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Faces of Winkler celebrates diversity, relationships

From left: Artist Jane Unruh Thiesen with Lemlem Teklebrhan Abrha and Luella Seabaugh, two of the Faces of Winkler highlighted at Winkler Arts & Culture this summer. For the full story, see Pg. 8.
PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

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BTHC Fdn. working to meet immediate, long-term needs of hospital

By Lorne Stelmach

Focusing on both the more immediate and longer term needs makes for a challenging but meaningful task for the Boundary Trails Health Centre Foundation.

Speaking after the foundation's annual meeting last week, chairperson Ben Friesen noted that supporting the ongoing expansion of the hospital is obviously their big focus right now.

"It just continues to give you so much momentum, and everybody is so happy to see it going and it has been going so well," he said.

Friesen noted it continues to be very encouraging to see that so many are getting involved in ways big and small to help support the project.

"People got on board right from the start ... when we first started, it was very daunting to us," he said. "But once we started going, and we did have a good plan ... the community just was behind it like 100 per cent right from the start.

"You don't want to say it's an easy sell ... but it is a very rewarding commitment to be working on. It's just something that people really buy into," Friesen added. "This whole

area can become a wellness centre over here. It's really nice to have it regional."

In the meantime, Friesen said they also need to maintain their focus on their ongoing initiatives, such as supporting palliative care and spiritual care at the hospital.

"The expansion is sort of the exciting part of it, but we definitely have to continue," he said. "The foundation was originally put in place to support programs like the palliative care and the spiritual care and some X-ray equipment needs."

And the foundation is in a good position to keep building that support with a financial report that showed a surplus of just under \$1.3 million for the fiscal year ended March 31.

The revenue of about \$4.7 million includes \$2.5 million in designated donations, and the big driving factor behind that success is the hospital expansion.

Kyle MacNair, who is the implementation lead for clinical programming with Southern Health-Santé Sud, provided a brief update on what had been estimated to be a \$100 million project that is being completed in phases.

It will include 24 additional acute



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

From left: Palliative care nurse Eunice Suderman and Lisa Thiessen from BTHC's spiritual care program shared a bit about their services at the BTHC Foundation's AGM last week.


care inpatient beds, expanded emergency department, new state-of-the-art operating room, expansion of the cancer care unit, dedicated space for palliative care services and a level two nursery designed to provide services to premature newborns with complex feeding needs.

The new community services build-


ing will enable existing community services to be relocated from the existing hospital space. Those services in the new building will include public health, midwifery, home care services, children and youth rehabilitation services, and a centre for hope healing

Continued on page 3

Class of
2025



Congratulations Graduates!
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of the Town of Altona, we wish
you all the best in the next
chapter of your lives.



CPR Station Depot Gallery & Museum to open in Manitou on July 5

By the PMCHA

After four years of restoration work, the Pembina Manitou Culture and Heritage Board is pleased to announce that the La Riviere CPR Station Depot Gallery & Museum, located in Manitou, will open to the public from 9am to 4pm on Saturday, July 5, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2pm. The ceremony, which will take place on the platform in front of the station, will include greetings from the Station Committee and other dignitaries.

Special guests for the day will be a group of rail enthusiasts from the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA) who will have their antique motor cars (jiggers) on site for their tour of the rails from Manitou to Morden and back. They will unload the cars onto the tracks at around 7am and after a safety review will leave for Morden at about 8am. Early risers will be able to see the parade of cars from

the Manitou Centennial Park, as they head east.

The cars will return around noon and will be on display from then until 1pm, when the group will again head to Morden and back.

Displays at the CPR Station Depot include a variety of posters and signs celebrating the CPR over the decades, photos and paintings of other local stations, with a special focus on the La Riviere Station and rail yards as they looked during their time in La Riviere. Other displays celebrate the development of the farm economy, with maps and photos from as far back as 200 years ago.

Felix Kuehn's highly detailed 24-foot-long, hand-drawn map of the Boundary Commission Trail is also on display on the second floor of the station.

Plans for the summer are to have the Station open from noon to 4pm, Wednesdays to Sundays. *Advertisorial*

Cheyenne Thiessen wins Katie Cares scholarship

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Katie Cares recently handed out its fourth annual Kaitlyn Marie Reimer Scholarship to Cheyenne Thiessen.

The \$2,000 scholarship is presented annually to a graduate of Garden Valley Collegiate in memory of the late Reimer, founder and namesake of Katie Cares. It was created thanks to a donation from Kerry and Darlene Pollack.

Ruth Reimer, Katie's mother and head of the non-profit, says Thiessen's application essay resonated with the entire family.

"It struck such a chord with all of us," she said, explaining that Thiessen's piece shared some of the challenges she overcame growing up and her dreams to one day create more safe spaces and supportive programming for Winkler area youth. "It was

a difficult choice between the four candidates, but we came back and it was unanimous ... this was the one.

"The honesty and vulnerability that she shared in her essay, and when meeting her ... it stood out," Reimer said. "I'm so glad that we are able to give her this hand up to help with her education."

Thiessen intends to use the financial support towards her post-secondary studies in sociology at Brandon University this fall.

"I want to pursue a career in youth work," she shared. "I want to work at a resource centre or somewhere that kids can go if they need help for things."

It's a resource that's very much needed in Winkler, Thiessen observed.

"There's a lot of stuff for families and a lot of stuff for people with dis-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

John Reimer with Cheyenne Thiessen, the winner of this year's Kaitlyn Marie Reimer Scholarship, presented by Katie Cares.

abilities or newcomers, but there isn't very much for youth," she said, noting she found a welcoming community in the local amateur theatre world. She's been acting with Flatlands Theatre Company for years.

"This last year I started to help out with teaching the theatre classes that

they have," Thiessen said, adding that it was an honour to be a mentor for some of the younger students seeking new ways to express themselves. "It was an incredible experience, and doing that really helped me see how much more community we need for young people here."

> BTHC FOUNDATION, FROM PG. 2

garden and healing courtyard.

