being held in the United States. One of the teachers made the route and the school sent out a notice to families and social media about the event and a reminder to stay socially distanced and not come near the cars. That Friday afternoon at 3 p.m. the teachers drove through the community and Bru says that the event was very emotional for both students and staff.

"For us we felt like we were a part of a community. A lot of staff members said they had tears rolling down their face, it was just so beautiful and so exciting and the kids were so cute," says Bru.

"One of my favourite stories was a student, who doesn't have a dad and can barely speak English, and when his male teacher went by, he was like 'Mr. C., I have a cut on my leg and it's bleeding' and he's holding his leg to show the teacher and you realize the actual connection. It was such a highlight."

Bru says that the response to the parade from both students and teachers was inspiring. She adds that they tried to do something every three weeks to connect with students. One of the things they did was a video message, which was sent out at the end of spring break, as well as a Pass It On challenge, which is a video where one teacher opens a message and then "passes" it to another virtually.

It wasn't just schools in Winnipeg who had done parades and events for students. When COVID-19 made St. Francois Xavier School shut down their building to students, the school decided to hold their annual Jump Rope Event physically distanced this year.

The rural K to Grade 6 school has held the annual Jump Rope Event every year since the school has been open. Typically the event features a kick-off and big ceremony where the kids get together and jump rope with the

physical education classes. Because of the pandemic, the school had to shift gears and held the event with St. Eustache School since they share a lot of the same communities.

"We asked all the students at our schools to go outside and jump rope and we sent them out at an approximate time frame and brought out 27 teachers and EAs from the different schools. [We] drove around for two-and-a-half hours in the different communities as kids were outside and jumping ropes," says Breanne Syvret, physical education teacher at St. Francis Xavier School.

Staff drove around throughout the four neighbouring communities of St. Francis Xavier, Elie, Lido Plage, and St. Eustache where kids were outside jumping rope. Jump Rope for Heart, a charity event for the Heart & Stroke Foundation, also supplied banners, signage, and hats for students and teachers that day as well.

"It was so fantastic. It started off with a light drizzle that day, but we decided to keep going, and by the end it was pouring rain and our families were still outside jumping rope," says Syvret. "They were still so excited to see us all. It was definitely the morale booster everyone needed to continue on with online learning." ♦



School staff went above and beyond earlier this year to make sure kids had access to learning.

# LEARNING AT A DISTANCE

BY SHAYNA WIWIERSKI

## How schools were able to adapt to online learning

When Manitoba schools got the news that they would have to close their buildings to students this past March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to act fast.

The Manitoba Government closed elementary, junior, and senior high schools until September earlier this year due to COVID-19. As a result, parents and teachers had to ensure that kids were still learning the curriculum, and like most other things, learning soon pivoted to online.

Schools in Manitoba utilized a number of programs for online learning, including Seesaw and Google Classrooms. Christine Wolf, library technician at Elm Creek School in Elm Creek, Manitoba, says that their division switched to Google G Suite with the education program in the last few years so they were prepared for switching to online learning.

"Our teachers have used Seesaw and other things, but for the most part, Google Meet seemed to really work well,"

says Wolf. "Because of our subscription to it, we were able to have larger meets and quite a few students had borrowed some Google Chromebooks from the school so they could have technology at home to participate."

Overall, the process seemed to work well through the online learning. For those students who didn't have access to technology or WiFi, they had to figure out an alternative model so students could still learn. Wolf says that teachers would contact the parents over phone and students were able to pick-up and drop-off hard-copy assignments on Mondays and Tuesdays.

The lack of WiFi or devices seemed to be the great challenge for families and schools. Kathy Bru, principal at Ryerson School, a K to 6 school in the Fort Richmond area, says that because of their diverse population of students, the language barrier ended up being an issue for a lot of parents when helping their kids learn.



"It's been a real challenge because of the demographics of our schools. Setting everybody up for online learning was a real challenge because 65 per cent of the families don't speak English at home," says Bru, adding that they have 29 different languages spoken at home in their school. "So to have parents help us to set up things [it was difficult] as a lot of parents can't read our emails, so it's a bit of a challenge."

Bru says online learning was a little bit easier for the older kids in Grades 5 and 6, however the younger ones required more parental support and if kids weren't familiar with how to log on to the computer or what to do, it was a problem. She adds that a lot of their families have lots of kids, so navigating how to deal with parents who don't speak English very well and getting multiple phone calls from the school was an issue they had to figure out as well.

"It was confusing to them, so we had to try to have a point person for each of our large families, or a specific plan, like on Monday you'll get a phone call from this teacher, and they will support all your kids," says Bru, adding that each grade level teacher took a day being the support, so it was important to figure that schedule out.

Another issue they had at Ryerson was the lack of technology in homes. Bru says that for some families, all they had were their parents' cellphone to work on, which the parents needed during the day. Often, when they would come home the phone was passed from student to student, with the older kids in high school usually being the priority since they had more work to submit. Those who went to Ryerson were usually the last ones to use the technology. For those who didn't have any devices, the school offered package pickups on Fridays, so parents and students knew there was something they could come and get. They also offered drop offs at homes. Bru says that school staff went above and beyond to be sure that they could stay connected to their students and that they had access to learning.

Carmen Collegiate in Carmen, Manitoba also offered the option of lending out technology to students who needed it. Brenda Mutcher, Grade 6 classroom teacher, says that the Grade 6-12 school let students borrow Google Chromebooks so they could work from home.

The school also utilized Google Classrooms to teach students, with the Grade 6 students also using Google Meet and Hangouts to communicate. Mutcher says that overall it went well, but there was some trial and error when they first started.

"The first week or so were little errors with technology, thinking I had posted an assignment and it didn't get



When the COVID-19 pandemic first hit Manitoba earlier this year, like most other things, learning soon pivoted to online.

posted," says Mutcher, adding that the students seemed to catch on quite quickly to technology. "Once we got past the first week, it was just little snags, like I posted at the wrong time. Instead of 9 a.m. I posted at 9 p.m."

Their usual work day consisted of having students up and running by 9 a.m. when all the messages and assignments were up. Then at 10 a.m. they would meet online in case there were any questions.

"We clarified the assignments, did a math lesson that took about half an hour or 40 minutes, and then the students worked for the morning and I would be available for questions," says Mutcher. "Students would then click on their Google Hangout so they would be able to see me so we could do a lesson or answer any quick questions they might have. It seemed like students worked for the morning and then in the afternoon was a time for teacher planning, correcting, and meeting with my colleagues."

Mutcher also adds that rural WiFi was also a problem since the connection isn't the greatest. Overall though, Mutcher says things went well and going forward there are some things from distanced learning she would keep.

"The positives would be that teachers took the challenge of trying something new and I think it was successful for me. I tried a lot of new things online and it worked very well. In fact, I would keep most of what I was doing," she says. "The world is shifting towards technology so it is important that students are exposed to new ways of learning. I don't have kids of my own so I was able to focus more on my class than other teachers that had families, they also had to teach. There were no distractions like telephone calls and people walking in and out of your class. The students also said that was one of the positive things they liked about home learning, that they could concentrate more on their studies." ♦

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

## How Manitoba schools were able to still provide food to those students who needed it most

Human beings require four basic needs to survive: food, water, air, and shelter. When COVID-19 was classified as a worldwide pandemic and forced schools to shut their doors, not only did in-classroom learning stop, but for many kids their access to food was disrupted as well.

Many schools across the province offer breakfast, lunch, and snack programs to students, and for numerous kids, those programs are the only source of nutrition they may be able to acquire throughout the school day.

