

THE BRIDGE

MAMAWI ATOSKETAN NATIVE SCHOOL

TAKING FIRST NATIONS TEENS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

UPDATE No. 8 | OCTOBER 2020

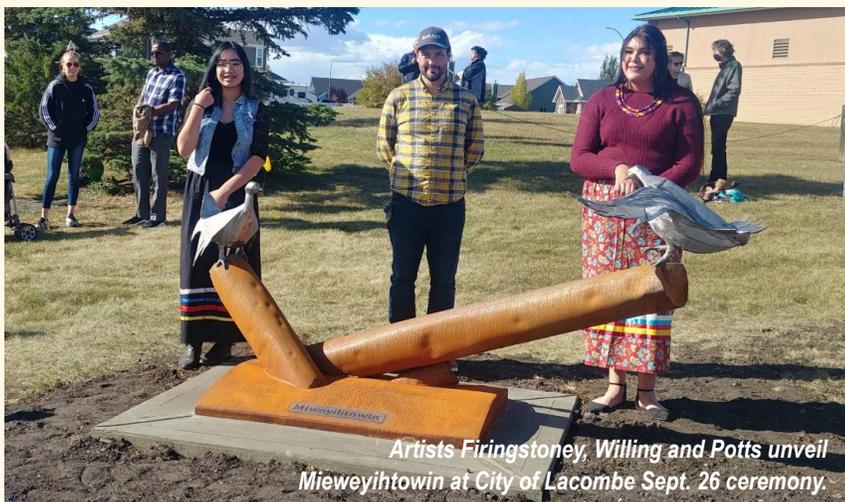
STUDENTS WIN PUBLIC SCULPTURE COMMISSION, BECOME PHILANTHROPISTS

The City of Lacombe's public art committee enthusiastically endorsed the proposal by students Eileen Firingstone and Tessa Potts, and vice-principal Mike Willing for a welded steel sculpture that was unveiled on Sept. 26 at a ceremony coordinated by the City.

Miweyihtowin, (Cree for "Affinity for Each Other") was designed by Firingstone (currently Grade 11) and Potts (Class of 2020) and created over the summer in the Leon Ingraham Industrial Arts/CTS Building. The sculpture was installed beside the traffic circle at the intersection of College Avenue and the Edmonton-Calgary Trail.

Upon learning of costs for COVID-19 measures mandated this fall, Potts and Firingstone donated a significant part of their commission proceeds to MANS, thus becoming the school's first major donors from currently-enrolled students and recently-graduated alumni.

The WCB Welding Foundation, a major donor to The Bridge Campaign and funder of the Mind Over Metal Camp at MANS that introduced Firingstone to welding when she was in junior high, is featuring MANS and the sculpture commission in the winter 2020 issue of its magazine, **WELD**.



Artists Firingstone, Willing and Potts unveil Miweyihtowin at City of Lacombe Sept. 26 ceremony.

Photo by Lynn McDowell

THE CLASS OF 2020: HISTORIC & BIGGEST EVER

"Record-breaking" best describes the six graduates who marched down the high school gym aisle on June 16. Story on back.

A DREAM COMES TRUE

"I want to go to Burman University for a biology major so I can pursue a medical degree."

Jade Rabbit, MANS Valedictorian 2020

Freshman at Burman University

People who believe in you make you believe in yourself.

When students like Jade Rabbit joined the Schuler Family and the scholarship they recently established at MANS to help graduates attend Burman, a seed of possibility was planted. The seed was nurtured in the story and at Burman—and it grew into a reality never thought possible.

MANS Scholarship

has been a difference for

The Ernie Schuler Family Staff Room & Scholarship

As a young widow left with 11 children, Ernie Schuler wanted to do something to help his children. He wanted to help them get a good education and a good job. He wanted to help them get a good life.

Ernie's wife, Helen, was a nurse and a teacher. She was a woman of many talents and a woman of many dreams.

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MANS STUDENT, COUNSELOR INITIATE VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES IN COVID LOCKDOWN

The March arrival of COVID-19 changed education delivery overnight, but a MANS high school student and MANS' guidance counsellor were quick to recognize the importance of combatting isolation and keeping the school community connected.

Juliette Rain, now in Grade 11, initiated a closed Facebook page for MANS staff and students to check in with each other. "She accomplished something that none of us could have done," said Principal Gail Wilton. As a student, Juliette drew in her peers—an important part of keeping up spirits and motivation to finish classwork while many families struggled with internet and computer availability.