Once all of that has been accomplished, work will then begin on renovation of the existing hospital space.

As of last month, work on the new in-patient unit and the energy centre was mostly complete, shared MacNair, who noted the energy centre is especially vital to ensure the hospital is fully powered.

"They are monsters that are going to provide the backup power," said MacNair, who also showed some interior shots showing the new in-patient unit looking pretty finished.

"The community services building still looks a little rough ... not as far along," he noted.

"While all of this is going on, renovation planning is heavily underway," McNair added. "The end is in sight. We are going to have an eco-cardiography unit, so that is very exciting. This is something that's going to bring a lot of care closer to home."

Eunice Suderman, who is a palliative care nurse at BTHC, also offered some comments on that program.

"It's important to me to deliver compassionate and high quality care to each person," she said. "We work as a team with doctors and home care workers and volunteers and spiritual care and social workers and physiotherapists and occupational therapists ... it's just a whole team that works together.

"By supporting a palliative care program here at Boundary Trails Health Centre, you are supporting a program that strives to include a patient's quality of life."

As the expansion project progresses, the foundation will continue to be in close contact with hospital directors to keep up with the equipment needs, Friesen emphasized.

"We really want to make sure that we do our due diligence and give us truly the equipment needs that are required," he said. "And as the expansion part gets opened up, there will be some other equipment needs."

Friesen also noted they are working on developing a longer term strategic plan.

"This foundation, in our view, it has stepped up to a different level. We're now not working with a few thousand dollars—we're working with millions of dollars of community money, and we want to make sure that these funds are properly spent and properly put to use, so we're working on getting some outside help with a strategic plan ... something that's not just for this year, next year, but goes beyond ..."

"We need a plan in place that the new board members coming on can see what the foundation is here for because it's not just this one expansion," he said. "This really stepped us up to another level. It was a learning experience for everyone of us on the board."

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



• DON'T MIND THE MESS

Emotional baggage: now boarding

Years ago, I was roped into doing a skit at church. You know the kind—something meaningful and mildly awkward, performed under harsh fluorescent lights with a microphone that squeals just as you find your confidence.

The skit started with me walking across the stage, toting an empty bag. As I journeyed, I picked up blocks labeled “fear,” “regret,” “shame,” “resentment,” and “worry.” Classic church skit stuff.

By the time I was halfway across the stage, I was lugging this bloated, overstuffed bag like a woman who had misunderstood the airline’s carry-on policy. Eventually, weighed down and stuck, I gave it all up to God in dramatic fashion. Exit stage right. Everyone clapped. I was relieved it was over.

It was a simple object lesson—but one I’ve been trying to live ever since. And let me tell you, living it is a whole lot messier than acting it out in front of a congregation armed with coffee and bulletins.

Some people seem to glide through life like seasoned travelers—packing light, carrying only the good stuff:

sweet memories, hard-earned lessons, love. And then there are the rest of us. We pick up everything along the way. That rude comment someone made in 2009? Toss it in. The time we embarrassed ourselves in front of the whole class? Yep, pack it. Every heartbreak, every disappointment, every sleepless night worrying about things we can’t control—we haul it all.

We become emotional hoarders, stuffing our metaphorical bags until the zipper won’t close and we have to sit on it just to get through the day. And sometimes, we do just that. We sit on our baggage, stuck in one spot, unsure how to move forward without spilling our mess all over the floor.

Life doesn’t wait for us to figure it out. It just keeps handing us more to carry: responsibilities we didn’t ask for, losses we weren’t ready for, fears that sneak in when we’re too tired to argue. Some of it we choose; some of it we inherit. All of it adds weight.

But here’s what I’ve learned, usually the hard way: the real work is learning how to unpack. It’s not glamorous. No one claps. There’s no spotlight. It’s just you, sitting on the floor with your emotional clutter, picking up each item and asking, “Do I still need this? Or have I just gotten used to carrying it?”

Sometimes the answer surprises you.

There is no one-size-fits-all method to letting go. There’s only grace and trial and error. And the occasional ugly cry in your car. But there is wisdom in knowing that not everything deserves to come with you. Not the cruel words spoken in haste. Not the guilt you’ve already apologized for ten times over. Not the story you keep telling yourself about why you’re not

enough.

Here’s the kicker: we often fear that letting go of these things will make us lose part of who we are. Like if we stop carrying our pain, we’ll forget how strong we’ve been. But I promise you, strength doesn’t live in the pain. It lives in the healing. In the choosing to love anyway. In the decision to hope again.

And love? Love makes the baggage light.

When we fill our bags with love—real love, the kind that forgives and laughs and shows up anyway—everything else shifts. Regret softens. Fear quiets. The road ahead doesn’t look so steep. And maybe we even find ourselves walking a little taller, breathing a little deeper, ready to keep going.

So, what’s in your bag?

Maybe today’s the day you open it up, start sorting through the mess, and decide that love—not fear, not shame, not the past—is the only thing you really need to bring along.

And if you need help, I know a woman who once did a church skit about this. She’s still learning, too.

** Editors note: Lori Penner passed away last week. This is the final column she submitted before her death, and we feel it’s only fitting to share it in her memory as one last offering of wisdom and reflection on the shared experiences that connect us all.*

Lori spent decades covering the stories that mattered to the Pembina Valley. She believed in the power of community journalism, and she practised it with care, compassion, and an unwavering sense of purpose.

She left us far too soon. She will be missed—deeply, and by many.



By Lori Penner

All columns and letters published on our Get Heard pages are the personal opinions of the submitting writers. They are not objective news articles, nor are they necessarily the viewpoint of the Voice.

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MCI board decides to pause operations for 25/26

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna is pushing pause on operations for the 2025-2026 school year.

The board of directors of the Christian private school made the decision a few weeks ago to suspend programming as of the end of June.

"We're not going to be offering any classes for this fall," said CEO Chris Harms, noting it was a difficult decision but one that has been looming for some months now. "It was kind of the last resort. The hope was to continue forward.