The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba is an organization that provides funding and support to provincial schools who are managing meal and snack programs. Maxine Meadows, program dietitian with the council, says that when COVID first hit, schools jumped into action right away and many sent home as much non-perishable food items as they could. She adds that many programs also supported students through hamper programs which were delivered to families.



The Winnipeg School Division divided their territory of schools into half and used R.B. Russell Vocational School and Tec Voc Vocational School as a source to make hampers from Winnipeg Harvest.

Currently, the Child Nutrition Council supports just under 300 schools in the province, but schools are eligible to apply for funding and support each spring.



The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba is an organization that provides funding and support to provincial schools who are managing meal and snack programs. The council dietitians, in partnership with the Manitoba School Nutrition Action Group, created guidelines for schools for funding during the COVID-19 disruption of classes and they also supported programs with sharing delivery models and food ideas for breakfast, lunch, and snack programs during the pandemic.

The council itself had to quickly adapt their organization so they could provide the best support to schools and share how their program dietitians could provide help and guidance to students.

As a result, the council dietitians, in partnership with the Manitoba School Nutrition Action Group, created guidelines for schools for funding during the COVID-19 disruption of classes and they also supported programs with sharing delivery models and food ideas for breakfast, lunch, and snack programs during the pandemic.

Meadows says that currently they support just under 300 schools in the province, but schools are eligible to apply for funding and support each spring. Their programs are offered to students at no cost and they have been working with schools since 2001. Janelle Wotton, program dietitian with the council, says that it was interesting to see what schools were doing with the funding they provided in terms of getting nutrition out to the students who needed it the most.

"Every approach varied throughout the province. We had some schools that were doing something on a school level to directly meet their students' needs and then we had some divisions that were able to come together and have a divisional-wide approach that was able to meet all the schools and families in need in their school division," says Wotton. "Beyond that, where there was a divisional approach going on, we heard that schools even took it upon themselves to go even further to provide extra hampers or extra support to families."





Schools in Winnipeg Harvest's school programs were able to come in weekly and pick up items to support their hampers for students and families.

At Brooklands School in the St. James Assiniboia School Division, they have around 30 students that regularly attend their breakfast programs at the school. When COVID hit, Rex Ferguson-Baird, principal at Brooklands, says that numerous families were in touch with the school in regards to nutritional support.

"As we have gone through the lockdown, more and more families have connected with us and have said 'hey, we can actually use the help, we haven't been able to make it as we have been laid off.' So having a sense of who in the community is struggling to meet the needs of their families and kids has been important to us," says Ferguson-Baird. "We all know, if we struggle to meet our basic needs, we struggle to meet our learning needs."

Ferguson-Baird says that they received donations, as well as reduced-rate food from wholesalers and grocery stores. They are also part of the Community Schools Partnership Initiative (CSP), which is a provincial program which allows them to use funds to support students nutritionally. He also adds that several parents of their staff donated their \$200 Senior Economic Recovery Credit which was mailed out to Manitobans 65+ this past spring.

"They have identified that they aren't hurting right now in that respect and don't need [the money] per se, so they wanted to give it to a cause that could use the additional funds," says Samantha Amaral, vice-principal at Brooklands School.

Winnipeg Harvest is another organization that has been supporting schools through this time. They have a number of programs that they offer, including their Meal Snack Program, which provides food options to schools to augment school meal programs. Keren Taylor-Hughes, chief executive officer at Winnipeg Harvest, says that they offer a variety of items where schools can come in and choose foods to add to their meal programs. She adds that traditionally they serve 40 schools in that program,

with another 40 in surplus where they can also come in once every two weeks and pick up items they have extras of. They also have a Breakfast 2 Go program, which is a weekend meal program that serves three schools in high-need areas in Winnipeg where students get to take home food to cover breakfasts and snacks over the weekend.

Their food supply is typically fully donated by producers, growers, manufacturers, retailers, and community donors in the province. Taylor-Hughes says that once the pandemic hit the province they noticed a drop in donations since people were starting to hoard food and clear grocery stores out of stock.

"Our traditional grocery stores that provide the food were unable to. Initially we saw our food donations dwindle by about 20 per cent and the need increase by 30," says Taylor-Hughes. "On the school front, we initially reached out to the Winnipeg School Division (WSD), which is one with the greatest needs in terms of families. We reached out to them first, since they were looking at creating a hamper program for families, so we told them we would do whatever we could to support them."

The WSD ended up dividing their territory of schools into half and used R.B. Russell Vocational School and Tec Voc Vocational School as a source to make hampers. Schools in Winnipeg Harvest's school programs were able to come in weekly and pick up items to support their hampers for students and families. Winnipeg Harvest also had to purchase food since they were short on items that would have traditionally come through their donation stream.

Taylor-Hughes says that through it all and the challenges that Winnipeg Harvest has faced as an organization, they were able to support children and families through this time. They also ended up providing a summer series of their Breakfast 2 Go program for five schools who were identified for being in need. Every Monday for 16 weeks they went to the schools and delivered packages for children.

"We have made ourselves available and we made it known that we were here to help and support children in these families at this time," says Taylor-Hughes. "I think people knew that and as a result I would like to believe that most places have recovered and they have what they need from the food support to [feed] their families." ♦

# CALLING ON COUNSELLORS TO HELP US FIND THE NEXT LORAN SCHOLARS

BY HEATHER SPRATT

I have been involved with the Loran Scholars Foundation for nearly three decades, both as a selection volunteer and staff member. It continues to be an honour to identify and support talented Canadian students. Within the last five years, 15 students from Manitoba have become Loran Scholars. Finding Loran Scholars each year is a national undertaking that begins with ensuring the application gets in front of the right students. Guidance counsellors play the single most important role in identifying these promising young people and instilling in them the confidence to apply.

The Loran Award is the country's largest and most comprehensive four-year undergraduate merit-based award. The award is unique in that it's not a reward for past accomplishments, but an investment in a potential future path of high impact. We do not provide a scholarship in the traditional sense of simple funds to support students through school. While Loran Scholars do receive annual living stipends and

tuition waivers at partner universities across Canada, it is its enrichment opportunities that set it apart, including mentorship; funding to access summer experiences in Canada and abroad; forums and scholar gatherings; and an engaged and supportive alumni network. Our mission is to support these students in realizing their full potential and promote their growth as leaders who are committed to giving back.

We are interested in the students who see problems as challenges to be addressed and have the inner-directedness to tackle them. They are humble with big hearts, they shun the status quo, and are meaningful risk-takers, team builders, and believers in a brighter tomorrow. Think not just of the student who is at the top of their class, but of the student who will come back to their high school reunion in 30 years and will have made a profound impact within their community. As counsellors know, these are not necessarily the same people!

School counsellors are integral to the identification of these amazing young people, who often don't self-identify as 'scholarship material'. One of Loran's first scholars, who went on to lead the foundation for 13 years, fully credits her guidance counsellor for tapping her on the shoulder and insisting she apply. The child of factory workers and new Canadians, she never would have done so without her counsellor's encouragement. This is a story we hear time and again.

The students this program seeks may not see anything special about what they are doing, they just do what needs to be done. This is where you come in. These students may need you to tap them on the shoulder, hold up the mirror to who they are, and encourage them to apply for the Loran Award. You play a critical role in connecting these students with a community that will continue to encourage them to realize their full potential, for their benefit and the benefit of our collective future.

A vote of confidence from a guidance counsellor can propel a student to do great things, whether as a Loran Scholar or not. Your faith in them matters.

