

# 4 Teacher

## CNIB welcoming student tours



The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) is opening its doors to students and teachers interested in booking an educational tour of the facility and learning more about how partially sighted Canadians live their lives.

"We'd love to initiate a program with all the schools in Manitoba to show students all the services and support CNIB provides to the blind and partially sighted people like me," says Chris Glowach, spokesperson at CNIB. CNIB has been offering general public tours for years and recently hosted a classroom of students in May with great results.

"We have a kitchen where people who are blind are taught to prepare food, as well as a room where we teach adaptive technology. Nine out of 10 people who come to CNIB have some sort of useful vision and some have lost their vision halfway through their life, so it can be hard to get used to learning how to surf the internet again for example. We help people through that adjustment."

Glowach says it's incredible how many adaptive technologies are available today, even from 2003 when he joined CNIB. "The students who came for the tour were enthralled and stayed on the tour longer than any of the other groups that day."

Visitors can learn about the CNIB's independent living training where people with vision loss are taught the essentials of daily living such as household tasks and personal care, their low vision clinic and the early intervention program where occupational therapists work with blind children and their families on the developmental needs associated with vision loss.

The CNIB Center in Winnipeg also offers a store with writing and reading aids, magnifiers, music and home entertainment devices and other household items all designed to assist people in their everyday lives.

Glowach says that any age group of students is welcome to book a tour, which is free of charge to schools. "It's a very informative and educational school outing," he says. "It can help build understanding of their classmates who have vision loss, or just to learn more about how CNIB provides support to ensure blind and partially sighted Canadians fully participate in life."

Teachers can book a tour of CNIB by contacting Chris Glowach at 204-789-0958. **T**

## Veggie fundraising available for all

A pilot project where schools fundraise by selling vegetables is now available for all Manitoba schools.

The Farm to School program, sponsored by the provincial government, Peak of the Market and the Manitoba Association of Home Economists, had been tried on a limited basis last year.

Schools have from September 14 (when the first order will be accepted) until December 14 (when the last order will be accepted) to take advantage of the program.

Organizers say the Farm to School Healthy Choice Fundraiser provides great profit margins and the opportunity to:

- get fresh, local vegetables at or below super-market prices
- offer healthy food choices
- support local producers
- support your school's nutrition policy
- try new recipes with Manitoba vegetables available at [www.peakmarket.com/recipes](http://www.peakmarket.com/recipes)

It also offers the opportunity to educate students about healthy food choices.

Schools wanting to get involved in the program can visit [www.farmtoschoolmanitoba.ca](http://www.farmtoschoolmanitoba.ca) for more information on the program and to register. **T**



## Treaty education ramps up

### Commission brings history into the classroom

By Matea Tuhtar

**WE ARE ALL TREATY PEOPLE.** is one of the primary messages that the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) wants to share with the students and teachers of Manitoba.

"For the most part, students have very little knowledge of treaties," says James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner at the TRCM. "They want to know 'Why is this important to me?' and 'Why should I care about something that happened 140 years ago?' Your average student knows very little about treaties, the historical significance of treaties and the complexities of it."

The TRCM is hoping to change that through various education initiatives that include the TRCM Learning Center, Speakers' Bureau and the upcoming Treaty Education Teacher Kits that will be available this fall.

"Right now we're really caught in that win-lose mentality," says Wilson who speaks to groups regularly. "If First Nations win rights, people think of it as a loss to Canada, and if Canada wins something people think of it as loss to First Nations. There's very much an adversarial approach. Where as if we focussed on strengthening the relationship itself then we see that creates certainty in a relationship. And that certainty attracts investment, and not just business investment but social investment which to me is more important. And with investment comes educational opportunities and job opportunities which are good for First Nations and good for the rest of the province."

Classrooms can visit the TRCM Learning Center to hear speakers that include historians, political leaders and aboriginal elders, as well to take part in smoke ceremonies and view films and slideshows. The Learning Center is a round forum concept and can accommodate any grades, though the speakers are also available for school visits. The Center also has a library with archival materials such as maps, posters and books and is open to the public.

However the initiative that Wilson is most excited about are the *The Treaties and Treaty Relationship* teacher education kits. The kits are comprised of teachers' guides, documents, maps, DVDs, timelines and a kids' play. All the information can be also be found on an included USB drive. An oral history project, which contains the written testimony of 220 Aboriginal elders from across the province, and a First Nations Historical Atlas of Manitoba which contains fur trades, treaty areas and vignettes of communities, as well as

star charts and constellations from the First Nations perspective, will round out the kits.

Teacher guides for Grades 5 and 6 are available September 2011 and are integrated with learning outcomes of social studies. Next year the K-Grade 4 guides will be coming out, with Grade 7-12 following the year. They are designed to provide teachers with Treaty education lesson plans, outside links to additional learning resources and a variety of learning resources that can be used in the delivery of Treaty education in the classroom.

"We are creating resources which teachers can use to better deliver the existing curriculum and meet multiple learning objectives with it," says Wilson. Through partnerships with the

**It's great to see a transition in students who going into this really could care less about something they don't see as relevant to them today and then beginning to understand how it impacts their day to day lives and seeing how that changes some of them.**

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the federal and provincial governments, the guide has been edited and tested in a few pilot schools this year. "We have a really dynamic team working on this guide and lots of curriculum input. We also had to make sure it's extremely balanced and without bias. This thing has been vetted like you wouldn't believe," he laughs.

The TRCM goal is to have treaty education mandatory in schools within the next three years and that all Manitoba students should be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the topics, concepts and understandings of the *Treaties by Grade 12*

"I think the best way to have that happen is to create a really solid document that teachers want and make it worth their while," says Wilson. "As a former teacher I know it's important to have stuff you can use and interpret well to the students. There's no hokiness to it, it's all concrete information."

Wilson says one of the most important things about the learning initiative and something that came up during the pilot testing, is that it's

important to create a comfort level for teachers.

"A lot of teachers have a fear of covering certain topics because they are afraid of offending people or saying the wrong thing. So we want to make this as user-friendly as we can, with no political agendas attached. It really just gets the students' understanding relationships and I think that's the key thing about it. Understanding First Nations people historically helps people understand the province of Manitoba better and helps the future potential of the province."

Debbie-Beach-Ducharme, principal of William Whyte School agrees.

"The teacher that piloted the Learning Kit in our school had a very positive experience; it was a learning experience for her as well. To me it's very important and critical to present this kind of education to our students and help bridge the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It's a critical piece of information and it wasn't available before."

Wilson says that schools have had good responses to the learning kits.

"It's great to see a transition in students who going into this really could care less about something they don't see as relevant to them today and then beginning to understand how it impacts their day to day lives and seeing how that changes some of them."

"We've presented to a school where we had one girl who said she didn't want to study the Indian Act because she had all these prejudices, and then after studying treaties and the Indian Act she's saying now that she's interested in studying Aboriginal Law. And this is from a non-native student. So to me that's huge, as a teacher it's really empowering to hear students say stuff like that."

The TRCM is presenting teacher in-service treaty education training workshops in October in The Pas and Winnipeg. The workshop is designed for any teacher who plans on implementing the teacher guides in their classroom over the 2011-12.

Every teacher who attends will receive the Treaty Education Kit for their classroom. There is no fee for registration.

For more information on the teacher guides, TRCM Learning Center, Speakers' Bureau or the upcoming teacher workshops visit [www.trcm.ca](http://www.trcm.ca) or contact TRCM at 204-777-1871. **T**