"Lots of effort has been put into reducing tuition, finding people to cover the costs of transportation, some of those types of things, hoping to give a boost for enrolment," he said. "But we just weren't able to commit to moving forward. There wasn't enough interest or commitment in the community for us to do that."

MCI had 45 students enrolled in classes this year. Two decades ago, the school had 195 students.

"It's been a slow, continual decline from then until now," Harms said, noting some years they've dropped by as many as 30-50 students, but in recent years it's been a much more gradual decrease.



MCIBLUES.NET

The future of Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna is uncertain. Due to declining enrolment and rising costs, the board of directors has decided not to offer any programming this fall.

The school has been in operation since 1889, offering an Anabaptist-rooted education to Gr. 9-12 students.

It's owned by a collection of churches, many of whom are have an aging membership, Harms said.

"Many of the churches that are left remaining have seen similar decreases in attendance, a decrease in young families with prospective students," he said, citing it as a contributing factor to MCI's enrolment struggles.

And even as enrolment has dipped, expenses have continued to rise.

"Tuition has not gone up at the same pace that costs have," Harms said.

"And in order to keep tuition from not climbing dramatically, it did require an increase in donations to make that happen."

The decision to close the doors affects over two dozen staff, both teachers and administrative workers.

Harms said the focus now is on deciding next steps.

"Our board of directors is the one that made the decision to pause op-

erations, and so that triggers a meeting of the [church] delegates," he explained. "They've got a meeting planned in early July where they'll look at the future of the organization and what does that look like.

"I ask that the community would continue to pray for wisdom for the leadership group that's going to have to make decisions and work through this process."

Measles exposures at BTHC, Winkler clinic

By Voice staff

Public health officials are warning of new measles exposure sites in our area:

- Boundary Trails Health Centre emergency department on June 19 from 9:40 a.m. to 3:20 p.m., from 10:10 p.m. to 1:20 a.m. on June 20, and on June 21 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Anyone who was at this location on June 19 and 20 is asked to monitor for symptoms until July 11. Anyone who was at this location on June 21 is asked to monitor for symptoms until July 13.

- C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre Urgent Care in Winkler on June 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anyone who was at this location is asked to monitor for symptoms until July 9.

Public health is asking anyone who was in these locations during these times to check their immunization records and ensure they are up to date with measles vaccine (MMR or MMRV). Contact your health care provider if symptoms arise.

Information about symptoms and measles vaccination can be found at www.gov.mb.ca/health/public-health/diseases/measles.html.

Letter policy

The Voice welcomes letters from readers on local and regional issues and concerns.

Please keep your letters short (excessively long letters are less likely to be published), on-topic, and respectful.

The Voice reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject any submission.

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

Send your letters to us by e-mail at news@winklermordenvoice.ca.

Public Utilities Board

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to share your views about the rate application filed by Manitoba Public Insurance

The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPI) has filed the 2026 General Rate Application before the Public Utilities Board (Board) for approval of Basic Autopac vehicle insurance rates and premiums effective on April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2027.

For further details, please contact MPI at inquiries@mpi.mb.ca or visit the Board's website at www.pubmanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in learning more about this rate application, you are encouraged to attend the hearing, observe the hearing via live streaming, or provide your perspectives through the Board's online comment tool.

If you wish to speak at the hearing or make a written submission, please contact the Board Secretary, Dr. Darren Christle at 204-945-2638 or toll free 1-866-854-3698, no later than **September 30, 2025**.

For more information, visit www.pubmanitoba.ca.

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A public hearing on the proposed rate application will be held beginning:

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 9 a.m.

Please view the hearing via the PUB website link.

Morden's youth employment leader helping teens step into the workforce

Manitoba Youth Job Centre helps rural youth build job skills

By Annaliese Meier

A familiar face has returned to the Manitoba Youth Job Centre (MYJC) this summer to help teens and young adults build workplace skills and find employment opportunities in Morden and beyond.

Anna Nikkel, a psychology and animal systems student at the University of Manitoba, is back for a second year as the Morden-based Youth Engagement Leader for the provincial MYJC program. A longtime resident of Morden, Nikkel serves not only her hometown but also nearby communities such as Winkler, Carman, and Portage la Prairie.

"My role is to assist students and youth with any employment needs and direct them to where they can look for work in the future," she said.

Funded by the Manitoba government, MYJC provides

free employment support to youth aged 13 to 29 across rural and northern Manitoba. Services include resume preparation, interview assistance, job search strategies, and career development support. For younger teens, ages 13 to 16, the centre offers the Odd Job Squad — a supervised program designed to give youth hands-on work and volunteer experience.

Nikkel remembers taking part in an Odd Job Squad event as a middle school student, calling it a turning point in her own job journey. "Having that experience on my resume helped me when looking for part-time work," she said.

This year, MYJC is operating out of eight hubs across the province, with locations in Morden, Brandon, Selkirk, Thompson, The Pas, Steinbach, St-Pierre Jolys and Flin Flon. Each centre supports the surrounding area through job fairs, community events, and tailored assistance.

The Morden office, located at 1-160 Stephen St. beside Service Canada, is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed from 12-1 p.m.). Youth can reach Nikkel at 204-870-2945 or by email at Annabella.nikkel@gov.mb.ca.

While the MYJC no longer directly places youth in jobs, the team helps build resumes, explore career paths and navigate online job boards. Participation in Odd Job Squad events — such as community clean-ups, freezie sales and car washes — provides early work experience and encourages youth to develop teamwork, customer service and time management skills.

"For those unsure what they want to do for school or work, we provide tools and guidance to help them explore their options," Nikkel said. "And we're located right inside the Manitoba Training and Employment Services building, so post-secondary students can also access additional supports."

MYJC benefits the broader community too, by supporting local employers with job-ready candidates. Residents and businesses can also request help from Odd Job Squad participants for light tasks such as weeding, window washing or garden cleanup.