Our application period typically opens in early September and runs until mid-October each year. For the most up-to-date information and how to apply, please visit [www.loranscholar.ca](http://www.loranscholar.ca). I would also welcome any personal communications via email at [spratt@loranscholar.ca](mailto:spratt@loranscholar.ca), or by phone at 416-646-2120 ext. 224. ♦





# TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION DURING A PANDEMIC

BY STEPHEN P. SUTHERLAND, MA



Dalton, like many Grade 12 students is planning to make the transition from high school to post-secondary education (PSE). During optimal conditions this transition can be daunting, never mind during a pandemic. As student service providers, the Canadian Mental Health Association is committed to students' holistic development and this has been tested as we have been forced to enhance our connection virtually.

The transition to PSE is now front and centre and everyone is discussing the mental health and well-being of students as they pursue the next chapter of academia.

The month of June for graduates is seen as the closing curtain to high school academics. Leaving home to venture off into greater independence; this looming adventure, a right of passage for many.

Pressing pause on the physical adventure to ensure student safety has been the prudent conclusion of many PSE campuses, though many students who were looking forward to the social enterprise of on-campus learning and engagement will need to adjust expectations. Student service staff continue to make adjustments to build in opportunities for students to engage in support services, as well as opportunities for social and emotional engagement. Students have shown incredible resiliency and some may have built into their lives new routines to fend off social isolation which can lead to symptoms of anxiety and depression. As students make plans for a fresh start to higher education, their need for greater connection to their emotional intelligence is critical to their academic success. How do we support students who are making this transition to PSE?

Students will need to know what stress looks like and how to respond to it so it doesn't sabotage their PSE. Stress is not a new reality, however many students have not normalized stress to include healthy responses that will build into their coping capacity. In a society of all or nothing thinking, students can allow the self-critic to rule, rather

than accessing a strength-based mindset. Fear is the four-letter word that can be a strong barrier in moving forward, however, acknowledging it can lead someone down a path of clarity and hopefulness. Students who are more self-aware will be more connected as they posture themselves with a greater curiosity, as well as learning to be kind and practicing how to breathe deeply regularly as they respond to the new demands on their lives. Priorities will change and students will need to create realistic schedules at a pace that will ensure a good academic, home, and work-life balance. How they spend the 168 hours in a week will ultimately determine their semester's success. Building healthy routines early may prove to be a game changer. Test-driving these routines and setting a timeframe to evaluate could make all the difference in creating the adjustments to prevent probable derailment.

Students will need to guard their educational investment just as they protect their mobile device. Building meaningful connection with professors, staff, and peers will require more intentionality. There should also be consideration in what their learning space will look like to minimize potential distractions and maximize receiving information. Lastly, students must decide who they will allow to speak into how they spend their time and resources – reminding them that this may be the first time they are allowing someone to have this role and this may not be the person they thought it would be. Change is inevitable – that doesn't mean it isn't difficult. Having the right support can truly make or break this transition.

Supporting students in their transition to their first semester of PSE is about being honest and actively listening to their concerns. This fall will bring opportunity to assist the future Dalton's who will need support in their transition to greater independence and critical thinking, which will assist in shaping their future vocation.

*Stephen P. Sutherland, MA, is the program director of mental health promotion for the CMHA Manitoba and Winnipeg. ♦*



For every 100 young adults who try smoking, 18 will become daily smokers.



Both smoking and vaping harm our lungs and the chemicals in each impact our circulatory system (blood to and from the heart to every area of your body).

# COVID-19, SMOKING AND VAPING:

## A REAL-LIFE EXERCISE IN CRITICAL THINKING FOR YOUR STUDENTS

What is critical thinking? Critical thinking is not about being negative, it is about being discerning and making your own decisions based on evidence.

Commercial tobacco use is the leading cause of premature death in the world, killing more than eight million people every year. As of August 27, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) published that the death toll due to COVID-19, a highly infectious disease, is just under 871,000, which is just over one-tenth of annual smoking-related mortality. Just like how infectious disease affects those around you, over one-million deaths are related to exposure to second-hand smoke.

For every 100 young adults who try smoking, 18 will become daily smokers. It's not willpower; it's addictive ingredients. Nine out of 10 people who try to quit will fail, even with support. Just don't start and you are already on the path to success!

Critical Thinking Exercise – Have your students look at the 2020 Commercial Tobacco Use Monitoring Summary. What do they notice? For example, why did less than half of people participate in the survey? Does this say something about the indifference to the impact of smoking and vaping?

### Vaping is not safe!

Vaping was originally meant to support people who were attempting to quit smoking. Research is not strong enough to support this as a pathway to health and it was never meant as a gateway to smoking.

One in five teens who vape, have never smoked a whole cigarette.

Thirteen out of 100 people who try vaping will vape daily (pretty addictive isn't it?).

A recent study (August 2020) by Stanford Medicine alerts that youth are at an increased risk for COVID-19 due to lung damage. Young people who vaped alone were at five times the risk, and those who both smoked and vaped had seven times the risk compared to non-vapers of being diagnosed with COVID-19. Being young does not protect you from any illness, including this one.

Critical Thinking Exercise – Review the history of modern vaping (Hom Lik, 2003), compare to recent advertisements or articles about vaping just 17 years later. Where did things go wrong? Did social media have a role to play?

### What do we know vaping and smoking have in common?

Other than both are a waste of money, both have been shown to hurt our immune system by damaging and slowing down cells needed to react to intruders. With the disease such as COVID-19 circulating, we need a healthy immune system more than ever to fight the virus.

Both smoking and vaping harm our lungs and the chemicals in each impact our circulatory system (blood to and from the heart to every area of your body). When our veins are made tighter by harmful chemicals, it increases the chance of a heart attack or stroke from a blood clot.

Guess what? We are learning the COVID-19 virus harms both our lungs and our heart and circulatory system. Young people infected with COVID-19 have had strokes and heart attacks – do we want to make things harder on our body or easier?



Critical Thinking Exercise – Give your students three maps of the body. Ask them to do research into what areas of the body are impacted by smoking – label one; do the same for vaping and the same for COVID-19. Is any area safe?

### Headlines, Headlines, Headlines...

#### **“Smokers seem less likely than non-smokers to fall ill with COVID-19.”**

These types of headlines were making the news in early stages of the pandemic leading to a theory that smoking may be protective, even though we need a healthy immune system and lungs for protection.

In one study, only people with COVID-19 and symptoms (such as coughing, short of breath, feeling tired) were asked to rank the “severity of symptoms”. Non-smokers were more likely to grade the symptoms as “severe” compared to smokers. Other studies sorted people into “current smokers” and “non-smokers” but didn’t ask if any of the “non-smokers” ever smoked (they literally could have quit that day). Other studies were based on an astonishingly low number of cases.

And thus came the misleading headlines which were so alarming that the WHO put out a statement on its website imploring media to stop spreading this information.

Critical Thinking Exercise – Have your students look at some of the media headlines and then show them studies from Paris and China for example. Ask them if they believe the headline and why? For example, see how many of them come up with one key factor in rating disease severity. For most non-smokers, suddenly coughing, having trouble breathing or feeling extremely tired is a frightening and noteworthy change in health. Think of how terrible smoking can make you feel if you would not see this as a remarkable change to how you feel day to day. See what other factors make them doubt and make them believe a story.

