



Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba

www.trcm.ca

YOUNG DESCENDANT PASSES FAMILY HISTORY FORWARD

140-Year-Old Document Becomes Manitoba's Hottest, Newest Teaching Tool

September 27, 2011 – 140 years ago, Nicahe Daniels' Great, Great, Great Grandfather, Chief Yellowquill, stood at Lower Fort Garry and earned himself a place in history as the first signatory to one of the most important and enduring agreements in Canada.

Today, holding a duplicate of Treaty One, originally signed in 1871, Daniels passed her piece of family history forward to the future. There to accept it was Xavier Amadei, Raychel Ritual and Darrius Jack from William Whyte Community School, on behalf of Grade 5 and 6 students across Manitoba.

This symbolic exchange launched a new era in Manitoba education that will ensure every student in the province is taught the importance of Treaties and Treaty Relationship. In unveiling the new Treaty Education Initiative, first piloted last year in 11 different schools, the goal of the province-wide program is to:

- Increase the knowledge and understanding of Treaties and Treaty Relationship among all students in Manitoba;
- Ensure students understand the impact of Treaties and Treaty Relationship on the creation of the Province of Manitoba;
- Build bridges between all peoples in order to strengthen our prosperity;
- Assist students in engaging in more informed discussions throughout their lives.

"Treaties are the most important documents Canadians have ever put their names on, yet many do not understand them," said James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. "Helping our students understand them is integral to the future of our societies and the prosperity of our province, and country."

Honouring the Spirit and Intent of the historic Treaties and Treaty Relationship between First Nations peoples and Canada, has been integral to this development. It is a process that continues to be guided by First Nations' knowledge keepers like the Council of Elders from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. This phase of the Treaty Education Initiative includes:

- The Treaty Education Kit with teacher resources including;
 - Treaty Education Teacher Guides for Grades 5 and 6;

- Treaty Essential Learnings: The Treaty Experience in Manitoba;
- A two-day in service for Grade 5 & 6 classroom teachers in October 2011;
- Future plans to expand the Initiative to K-4 and 7-12.

“The Treaty-making process has always been important for First Nations people, as we view Treaties as living agreements which need to be recognized and renewed on a regular basis,” said Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. “Treaties Education provides an opportunity for all Manitobans, especially our youth, future generations and new Canadians to understand the Spirit and Intent of the Numbered Treaties, specifically 1 to 11, to understand the honour of the Crown in this relationship and the Treaties are the foundation on which both Canada and Manitoba have been built. “

In total, there are 70 Treaties across Canada. Most dealt with peace and friendship while the 11 Numbered Treaties:

- Primarily dealt with land and were signed between 1871 and 1921;
- Were negotiated by First Nations to protect their cultures, land base and languages;
- Were negotiated by Crown to gain access to the land for settlement;
- Prevented the western provinces from becoming part of the USA;
- Were fundamental in the unification of Canada coast to coast to coast.

"Treaties are an important part of our shared history," said the Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. "These teacher guides are an essential tool to understanding Treaties and explaining the Treaty relationship to all Canadians."

Echoing the Minister's comments, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre said, "As a partner organization committed to the development of the Treaty Education Initiative, we are pleased to support the launch and implementation of the Teacher Guides for Grades 5 and 6," said Executive Director, Lorne C. Keeper. "This initiative, with Manitoba Education, is an example of how mutually respectful partnerships can positively impact the lives of all Manitoba students."

With in-service sessions planned for mid-October in both Winnipeg and The Pas, Treaty Commissioner Wilson said the Teacher Education Initiative is a win for First Nations and for all Manitobans. “Understanding and strengthening the Treaty Relationship creates certainty,” said Wilson. “With certainty comes social and economic investment; with investment comes opportunities and jobs for all Manitoba. We’re proud to be a part of it.”

-30-

For further information, please contact: James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner, telephone: 204.777.1871 or james.wilson@trcm.ca.