"Employers appreciate that today's youth are tech-savvy, adaptable and eager to learn," Nikkel added. "Giving them a chance helps build strong, community-minded workers for the future."

With many students expressing interest last year but limited events available, Nikkel said her 2025 goal is to organize more Odd Job Squad events with a greater focus on



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Anna Nikkel is serving as the 2025 Youth Engagement Leader for the Manitoba Youth Job Centre in Morden.

"GIVING [YOUTH] A CHANCE HELPS BUILD STRONG, COMMUNITY-MINDED WORKERS FOR THE FUTURE."

community service.

"The more support and requests we get from the community, the more opportunities we can offer," she said.

Youth interested in joining must complete an intake form and, if under 16, a parent consent form. A Social Insurance Number is required, and those planning to work outside the Odd Job Squad must also complete the Young Worker Readiness Certificate through SAFE Work Manitoba.

Nikkel encourages anyone considering their first job to stop by.

"Even if you already have a resume, we can help make it better," she said. "Participating in just one event or volunteering can give you something to build on — and that can make all the difference."



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Do you have a suggestion for our news team? Is there someone you would like to see recognized in the newspaper for their accomplishments - athletic, academic or community service.

PVLIP launches Community Activity Checklist

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Pembina Valley Local Immigration Partnership (PVLIP) is tackling part of its new Community Action Plan this summer with a fun challenge to area residents.

PVLIP has launched a Community Activity Checklist and is inviting everyone to have a go at completing it between now and Aug. 31.

"We wanted to help the general public recognize the ways in which they can be welcoming and inclusive to newcomers," said PVLIP coordinator Elaine Burton Saindon.

Fostering inclusion is priority number one on the group's new strategic plan. Under this heading, they're taking steps to help communities address racism, embrace diversity, and promote mutual understanding.

"We have so many opportunities to do that this summer," Burton Saindon said. "There's lots of opportunities to check out a variety of cultural events, whether it's here in the Pembina Valley or in other communities."

But you don't have to travel far to complete the checklist—it includes a host of activities that anyone can do to explore new cultures close to home, including things like visiting a restaurant from a culture other than your own, learning more about another culture or

religion, watching a foreign language movie, or getting to know someone who was born in another country.

Each checklist item has three boxes to check off indicating whether you completed it on your own, with other people, or have encouraged others to do it.

"One of our goals is mutual understanding, so how do we do that? Well, let's bring a friend along or let's share it with somebody," said Burton Saindon. "Maybe you're a senior who can't go out easily, but you could send this information to your grandchildren. There's lots of layers in which you could help promote these opportunities."

To further aid people in finding ways to explore the cultural diversity of the region, PVLIP has created a detailed events calendar (pvlip.ca/events/) outlining the multicultural activities happening across southern Manitoba this summer.

"We have tried our best to find as many local cultural events as possible," Burton Saindon said. "And we also encourage people to submit their events, because with a lot of things it's word of mouth. Maybe it's a particular cultural group that has a picnic every year in the park, but nobody knows about it unless they've got a friend in that group. And maybe there's a new-comer who

Have you visited a restaurant from a culture other than your own?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you used a business (other than restaurant) that you believe is owned or managed by an immigrant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you attended a cultural event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you positively engaged on social media with organizations or individuals from other cultures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you tried to learn more about another culture or religion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you learned how to greet a newcomer in their mother tongue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you watched a foreign-language movie?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you made a friend with someone who was born in another country?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you volunteered for a community organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TINYURL.COM/PVLIPCHECKLIST

would be invited to that group if they knew about it."

People are welcome to fill out and submit the checklist multiple times if they're going through the items in different ways.

"We'll collect as many responses as possible and then we'll collect that data and see what kind of a report comes back," Burton Saindon said. "If somebody learned something new or they were able to make a new friend along the way, we'd love to get that kind of information back so we can share it with the communities."

To access the checklist, head to tinyurl.com/PVLIPchecklist.

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arts & culture



A multicultural theme for this year's Faces of Winkler

By Ashleigh Viveiros

For years, the annual *Faces of Winkler* art show at Winkler Arts and Culture has shone a spotlight on the leaders and everyday Winklerites that together weave the mosaic of our community.

This year's exhibition is no exception, but the Park St. gallery decided to freshen up the popular exhibition with a new, multicultural theme in partnership with the Pembina Valley Local Immigration Initiative (PVLIP).

Each *Faces of Winkler: Stories of our Neighbours* display highlights the relationship between two Winkler residents through photography, art, and storytelling, said Jered Hildebrand, gallery executive director and also one of the participating photographers.

"We really wanted to focus on the

relationships in our community of neighbours who happen to be newcomers and people who are long-time if not lifelong Winkler residents," he explained.

"It was very much a shoulder-tapping experience" to find these different relationships to share, Hildebrand said, noting they worked closely with PVLIP on this project. "We've got some great stories, some beautiful stories that we were able to include."

There are seven pairs highlighted: Kossivi (John) Assagba and Chris Kalansky, Samuel Campos and Wes Harder, Shan Pather and Sue Driedger, Tanya Chateaneuf and Lili Krushel, Tim Goertzen and Binaw Malume, Luella Seabaugh and Lemlem Teklebrhan Abrha, and Joyne Casey and Anastasiia Sirenko.

Capturing these relationships



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

From left: Photographer Walter Dueck, Samuel Campos, Wes Harder, and artist Olga Krahn at the *Faces of Winkler* launch last week. Left: Co-workers Joyne Casey and Anastasiia Sirenko are also among the pairs whose stories are featured in the show.

through art are artists Olga Krahn, Sally Dueck, Lizzy Reimer, Taylor Hildebrand and Jane Unruh Thiesen, and photographers Walter Dueck, Lili Krushel, Kevin Driedger, Paulo Zarate, and Hildebrand.

PVLIP coordinator Elaine Burton Saindon said the show lined up perfectly with the agency's work in fostering inclusion and acceptance in communities across the region.