In summary, here are some things we are learning from the WHO :

- Smokers are more likely to develop severe disease with COVID-19 compared to non-smokers.
- Smoking impairs lung function making it harder for the body to fight off the Coronavirus and other diseases.
- Available research suggests that smokers are at a higher risk of developing severe disease and death.
- Tobacco is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, respiratory disease, and diabetes, which put people with these conditions at higher risk for developing severe illness when affected by COVID-19. ♦

## Get the Facts: Smoking, Vaping and COVID 19

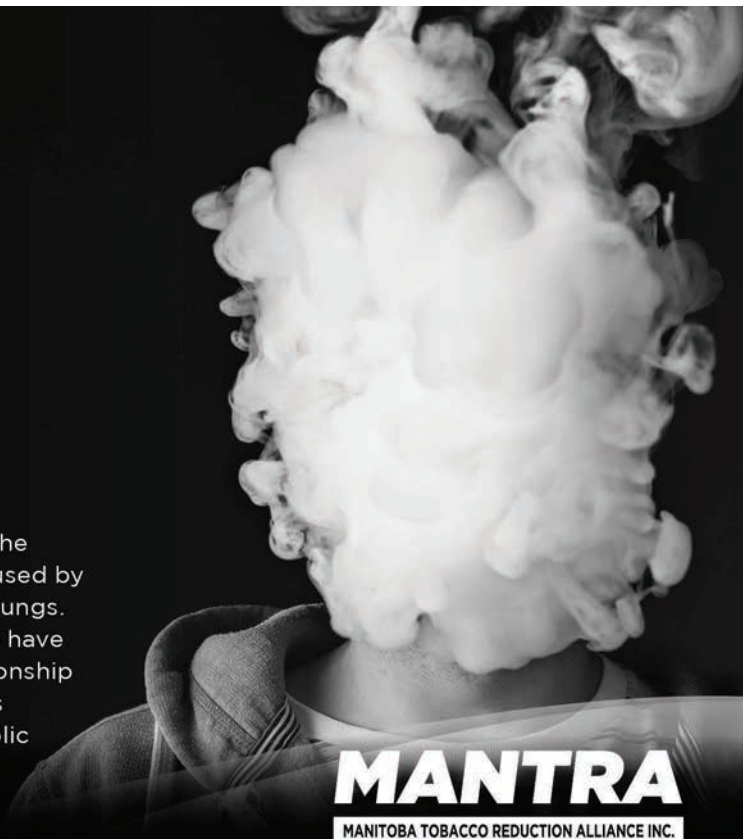
[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)

[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

[www.mb.lung.ca](http://www.mb.lung.ca)

[www.mantrainc.ca](http://www.mantrainc.ca)

Smoking and vaping are known to increase the risk and severity of pulmonary infections caused by damage from smoking to the airways in the lungs. While it is too early for adequate research to have taken place to appropriately study the relationship between COVID-19 and smoking/vaping, it is possible for researchers and the general public to make informed decisions about the risks of lowered immunity and increased risks of COVID-19.





# UNDERSTANDING THE ADDICTIVE NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BY JULIE WALSH, MSW, RSW

Over the past two years I have been researching and presenting workshops on social media use, its effect on mental health and impact on relationships, as well as sharing how it is designed to be addictive. There are many reasons that the platforms are popular, particularly among youth, who spend upwards of six hours per day on entertainment technology (Freed, p. 4). The online world has become a place for youth to experience social connection, to explore their identities, and a space that they communicate without adult supervision. However, another reason is the inherent addicting nature of these platforms.

“As long as a behaviour is rewarding – paired with a rewarding outcome in the past – the brain will treat it the same way it treats a drug.” (Alter, 2017, p.70)

The nature of addiction is complex

and many factors are involved. However, all humans seek dopamine, the neurotransmitter known as the ‘feel good’ chemical which is involved in our experiences of reward, motivation, memory, attention, and pleasure. This reward pathway is stimulated by many types of reinforcing stimuli, such as sex, drugs, food, successful social interactions, and positive feedback. When dopamine is released in high levels it creates feelings of pleasure, reward, and even euphoria. This rush will in turn motivate us to repeat a specific behaviour or experience. Social media can be addictive as people become motivated to repeat the experiences that produce these rewarding feelings, such as posting photos or increasing the number of followers.

“It is not that people lack willpower but that there are a thousand people on the other side of the screen whose

job it is to break down the self-regulation you have.” Tristan Harris ‘design ethicist’ (Alter, 2017, p.3).

The design of social media and resulting dopamine production are not coincidental. In what is known as “the economy of attention” there is financial gain in keeping people engaged as much as possible. Designers have finetuned ways using dopamine and behavioural psychology to do this. For example, most social media sites use “likes” to enumerate how people respond to a post or photo. Likes are highly rewarding; any form of positive feedback will produce small amounts of dopamine in the recipient. Instagram reportedly had an algorithm that would recognize ‘likes’ and withhold them if ‘too many’ were given at once, the goal being to deal them out throughout the day to ensure that users would continue to check in frequently (Alter, 2017). Streaks, such as those used in Snapchat to track and




reward the number of consecutive days you 'snap' someone, also produce dopamine and are highly motivating both encouraging us to continue the streak and to dissuade people from discontinuing use (even for a day). Even, the anticipation triggered when one 'pulls to refresh' and waits to see if new content has arrived, functions to increase our anticipation, and therefore the overall reward. According to Alter (2017), such "pull to refresh" is no longer required, as most sites have the capacity to refresh immediately. Yet this feature remains as a way to entice users further and enhance our reaction to intermittent reinforcement, much like pulling a lever or pushing a button on a slot machine.

"In 2004 Facebook was fun, in 2016 it's addictive." (Alter, 2017, p.5).

Social media is rewarding, popular, and will remain in our lives. How then do parents, professionals, and youth address the addictive nature and consequences of use? The first step is to recognize that these platforms are designed to be addictive and why this is. The next is for adults to realize that like any addicting substance, we must take the lead and set boundaries, as most youth will be unable or unmotivated to limit use on their own. Boundaries need to be modeled, and adults must pay attention to the amount and reasons for our own use. We can and should educate youth in understanding the addictive nature of these platforms and the many ways that social media creators are using technology to manipulate their brains, behaviours, and responses. Youth will need help in developing insight into why they use social media, how they derive pleasure from these sites, and what the positive effects are, as well as the consequences. Finally, we have to support youth in finding alternatives for producing dopamine and experiencing rewards.

*Julie Walsh MSW, RSW, is a clinical social worker who specializes in child, adolescent, and family-based therapy. Her education in trauma, attachment, regulation, and reunification has led her to develop manuals, workshops, and training programs for a variety of government and non-profit agencies throughout Manitoba and Eastern*


*Canada. In addition to her private practice, she presents workshops to school professionals, caregivers, and youth on attachment, trauma, coping skills, social media use, and reconnecting with children in the era of screens. She can be reached at [juliewalshtherapy@gmail.com](mailto:juliewalshtherapy@gmail.com) or [Juliewalshtherapy.com](http://Juliewalshtherapy.com). ♦*



## Rewarding Behaviours Lead to Addiction

- The substance itself isn't addictive (chocolate) the connection between stimulus, and perceived reward/outcome is
- "It is when we learn this substance or behaviour will alleviate our psychological troubles" (Alter, p.73)
- Patterns of behaviours and feedback will encourage this connection

## Substance abuse and behavioural addiction



- Drugs and addictive behaviour activate the same regions
- Difference in magnitude and intensity
- Drugs more directly effect neurotransmitters



## How it is luring to youth

- Highly visible rewards
- Obviously recognition
- Novel
- Positive comments
- No adults
- Social connection
- More comfortable than face to face for many
- Venue to meet potential partner
- Feelings of belonging and 'in group'
- Venue to express ambitions, show successes, receive empathy

# HOW DO WE CREATE A **PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT** IN OUR SCHOOLS?



BY KATHY THEBERGE AND WAYNE MCNEIL

In a news release on August 6, 2020, Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen said, "With the resumption of in-class learning in Manitoba this fall, students will require emotionally, psychologically, and physically supportive school environments to help address anxiety and distress they may have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

As an educator for more than 20 years, through experience and training, I have become more aware of when my students are not ready to learn and I started asking myself, 'what is going on in their head'? One year I had a Grade 3 student who was a caregiver for three younger siblings when at home. At school she would sometimes behave in ways that suggested she wished to be treated more like a child as opposed to a caregiver. When students arrive at school quiet or grumpy, my

initial thoughts are whether they ate breakfast, got enough sleep, or had a rough morning emotionally.