Guidance counselor Kelly Stickle, inspired by a conversation with a Samson Community Wellness counselor, launched a MANS Counseling page on Facebook, and opened it to any young person in the Maskwacis community. Samson Cree Nation supported the effort with gift cards for youth who participated in the sessions.

View the unveiling ceremony and hear Firingstone and Potts talk about their relationship to welding in their personal videos (*The First in My House*, and *Eileen's Gift*) in the video section of mans1.ca. Willing's speech at the unveiling is posted in the "Who We Are" section. Other news stories and photos from the unveiling are also posted on the website.



TWO VALEDICTORIANS, BRIDGE CAMPAIGN SCHOLARSHIPS, UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS & PERSEVERANCE CELEBRATED IN HISTORIC GRAD

MANS' June 16 High School Graduation was not only incredible, but also historic: The Class of 2020 was the largest ever; it was MANS' first livestreamed grad (courtesy of COVID-19); the Roan sisters graduated as the first siblings to graduate together from MANS; and two valedictorians were declared.

In the weeks of government-mandated school closures and online classes leading up to grad night, it wasn't clear that there would be any ceremony at all, but a record number of seniors become graduates. Six graduands marched down the aisle of MANS' high school gym and receive their diplomas to much cheering from proud families. Three graduates are the first in their families to attain a high school diploma.

With seating strictly limited due to COVID-19, even the presenters of two scholarships established as part of The Bridge Campaign (The Emilie Schafer Family and The Cornerstone Scholarships) had to attend virtually. Both presenting families pre-taped speeches of congratulations to the two students who had earned their scholarships—valedictorians Shaneek Roasting and Jade Rabbit. The Emilie Schafer Family Scholarship presentation can be viewed in the video section of mans1.ca.

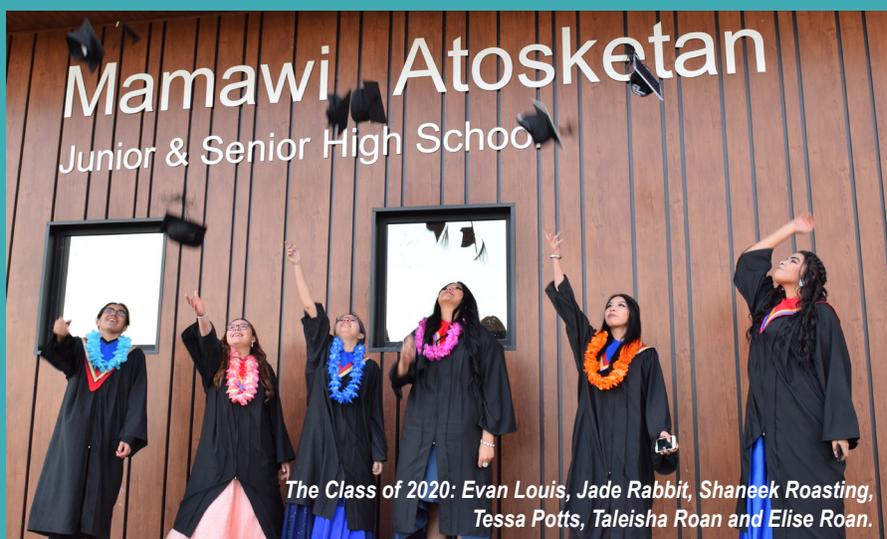
Both Roasting and Rabbit had already applied to and been accepted into Burman University's business and pre-med programs, respectively—a dream realized for the two best friends.

For Roasting and classmate Tessa Potts, the evening signified something like leaving home. Both have been at MANS since Kindergarten, and both are the first in their families to earn high school diplomas. Evan Louis, who has represented the youth of his community in Ottawa, also become the first in his family to graduate.

Closing Wisdom of the Elders

Evan's mother, Michelle Louis, was obviously moved when she addressed the graduates at the end of the ceremony. "You finished what you started," she told the Class of 2020. "And to top it off, you finished during a world-wide pandemic. That means that the six of you are capable of anything in life.

"As our elders say," concluded Louis, "Don't give up. Keep going."



The Class of 2020: Evan Louis, Jade Rabbit, Shaneek Roasting, Tessa Potts, Taleisha Roan and Elise Roan.

Photos by Pattie Reasor



Shaneek Roasting, Valedictorian

View *The Valedictorians*, an interview with Lyle Notice, in the video section of mans1.ca.



Jade Rabbit, Valedictorian

Valedictorian Shaneek Roasting proudly sported beadwork with her grad formal gown, and valedictorian Jade Rabbit donned a customized mortar board cap with intricate beadwork in the colours of her formal gown to receive her diploma from Principal Gail Wilton.