"This was a great opportunity to put both of those concepts together ... showing people as a 'Face' but also the connection and the sense of belonging that it brings by noting who is a local person who has mentored or worked with or volunteered with somebody else, a newcomer, to help their journey go better."

hind the show.

"It's just a great way to highlight the people of the community, and I really like this one where it's really highlighting relationships," Driedger said. "It helps recognize that the newcomers are in the community as our friends, our co-workers, as our neighbours; they are as much a part of Winkler's life as the people who have been here for many years."

Sam Campos and Wes Harder's friendship blossomed over many cups of coffee at Mina's Café, a local Brazilian eatery run by Campos and his wife.

"Not only do I enjoy the food, but I wanted to support him," Harder said, noting it was an honour for their friendship to be featured in the show.

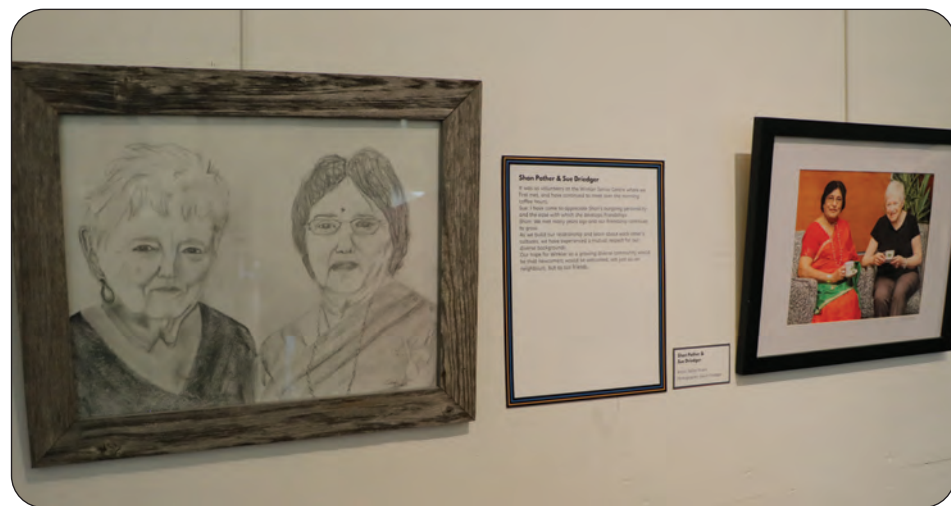
Campos feels likewise.

"I feel so happy about it ... because we're trying to be part of this community, so to be recognized in this way, it's amazing."

It's such an interesting theme for an art show, observed Harder.

"Winkler's becoming so much more diverse, with lots of different cultures. And you know what—we have our back stories that are different, but we're actually not that much different. We're actually all very much the same. We have common goals and interests and shared passions. And I think that's what it's all about."

Artist Jane Unruh Thiesen said she's painted portraits in the past for fun, but felt the weight of capturing the



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

The friendship of Shan Pather and Sue Driedger is shared through art, photography, and storytelling in the 2025 *Faces of Winkler* exhibit.

SHARING STORIES

Kevin Driedger, a former PVLIP employee, was thrilled to photograph his mother, Sue, and her friend Shan for the show.

"We partnered with the gallery and so I did a lot of the work of finding pairs of people we wanted to highlight," he shared, noting he thought of his mom and her friend right way. "I thought it would be great to feature some seniors, to show some different kinds of friendships."

The two live in neighbouring senior's complexes and can often be found enjoying a cup of tea together.

This is Driedger's second time participating in *Faces of Winkler* as a contributing artist. He loves the idea be-

Continued on page 9



Winkler, Morden farmers' markets open for the season

By Lorne Stelmach

It is farmers market season again in both Morden and Winkler, with a couple changes in each city this year.

The Morden Farmers' Market has new organizers with three vendors stepping up to take over from Many Hands Resource Centre, while the Winkler Farmers' Market has a new location with its move to the Central Station Community Centre parking lot.

"Many Hands did a really good job with it in recent years, but it was too busy for them, so they decided to ask if someone else would be willing to do it," said Lorna Epp, a Watkins rep who is now working with Kayla Wiebe of Border Hills Honey and Karen Friesen of Valleyfield Acres in organizing the Morden market.

Epp said the three of them have been involved with the market for a number of years now, so it seemed to be a good fit for them to take charge as they have a good feel for what needs to be done.

"We know what it's like to be a vendor, so it makes sense for us to do the organizing," she said. "We've been here many years and smiled at many

customers ... we've built relationships with people. It does make sense because you're more involved and invested in it."

Once again, the market will be involved with the food voucher program through Direct Farm Manitoba that supports people by giving them access to market goods.

"It also benefits the producers ... so it's good support for an event like this," said Epp. "It's to benefit the community and support our producers and growers and local people."

And Epp noted the number of vendors will increase as the season progresses.

"It's going to be business as usual every Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m.," she said. The market operates at the corner of 8th St. and Stephen St. in downtown Morden.

"It's a beautiful thing. It benefits the community, and it benefits the people, and it helps keep things local ... absolutely local is important," Epp said. "We want our community and our local people to thrive."

Meanwhile, Matt Friesen and his wife Janelle continue to organize the Winkler market even though they are not directly involved any longer as



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS AND LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Left: Morden Farmers' Market co-organizer Lorna Epp helps a customer at the market's opening day last week. Above: Nettie, Tyler, and Jayleah Friesen of Mini Acres Strawberries at the Winkler Farmers' Market's first day. Below: The Winkler market has moved to the parking lot of Central Station Community Centre downtown this summer.



vendors. Previously held in the curling rink parking lot, the market had to change its location this year because of the construction at the arena.

"We had one week under our belts, and it seemed to turn out pretty well," Friesen said a few days after opening for the season on June 24. "We had a good number of vendors to start the season ... there are a few who didn't have product yet, so there will be a few more coming as the season progresses."

Friesen said it was a good fit for them to relocate to Central Station as they have worked with the community centre the last couple of years with

the food currency program as well.