As a parent of two children, when behaviours arise that are new or rare, I often wonder what is behind the scenes that I cannot see? During COVID, my daughter increasingly sought my attention even though we were home together all day, every day. It was frustrating at times when I was trying to work or cook, and I had to remind myself that she may not be able to express her feelings in words and may be responding to the anxiety around her.

I have learned to pay attention and notice the differences in children that are under my care. It is my duty and my privilege.

The Respect in School program provides school counsellors and

all adults in contact with students, the tools to recognize, prevent, and respond to bullying, abuse, harassment, and discrimination (BAHD) through interactive, online training. Front-line agencies such as Kids Help Phone, have seen a significant increase in children and youth accessing their services. In 2020, Kids Help Phone has recorded a 28 per cent increase in conversations about physical abuse, 42 per cent increase about anxiety or stress, and a 48 per cent increase about isolation.

Minister Goertzen also stated, "We are pleased to extend funding for the RIS (Respect in School) program that complements many other resources available to schools for the promotion of supportive learning for all students."

Co-founded by former NHL player and well-known Manitoban, Sheldon Kennedy, Respect Group has



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The Hon. Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Education.

certified over 1.4 million Canadians since 2004. The online training programs focus on the prevention of maltreatment in schools, the workplace, and sport, where over 75,000 Manitoba coaches have been certified in Respect in Sport.

To date, almost 10,000 school leaders have been certified in Respect in School across Manitoba. Many school divisions have made it a requirement, including River East Transcona and Sunrise School Division, and they are

proud to have “Respect certified” over 3,500 and 900 school leaders respectively.

“We have been using Respect in School since 2012,” said Kelly Barkman, superintendent and CEO of River East Transcona School Division. “It has allowed us to create a positive school culture, give our leaders the knowledge and confidence to respond to issues and, most importantly, keep our students safe.”

The Respect in School online training program takes 90 minutes to complete, and will run on any modern web browser using a PC, Mac, Android, or iOS device such

as the iPhone and iPad. The online training is available at no cost to all adults working with students in public, funded independent, non-funded independent, and First Nations schools.

*Kathy Theberge is the project manager for Respect in School. She was previously an elementary teacher with the Toronto District School Board for 20 years.*

*Wayne McNeil is the co-founder of Respect Group. He has a professional background in IT and has shown a commitment to child advocacy through various volunteer roles. ♦*



### With the Respect in School program, school leaders will learn:

- The effects of bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (BAHD)
  - The impacts of BAHD on overall mental health and well-being
- How to use positive power
- How to prevent, identify and report BAHD
- How to become a more child-focused school leader
- How to contribute to a safe and caring school environment
- The importance of being an empowered bystander



**FREE ONLINE PROGRAM PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA**



**Enroll Now:** [mb-rischool.respectgroupinc.com](https://mb-rischool.respectgroupinc.com)

## Find out what two recent engineering graduates are doing with their degrees

Taking engineering has allowed me to have many different work experiences, which has provided me with a varied skill set."

## A horizontal row of four stylized, high-contrast portraits of women. From left to right: a woman in a pink hijab on a pink background; a woman with glasses on a green background; a woman with glasses on a blue background; and a woman on a yellow background. The portraits are rendered in a flat, graphic style with bold outlines and solid colors.

**Girls go the distance in engineering and geoscience. The time is now to be the force that drives the world forward.**

"My passion is to help others and create technological (clean energy) solutions that improve the communities we live in. This is what drove me to pursue a career path in mechanical engineering. I strive to build a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable future by applying my

Pre-Calculus  
Mathematics **40S**  
Chemistry **40S**  
Physics **40S**  
English **40S**







As the fall term begins, students can draw on UWinnipeg's new Remote Teaching, Learning, and Research Hub for helpful tips on using the library and navigating online classes.

# MAINTAINING A PERSONAL TOUCH FROM A DISTANCE

BY DAVID GARVEY

One point of pride at The University of Winnipeg (UWinnipeg) is small class sizes.

With an estimated student to professor ratio of 25:1, faculty members can promote an open-door policy for accessible office hours, and the classroom is welcoming to those preferring a more personal experience.

Supporting the academic side is a Student Services team that specializes in direct, face-to-face communication with students. Whether it's a first-time question about programs or an inquiry about major credits, the departments that comprise Student Services at UWinnipeg all strive to provide each student with a personalized response.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the new challenge of continuing to provide personalized services to students while working remotely and social distancing.

For Student Recruitment, this meant Zoom presentations for accepted students in the spring and open webinars for prospective students. There was a learning curve for both presenters and students in the early going, but as the practice became more commonplace, students were soon asking questions in the chat, posting emojis and hand claps, and even unmuting (on occasion).

Student Central (SC) offers a range of services to both incoming and current students. Since the campus closure in late March, SC staff has replied to or sent nearly 20,000 individual emails (including more than 5,000 in July alone!) and replied to nearly 1,000 voicemail messages. They helped many students during daily, one-hour, Zoom drop-in sessions that started on June 1 — addressing concerns like registration, technical issues, and payment options.

"Everyone likes seeing and talking

to students," SC coordinator Tessa Pearen said of the virtual drop-in sessions. "The staff have been very resourceful and creative in coming up with ways to assist students remotely."

Academic advisors participated in an Ask an Advisor event on Instagram, in collaboration with the students' association, and the team has been working to develop new ideas and adapt processes to suit an online environment.

Student success advisors have been developing innovative orientation materials that are suitable for a remote working environment, and nearly 500 new students attended the First-Year Information (FYI) sessions held over the summer.

The Career Services team spearheaded a virtual career panel that featured other post-secondary institutions in Winnipeg, and participated in other online events for career and post-secondary planning.



“Our amazing team of advisors has been busier than ever and working diligently to continue providing excellent support to our students,” said Anna Hussey, coordinator for Academic and Career Services.

Speaking of the 600 appointments and almost 1,900 contacts with students in June alone, Hussey said, “While we may not have a physical presence on campus, we have remained visible and accessible to our students during this challenging time — and of course before that, too!”

Student Recruitment coordinator Alex Gachanja agrees. “Though we will be doing things a little differently this year, high school students will have many opportunities to connect with the team via our virtual presentations and online events.”

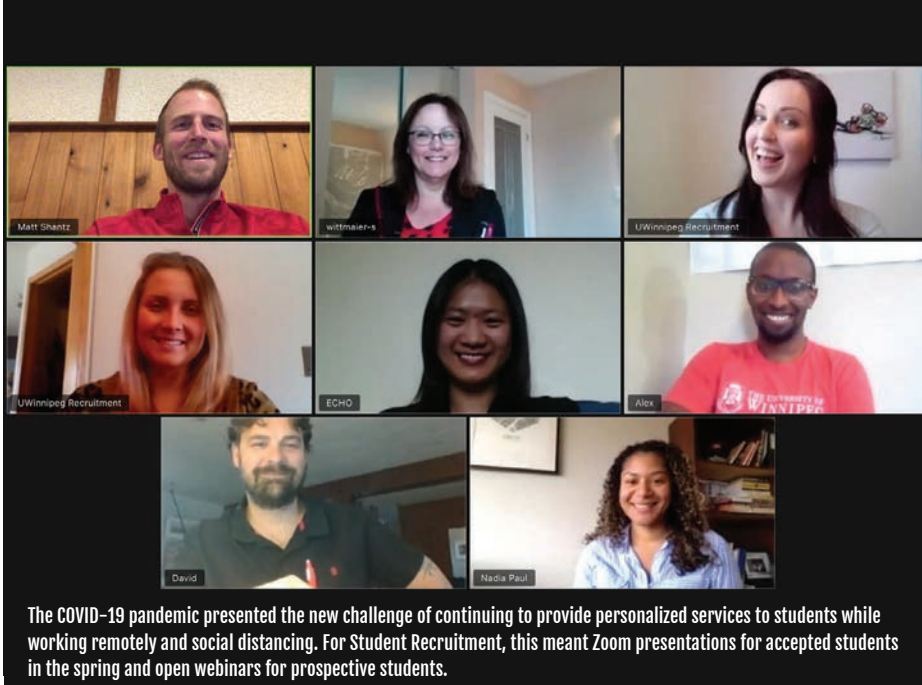
As the fall term begins, students can draw on the new Remote Teaching,

Learning, and Research Hub for helpful tips on using the library and navigating online classes. Future students can look forward to new digital experiences such as virtual tours, online university fairs, and more.

Student Services at UWinnipeg will

continue to utilize the digital tools that have become even more essential in recent months, while always offering the personalized service that students have come to expect — even from a distance.

Learn more about The University of Winnipeg at [uwinnipeg.ca](http://uwinnipeg.ca). ♦



## Choosing a program is the first step toward making their dream a reality.

At The University of Winnipeg, students arrive with different talents and passions, and leave ready to make their mark on the world. Our small class sizes means their success matters. Our dedicated faculty will help students discover their strengths and provide them with the opportunity to participate in world-class research and learning activities.

See how studying at UWinnipeg has helped students pursue their passions and work toward their career goals:

[uwinnipeg.ca/impact](http://uwinnipeg.ca/impact)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

# STRIKING THE BALANCE BETWEEN **SAFETY AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

## Tech adaptations, strict adherence to public health orders guide college campus re-opening

### COVID-19 DAILY SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

All individuals are required to pre-screen every day before entering MITT.

[Link in bio.](#)

### CAMPUS STATUS

# YELLOW

LIMITED

Limited public access  
Scheduled staff/students on campus only

In the weeks and months that followed the transition to remote and online learning, MITT developed a campus re-integration plan with a four zone (red, orange, yellow, green) campus activity protocol that was lockstep with public health orders.

Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT) is known for its nimble response to the needs of industry and students. In mid-March of 2020, its reputation got the litmus test when in-class learning was suspended due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. In a matter of days, MITT transitioned all programs to remote delivery. In the weeks and months that followed, a campus re-integration plan was developed with a four zone (red, orange, yellow, green) campus activity protocol that was lockstep with public health orders, and flexible enough to ensure MITT balanced safety and student success through blended delivery (in-class and online) of programs and student resources. That plan was announced publicly on May 29, 2020.

Central to the plan was MITT's purchase and implementation (slated for completion in fall 2020) of D2L's Brightspace learning management system, which provides a single platform for continuous program delivery, assessment, as well as student-instructor interactivity during blended or fully online learning.

By early June, public health guidelines in Manitoba had eased enough that MITT could bring limited numbers of students and instructors back to campus for "intensives", short-term in-class sessions to ensure they met graduation requirements and demonstrated skills required

for various program-specific accreditations. While academic teams handled modified program delivery, the facilities team redefined MITT's campus spaces with social distancing-specific wayfinding, revised class/lab capacities, while ensuring program-specific, as well as any new PPE requirements were met.

At the same time that MITT modified how it could safely deliver learning to students on campus or online, similar adaptations took place within other key teams across the organization. Recruitment, domestic and international, ramped up weekly webinars to help prospective students understand their options and connect with other key resources, such as MITT's IRCC-certified Immigration Services Advisor. MITT's student success and career development services teams likewise continued their one-on-one consulting work with current and prospective students, offering financial advice, career planning tips, and other supports via phone, email, or Zoom. And the Registrar's Office started posting regular updates and FAQs on [mitt.ca](#) to help students stay informed with regard to program status and intakes, as well as other essentials of the application process. MITT has remained open for business and committed to student success throughout the pandemic: this message is central to a video on [mitt.ca](#), where various staff and executives





The facilities team redefined MITT's campus spaces with social distancing-specific wayfinding, revised class/lab capacities, while ensuring program-specific, as well as any new, PPE requirements were met.



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Heading into the fall term, MITT anticipates its blended delivery of in-class and online programs will ebb and flow according to what public health orders permit.

share their perspectives on working through the challenges of the past several months.

Heading into the fall term, MITT anticipates its blended delivery of in-class and online programs will ebb and flow according to what public

health orders permit. Through its website and social media, MITT posts weekly status updates to ensure students, staff, and stakeholders have the latest information at their fingertips. Additional student supports, such as the Intro to College

and Work program (which is being offered online to all new students for the first time) guides participants through learning strategies and other tools that will help ready them for the demands of a college workload/ college life. ♦



## Help your students plan their career or education path at MITT.

Our programs are developed with industry and most have graduates career ready in a year.

Blended online and in-class delivery provides learners as much hands-on experience as is safely possible.

And our student success and career development advisor teams are available by phone, email, Zoom or Skype to help students achieve their academic and career goals.

Learn more  
**MITT.ca/start**



# EXPLORING YOUR CAREER OPTIONS IN MANITOBA

BY JACKELYN TSOURAS, MANITOBA CAREER PROSPECTS COORDINATOR

Manitoba Career Prospects is a provincially funded program that represents the Manitoba Sector Council Program and industry-based organizations. The Manitoba Career Prospects website provides services, including a career exploration portal, several job boards, and the ability to book industry-specific career presentations and tours.

Educators are encouraged to not only use the website to its full potential, but to book a speaker, a tour, and/or a career fair display. Manitoba Career Prospects is helping to bring industry directly into the classroom. The Career Exploration Portal, available at [www.manitobacareerprospects.ca](http://www.manitobacareerprospects.ca), allows a user to search and explore the many rewarding and exciting career

opportunities available in a multitude of industries in Manitoba. It also includes the education required to get these jobs and the colleges and universities in Manitoba that provide that education. The website is also host to numerous highlighted employers in each industry, giving an idea of jobs they hire for and what a successful candidate would look like.

Typically, Manitoba Career Prospects brings awareness of the many different careers available in the various industries in Manitoba at several career fairs, but because of the current situation with COVID-19, large gatherings are being avoided, or in some places prohibited. As a result, Manitoba Career Prospects is organizing and hosting a virtual career fair.





The Manitoba Career Prospects Career Fair is scheduled to be held on January 20th, 2021 and will have 50 virtual booths where students can virtually enter the various booths and speak to industry and post-secondary education representatives.

Whether you are a student wondering what career path to take, a parent looking for their child, or an educator looking for their students, Manitoba Career Prospects has something for you. ♦



# VIRTUAL CAREER FAIR

January 20, 2021  
9:30 am - 3:30 pm

SAVE  
THE  
DATE



**EXPLORE**  
career opportunities in  
Manitoba

**The Manitoba Career Prospects** Program gives you and your students the ability to connect and engage with industry professionals.