"It just really seemed to make sense to move over there both for their clientele and for the market as a whole," he said. "There's a good number of families who have gotten on to that list through Central Station ... that really just works well for the market."

"Being convenient for the customer is equally important," he suggested, noting he likes the visibility of the location being right off Main Street.

"A lot of people mentioned that they saw that the market was happening ... they hadn't necessarily seen any advertising for it," he said. "So it seems to be a good location for traffic and convenience."

Friesen said they have a core group of vendors who are involved in the market every year.

"Our produce vendors it seems are mostly returning vendors. Most of them have been there a long time," he said. "There's a couple new ones coming as well."

The Winkler market runs every Tuesday from 4 to 6 p.m.

> FACES OF WINKLER, FROM PG. 8

burgeoning relationship of her subjects, Luella Seabaugh and Lemlem Teklebrhan Abrha, who met through Regional Connections' Language Buddies program earlier this year.

"We met at Bethel Park and had a nice hour where we just chatted, so I got to know them a little bit, and then I took some reference photos,"

she shared. "I like how both of them were smiling; they both look so joyful, and that really connected them."

The duo have grown close over the last couple of months as Abrha works on her English skills and Seabaugh gets the opportunity to learn more about her friend's Eritrean culture.

"My hope is that more people will be open to accepting and helping newcomers feel welcome and wanted," Seabaugh said. "Everyone can offer a friendly smile and greeting when meeting someone who may look a bit different than us."

Faces of Winkler will be on display at the gallery through to the end of August.

Heritage Farms cuts the ribbon on its taproom

By Lorne Stelmach

He comes from a local Winkler farming family with a long history here, but Johnny Trinke is now producing a different kind of harvest.

A founder and co-owner of Heritage Farms Brewing Company, Trinke joined others last Friday in celebrating the official opening of their taproom in the basement of 400 Memorial Drive.

Trinke looks forward to their business being a boost to the business sector and a gathering point for the community.

"I think we are continuing to show the province that Winkler is not only a hub for community and economic growth and business but just a great place to live, raise kids and take advantage of everything we have to offer here," he said. "Hopefully Heritage Farms Brewing Company can play a small part in that and helping bring wonderful people to our community."

They first acquired the former Twist-

er's restaurant building in February, and a lot of work and planning has gone into its renovation.

"We've been working to renovate it ever since. First we started off by renovating the main floor, which is where Dos Banderas currently operates their restaurant," noted Trinke. "A lot of people don't know that there is a basement here, but we've retrofitted it into a kind of speakeasy style sports bar."

"We started selling Heritage Farms beer in Liquor Marts throughout Manitoba in October of 2024 ... we had been developing our recipes and getting our brand package in order for about a year before that," he said.

"It feels like it's really coming to a head here ... about a couple years of dreams and working hard ... now it's coming together. It's quite exciting," said Trinke, noting the initial response has been encouraging. "Just the reception we've already had from speaking to people in the community ... and then also engaging and interacting with our social medias."



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

On Friday, Johnny Trinke cut the ribbon on Heritage Farms Brewing Company's new taproom, located in the basement of 400 Memorial Dr.

They have three signature brews: the Farmer's Daughter Blonde Ale, Harvest Pale Ale, and Hired Hand Brown Ale. They also just launched a new lime blonde ale as well as an exclusive cider in partnership with Dead Horse Cider, and they are also offering a few cocktail specials as well.

Their plans for the place and for their business don't end there.

"We're currently working to fully build our production facility here in Winkler and then we'll be able to

expand our product line and then increase our capacity as well too, so that will be able to bring good beer, good stories and a good brand to folks," Trinke said.

He now just looks forward to seeing their place become a hub for the community.

"I strongly believe that this is going to be a good thing for the community and just a great place for people to get together."

Regional Connections reports on "busiest year ever"

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It was another "busiest year ever" at Regional Connections Immigrant Services, the agency reported at its annual general meeting last month.

Executive director Steve Reynolds shared that they saw "significant year-over-year growth" in terms of programs delivered, clients served, and community engagement.

"We saw over 5,000 clients," he said, noting that includes 1,760 new clients and over 4,000 returning ones. Some newcomers to Canada make use of the agency's services for several years, depending on which programs they're involved in.

Regional Connections recently wrapped up the final year of its five-year funding cycle with its primary funder, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. They've since begun a new, three-year funding cycle.

Looking back, it's amazing how much they've grown over the last

handful of years, Reynolds said.

"Through that [five-year] period, Regional Connections has grown by 143 per cent and added several core programs ... as well as undertaking several major grant projects under Canadian Heritage to promote welcoming communities and to combat racism and discrimination."

The agency has also broadened its service area considerably.

"We now have local office sites or regularly scheduled itinerant staffing in Morris, Rosenort, Carman, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Selkirk, Gimli, and Arborg as well as continuing from our existing sites in Altona, Dauphin, Morden, and Winkler," Reynolds shared.

Reflecting on the success of their myriad programs—which range from settlement and employment services to refugee assistance, English classes, and more—Reynolds shared a few highlights.

"We are honestly excited about everything, but the employment pro-

gram is maybe an underrated success," he said, noting many of those services are open to all, not just newcomers. "They had almost 800 clients last year and just a lot of success in finding local employment."

Of note especially is the success of the program's professional bridging service, which helps internationally educated professionals secure jobs more in line with their credentials and navigate Canadian licensing processes.

"It's a loss for everybody and for the community if these people are underemployed," Reynolds said. "So that's been a big success."

The HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) has also done great work in building relationships in local immigrant communities.

"Home visitors go to visit the mothers, usually, of pre-schoolers once a week. It's a great program," Reynolds said, noting the goal there is to help families prepare their child for school

while also giving parents the opportunity meet other parents and learn how they can better support their child ahead of them starting Kindergarten. "We've been delivering it for coming up on five years now and it's grown and really meets the needs, especially in communities where there's no public transportation because it's pretty common then that one of the parents is kind of stuck at home ... so it addresses the isolation of the mom and helps prepare the child for Kindergarten so they're more school ready. It's been a real success."