Use our website to explore some of the careers available in a variety of industries.



**CONNECT**  
with Manitoba's leading  
industries

- **Request a speaker** to come to your school
- **Schedule an industry tour** to get a first hand look at different work environments
- **Book our display** for your school, or
- **Arrange an informational interview**



**ENGAGE**  
with employers and  
industry representatives

We're here to help you help your students discover the various careers available in Manitoba. Visit our site: [manitobacareerprospects.ca](https://manitobacareerprospects.ca) for videos, resources and more! **PLUS make sure to save the date for our Virtual Career Fair!**



**MANITOBA CAREER  
PROSPECTS**  
EXPLORE • CONNECT • ENGAGE

# A HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT



Far left: Amy Jackson began her studies at the age of 28, which is near the average age for UCN students. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations played a role in her History major.

Left: Outside of her studies, Jackson is a proficient fiddler, teaching other students privately and with organizations including the Manitoba Metis Federation and Frontier School Division.

Amy Jackson always understood how education creates opportunity. For a decade, she juggled working in provincial and federal politics and completing part-time courses at the University College of the North (UCN). When she transitioned from the political arena to full-time student, her focus was clear.

"History is a passion of mine and I feel as though I can contribute to positive social change through research," said Jackson.

Jackson is a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Working in politics, she conducted outreach activities for Member of Parliament Niki Ashton and MLA Amanda Lathlin, all while taking part-time courses at UCN. She recently completed a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in History and minoring in Aboriginal & Northern Studies and Social Sciences.

Jackson began her studies at the age of 28, which is near the average age for UCN students. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations played a role in her History major. She says she is specifically drawn to the recommendations about education and history.

"True reconciliation cannot occur without proper telling and revision

of history," Jackson explains. "I carry the responsibility as an Indigenous researcher, to relay corrected history, and in doing so, will contribute to the important work of reconciliation."

She began to prepare for and take seriously the idea of enrolling in a Master's degree in her second year of baccalaureate studies.

UCN student advisor, Brian Loewen saw a spark in Jackson.

"Amy truly loves to learn. When we met to choose her courses each term, she was always enthusiastic about the course offerings at UCN," Loewen said, "I've asked Amy over the years if she could help other students and she was always willing to spend the extra hours she might have to reach out to these students and provide them with guidance."

Jackson says that from day one, the first time in Loewen's office she felt supported and excited about education.

"UCN is a small community where everyone supports each other," Jackson said. "I always brag to my friends studying at other universities about how amazing UCN is, how supportive it is for students. I am so happy I chose UCN and I know others who feel the same way."

Jackson applied for the Native Studies

Graduate program at the University of Manitoba.

"I have a hard time believing its true! I remember opening the notice and feeling overwhelmed. I couldn't believe what I had been working toward was actually happening!"

She was notified that not only had she been accepted to the program, but that she had obtained a full scholarship covering tuition costs for the entire program.

Jackson wishes to pursue a second master's degree in History, as well as in Aboriginal/Native Studies. She says it's important to complete a master's degree, and hopes it inspires young people from her community and beyond. She wants to show them that they too can pursue higher education with some dedication. She says it is a principle reinforced by role models she was fortunate to work with during her time in politics and while pursuing her bachelor's degree.

Jackson hopes to focus her master's research on the File Hills Colony, a social experiment aimed at fully assimilating residential school survivors into a farming lifestyle. After her master's degree, she plans to pursue a doctorate.

"I hope that one day my research can contribute to positive change and to reconciliation in our country." ♦



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# FROM CHEMISTRY TO MEDICINE AND HELPING OTHERS SUCCEED



## Join the Access community at U of M

A third-year honours biochemistry student, Brandon Wozniak is pursuing his love of chemistry and plans to go into medicine, with the support of the Access Program.

Brandon Wozniak is pursuing his love of chemistry and plans to go into medicine, with the support of the Access Program.

"I would like to help people who are dealing with mental health-related issues," says Wozniak, a Métis honours biochemistry student born in Fort McMurray and living in Winnipeg.

The Access Program at the University of Manitoba (U of M) provides holistic support to Indigenous, newcomer, and other U of M students, empowering them on their path to success.

"Access is really good because it really establishes a community within a larger whole," he says, noting how it helps alleviate the stress and anxiety of coming to a big campus where you don't know anyone, and having to figure out and maintain your schedule. "I find I share a lot of the same values as different students attending Access. So with that, I'm able to create cultural relationships, make friends, and it gives me a sense of purpose on campus."

A third-year honours biochemistry student, Wozniak plans to apply to medicine next year. "Chemistry is just amazing, how you can turn anything into something else."

He is also quite involved at the U of M. Among other things, he's a co-president of the Métis University Student Association and the

Indigenous student rep for the arts student body council.

"I encourage students to get involved on campus, and to not just get involved but to get involved in something that you care about."

After graduating from high school in Gimli, Wozniak came to university to study chemistry. At first, the experience was overwhelming, but after taking a break, he returned to university with the support of Access.

"I started doing chemistry research and I thought I need to be in a job where I am communicating with people and helping others succeed, so I want to do medicine."

Wozniak's aunt told him about Access and she said it was a really good program that provides supports for students coming from rural communities and that it would help him succeed in post-secondary. Under the Access Program, he was able to succeed.

Wozniak appreciates many aspects of the program.

"Having a smaller classroom really helps you establish a relationship with both the professor and the other students. The Access Program has been there with a variety of holistic supports pertaining to academic, mental health, course planning, and immersing myself in the Indigenous cultures on campus."

Through speaking with the Elder, he learned about Indigenous teachings, which he says will contribute to his learning and to his future.

He also notes the value of the tutoring provided.

"The one-on-one tutoring is very beneficial. The first year workshops, they really teach you how to time manage and plan your schedule, and without those, I'd be an absolute mess."

Wozniak encourages students to go to university and pursue a career in something they are passionate about, and to develop themselves as a person.

"University is a place to holistically develop yourself. I find that every year I grow so much and the advice I would give would be to put your best foot forward, learn through trial and error, and to seek out additional resources when you need help."

That's where the program comes in.

"And I would tell students to sign up for the Access Program."

Wozniak encourages Indigenous residents of Manitoba to apply to the Access Program and attend the University of Manitoba. Application deadline is May 1. Apply now.

Find out more at [UMExtended.ca/Access](https://umextended.ca/Access). ♦





# TRY THE TRADES

How many of your students do you expect will graduate and enter a career in construction? Now, imagine how they got there. Did they demonstrate a keen interest and ability in a specific skilled trade? Or, were they eventually resigned into accepting that a job in the skilled trades may be their only option? Too often in Canada our secondary education environments foster the latter scenario. This is not only a disservice to many students, but also to our skilled construction workforce and the critical infrastructure they build and maintain.

We know that the demand for skilled labour will only be increasing over the next decade, and there will be a skilled labour shortage. While the solution to this problem may seem simple – more demand for workers means sending more students into trades training, problem solved! But this solution ultimately creates a dilemma of quantity over quality. Encouraging students en masse to choose a career in trades does not produce good results long term.

Proof of this can be seen while examining Canada's skilled trades apprentice programs. Nationally, less than 50 per cent of Canadians who start an apprenticeship go on to become a journeyed tradesperson. Further, the average Canadian apprentice is 32 years old and has been out of high school and in the general workforce for over a decade. By comparison, the average apprentice in Germany is 21 years

old, with a completion rate of 85 per cent. This tells us that there are real barriers to apprenticeship completion, and academic readiness and career fit are critical to success.