Looking to the future, Reynolds said they're focused on maintaining their current level of programming.

"As newcomers continue to arrive, it's a lot of work just to maintain the services or the capacity we have," he said, noting the federal government's plans to limit immigration levels will most likely affect future funding for these types of programs.

Continued on page 11

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Blumenort Mennonite Church marking a century of worship

By Lorne Stelmach

The Blumenort Mennonite Church in Rosetown is marking its 100th anniversary with events and services July 12-13, and organizers note how the congregation is not only surviving but thriving.

"We have this little rural church that is still going strong ... and especially when you see all the children, that's a good sign for the future," said Karla Fehr, a Sunday school teacher and key organizer of the celebrations.

The events kick off that Saturday with a golf tournament at Oakview golf course in Gretna. A highlight of the day will be a bus tour that will depart at 2 p.m. and go to a variety of significant sites in the area.

"The way our church was set up, a hundred years ago, people lived in the various villages in the west re-

serve, so there were congregations that met in many of the different villages," explained Fehr. "They would only gather as a larger body once or twice a year.

"So we're going to visit a number of those original sites. I don't know if any of the original buildings are still there. There might be one or two, but we know where they were and know some of the history."

The Sunday will start with a choir practice at 9:30 a.m. followed by a worship service at 10:30 a.m.

"Singing has always been a very big part of our Sunday mornings," noted Fehr, who said things will continue with a lunch at noon then another service at 2 p.m. where they will have more music and focus on the history of the church. It will conclude then with faspas.

A history book that was written by



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The Blumenort Mennonite Church is marking its 100th anniversary July 12-13.

Peter Zacharias for the 60th anniversary will also be available for people to purchase. It outlines a few key moments in the church's history, such as when the decision was made to become one congregation sometime in the 1960s

"There's also been congregations that were further away," noted Fehr, citing the example of the Wingham congregation in Elm Creek.

The church in Rosetown was built in 1965, and Fehr observed how much history there is connected to the congregation over time.

"How many baptisms would have been performed? How many marriages and how many funerals?" she wondered. "There's so many families that have been a part of this congregation ... I've spoken to a few of the young couples ... they have family who were founders, and that is five generations ago."

The church continues to be a vital hub for the community.

"I grew up in the Winkler area, but my husband grew up in this church ... and when we got married, we were farming in this area, so we made a conscious decision that we would join this church so that we could get to know more of the people in the community," Fehr shared.

"When people first came in 1923 or 1924, they came from such hardship," she added. "The church was key. They would get together to be thankful. They had such hardship in the old country and again in the new country because they had to leave everything behind ... they had to struggle really hard to get settled here.

"The focus was being thankful that they were together and they were alive and that they could still worship God, and that's still the case. Worship is the key."



One of the original church buildings.

> REGIONAL CONNECTIONS, FROM PG. 10

Still, there is increased funding coming for things like language training.

"A lot of our language program is federally-funded and they just focus on permanent residents," Reynolds said. "They did have an exception that Ukrainians who have arrived on a work permit were eligible for those services the past three years, but that exception has ended ... so that's been a huge concern. But I'm really happy the province is stepping up and adding some funding to our language program."

It will allow that program to con-

tinue to offer English classes to hundreds of people—from spring 2024 to spring 2025, they had 1,119 students registered students.

Another highlight coming up is the agency's expansion in Morden.

"We've outgrown our space in Morden quite awhile ago," Reynolds said, sharing that they're going to move into a spacious new building going up beside Gardenland Co-op.

"Right now we're fundraising and looking for support for the capital costs for us," he said, explaining that while they will be leasing their space in the building's first floor they still

need to cover the costs of finishing off the interior to suit their needs. "Construction will start very soon and we hope to move there in August 2026.

"It'll have quite a bit more classroom space and childcare space; those are both really small at our current location. We've had waitlists in childcare often in Morden, which prevented people from taking classes, or having to wait longer to take English classes, so we're excited about that being better.

"We're always so happy to be working in these communities," Reynolds said of Regional Connections' entire service area. "I can say the partner-

ships are amazing at all levels.

"And we're always looking for volunteers," he added. "We have some opportunities like community mentors or language buddies or conversation group hosts.

"Having community members be part of welcoming newcomers and helping newcomers build skills English skills but also build their social network, make some friends, meet some people, makes them feel more at home. It supports the newcomer, it supports integration, and we end up with more cohesive communities."

Learn more about how you can get involved online at regionalconnections.ca.