The Manitoba Building Trades Institute (MBTI) intends to change how skilled trades work is perceived by younger students. By increasing the depth of exposure to the skilled trades, we hope to help students make earlier and more informed choices about the career they want to pursue. That's why we are opening the Manitoba Building Trades Exhibition Hall, where students can participate in our Try The Trades programming.

During a three-hour workshop, groups of 10 to 30 students will participate in a variety of hands-on demonstrations at 13 different skilled trades booths with over 30 skilled trades professions. Booths are equipped with trade specific tools, hands-on training simulators, and virtual and augmented reality headsets. All booths will be staffed by tradespersons who are experts in their field and specially trained to work with students.

To enhance the continuum of learning, MBTI is developing an online portal for trades exploration and education. Educators will have access to teaching materials and assessments; students will be able to explore quizzes, skill tests, and view extensive career information for individual trades. Use of this portal and assessment tools will help students determine their own interest and aptitude for the skilled trades—the online portal is intended to complement a visit to the trades exhibition hall.

MBTI has designed our Try The Trades program to provide earlier and more meaningful skilled trades exposure to students. By creating an immersive and fulsome trades experience, students will get a better understanding of what the construction skilled trades industry entails and whether the work appeals to them. Our hope is that informed students have a higher success rate within the apprenticeship system and find a career they aspire to, not a job they resign to.

For more information, please visit [www.trythetradessmb.ca](http://www.trythetradessmb.ca). ♦

TRADE	NOC	Median Hourly Wage – Manitoba (JobBank.gc.ca)	2025 Job Outlook – Manitoba (Build Force Canada)
Boilermaker	7234	\$41.87	Good
Carpenter	7271	\$23.00	Good
Crane Operator	7371	\$30.00	Good
Industrial Electrician	7242	\$32.80	Good
HVAC Mechanic	7313	\$27.00	Good
Millwright	7311	\$27.00	Good
Plumber	7251	\$31.50	Good
Sheetmetal	7233	\$25.00	Good

# BUSINESS CO-OP PROGRAM GIVES ALUMNA HEAD START IN CAREER

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



Kayla Yanke's (CMU '18) hard work throughout the BBA co-op program ensured she got a secure job not only shortly after graduating, but also three provinces away.

Kayla Yanke (CMU '18) was one of the first students to graduate with CMU's Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Co-op degree, majoring in Accounting. After walking across the convocation stage in cap and gown, she was ready to join the workforce.

But just five months later, she suddenly faced being uprooted from the network she had established when she and her husband had to move across the country from Winnipeg, Man. to Victoria, B.C. for his job in the military.

Luckily, her hard work throughout the BBA co-op program ensured she got a secure job not only shortly after graduating, but also three provinces away. After doing her co-op placement at KPMG Winnipeg, one of the "big four" international accounting organizations, the firm offered her a full-time position. With those connections, she got a job at KPMG Victoria as senior accountant in audit.

"I'd recommend that [accounting students] do the co-op program with CMU because it's so much easier to



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get your foot in the door with a large accounting firm,” Yanke says. “It also helped me understand my courses when I went back to school because I had some practical experience, and then it makes it that much easier to go get a job after.”

Yanke started studying business because her uncle was a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) and she admired his career and the opportunities it gave him to travel and support his family.

“Then once I got into the courses, I just really enjoyed the challenge and the puzzle that specifically accounting is,” she says.

She looked into several different universities, but once she visited CMU, she knew it was the right choice for her.

“They were really helpful with laying everything out, giving me my schedule, and offering me a scholarship... and it was less intimidating being an 18 year old and not knowing what university was going to entail, coming to a smaller university with smaller class sizes and knowing

that I wasn’t just going to be a number, that my professors would get to know me.”

Yanke did two co-op placements in accounting—one with Argus Industries, an elastomeric products manufacturing company, and the other with KPMG, a financial audit, tax, and advisory services firm. She knows several students for whom the co-op program became too expensive, but for her the program was worth it because of the difference it is making in her career.

“Being able to complete my degree with the co-op experience allowed me to gain 15 credible months towards my CPA designation that I’m going for now,” she says.

One requirement to getting a CPA designation is 30 months of approved work experience. Having already completed half of those months means that once she writes the CPA designation exam this September, Yanke will be able to get her letters behind her name more quickly. She’s looking forward to advancing her career, and hopefully one day leading a company. ♦



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# ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN AND SCHOOL ADVISORS IN TECHNOLOGY

## Helping young women plan a future in technology



Youth need strong role models, especially young women looking for a career in technology, a professional area typically dominated by men.

The Certified Technicians and Technologists Association of Manitoba (CTTAM), together with industry experts, want female students early-on in their learning paths to further develop an understanding of and appreciate the range of interesting, high-paying and long-term technology professions that require a focus on their sciences, engineering, and math skills.

To aid in this goal, in June of 2019, a Young Women in Technology Conference was held at the Skilled Trades and Technology Centre on the Red River College Notre Dame Campus. Skills Canada (Manitoba), Red River College, and CTTAM joined industry partners to foster a collaborative day of learning and fun.

The event was dedicated to providing young women (Grades 6 to 8) access to a support network of leaders and experts, with high school students and professional members of CTTAM in attendance to help mentor young students.

"It's important for young women as early as possible to take part in the opportunities that exist in technology. Our overall message is expertise in math, science, and technology is valuable and can be a financially rewarding endeavour," said Robert D. Okabe, CTTAM's CEO & registrar.

### Exploring opportunities

At the conference, different areas of technology, which include civil engineering, computers, electronics, and robotics were explored. Students teamed up with Red River College instructors and high school guides to build and test spaghetti bridges, build a widget, construct circuits, operate industrial robots, and weld simulators. School advisors participated in break-out information sessions to help guide young students' choices and career paths in technology.

School advisors can raise awareness and interest in technology and science by providing young students with information on all of the different technology programs available through educational institutions such as Red River College, Assiniboine College, as well as science and engineering programs at the University of Manitoba.





The Certified Technicians and Technologists Association of Manitoba (CTTAM), together with industry experts, want female students early-on in their learning paths to further develop an understanding of and appreciate the range of interesting, high-paying and long-term technology professions that require a focus on their sciences, engineering, and math skills.

“Response to this day was overwhelming with several schools placed on a waiting list for possible future conferences,” said Okabe.

During the question and answer session, it was obvious to the organizers that the conference was a success due to the number of questions and interest shown from those in attendance.

### Being part of a thriving community

Technology is evolving and changing the way that we live, work, and play, especially with the challenges experienced within 2020's global pandemic.

Tech solutions have improved so many aspects of our day-to-day lives. From working on a construction project, to preparing drawings for a project and maintaining and

repairing valuable diagnostic equipment, choosing a technology profession can secure a spot in a growing group of women professionals. As more women enter and thrive in the technology and engineering economy, together we can all make the world a better place.

### About CTTAM

Over the past 55 years, CTTAM has supported the recognition of engineering technologists and technicians for their important role in engineering technology and applied sciences. Our primary purpose is the certification and regulation of our members within Manitoba.

More information can be found at [cttam.com](http://cttam.com) or by contacting Cathy Penner, CTTAM registration services coordinator at 204-784-1082, or at [adminassistant@cttam.com](mailto:adminassistant@cttam.com). ♦

# OPENING FALL 2020



Covid-19 Update Online programming is available. Contact for details.

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Book your visit to the Manitoba Building Trades Exhibition Hall.

# TryTheTradesMB.ca