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sports & recreation

Winkler Storm battle Bonivital to a 2-2 tie

By Ashleigh Viveiros

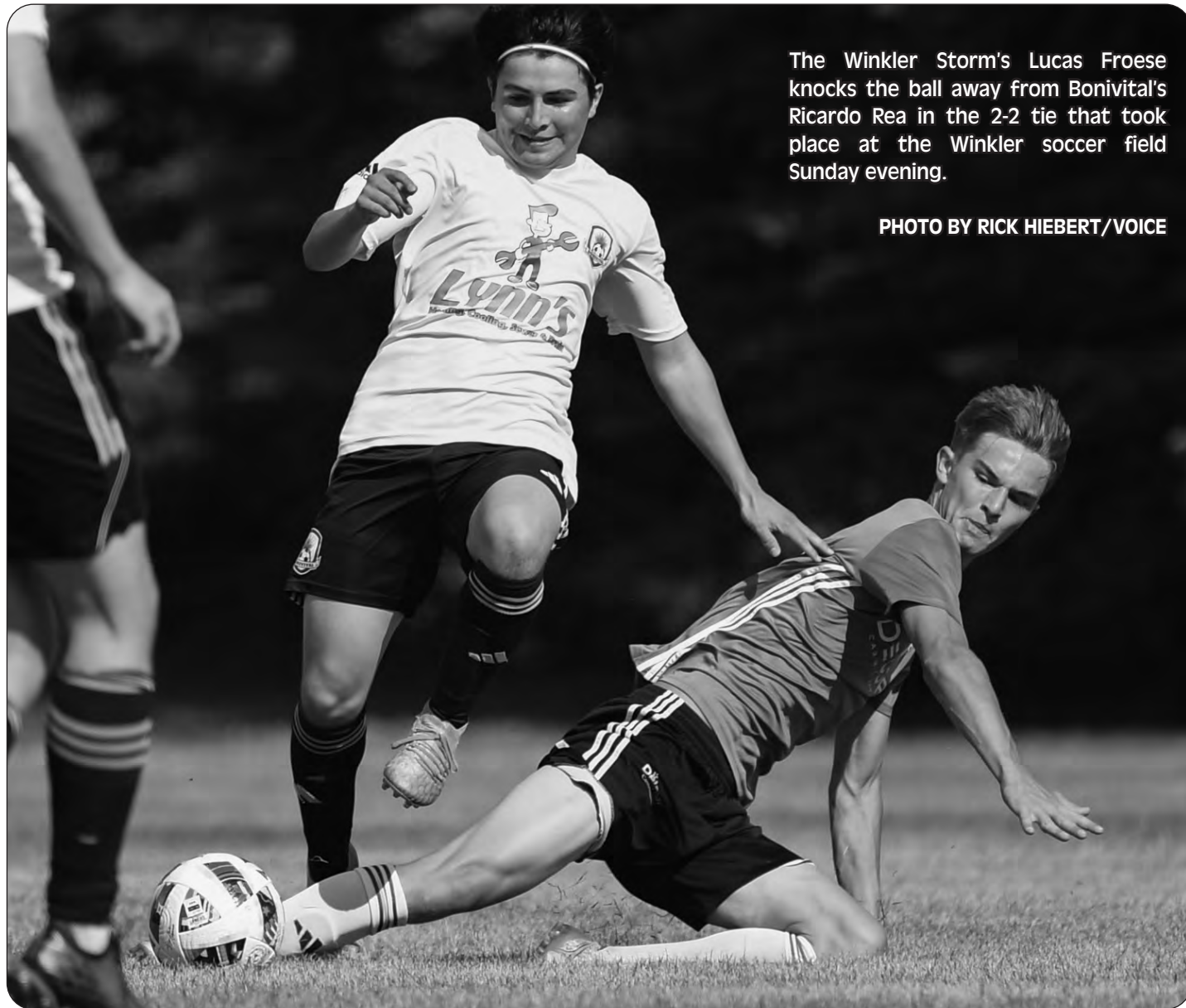
The Winkler Storm finally got a full home game in the books with their 2-2 draw against Bonivital 2 last weekend.

The previous two attempts at home openers this summer had either been cancelled due the opposing team not showing up or heavy rain putting an early end to them, but Sunday's match went the distance.

Scoring for Winkler was Matt Wolfe with a volley out of the air, assisted by Emil Rode, and Kevin Neufeld with a header that was sent his way by David Green.

It brings the Storm's record 1-2-1, which has them in the bottom half of the Manitoba Major Soccer League Division 1 standings, though they have a couple of games in hand.

Winkler hosts Winnipeg FC Sunday, July 6, at 5 p.m. and UDM July 13 before entering a couple of weeks of away games against SWB July 15 and Niverville Force SC July 20.



The Winkler Storm's Lucas Froese knocks the ball away from Bonivital's Ricardo Rea in the 2-2 tie that took place at the Winkler soccer field Sunday evening.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

PV Orioles in third place after trio of wins

By Lorne Stelmach

Three straight wins including a sweep of their Sunday doubleheader lifted the Pembina Valley Orioles into third place as the MJBL team heads into the home stretch of the regular season.

The Altona Bisons meanwhile continue to struggle as they remain winless through 19 games, while the Orioles sit at 10-9 and are six games back of first place.

The Orioles had trailed by as much as five runs against Interlake last Wednesday, but Pembina Valley rallied

with seven runs on four hits in the top of the seventh inning for the 11-9 victory. Ethan Klassen went two for five with three RBIs.

Pembina Valley then outthit St. Boniface 10-6 overall Sunday to post a 6-1 win in game one of the doubleheader. Brayden Fehr allowed two hits and one run through four innings, and Owen Goertzen then had three innings with four hits and no runs.

The Orioles then ran away with game two as they collected 10 hits on their way to the 13-0 victory. Goertzen drove in five runs on two hits including a three run homer in the fourth

inning.

Against Winnipeg South, the Bisons rallied with a pair of runs in the top of the seventh but came up just short with a 3-2 loss. Dillan Thiessen recorded 12 outs in surrendering just four hits and two runs over four innings.

Hits were 7-4 in favour of Elmwood then Sunday as the Giants edged the Bisons 6-4 in game one of the doubleheader. Reece Fehr allowed five hits and five runs in four innings on the mound.

In game two, Elmwood blew the game wide open with eight runs on

four hits in the third and then another nine on four hits in the fourth with the game being called in the fifth inning.

Altona was set to host Carillon Tuesday for a Canada Day doubleheader before closing things out with another doubleheader this Sunday against Interlake and a final game versus St. Boniface next Wednesday.

Pembina Valley was to face Winnipeg South Wednesday and then St. Boniface Friday followed by a Sunday doubleheader versus Carillon, who then have one more with the Orioles next Tuesday.

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What's *Your* story?

Mud Hens down Cardinals



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

The Morden Mud Hens hosted the Carman Cardinals Sunday afternoon. The game was called after four innings due to the 12-0 score for Morden. With the season winding down, the Border Baseball League standings at press time had the Winkler Whips in first place in the East Division with a 6-3 record followed by Morden in second at 5-5-1, the Altona Bisons in third at 3-4-2, and Carman in last place at 4-5-1. This week, Morden plays in Altona Friday night and then hosts the Whips next week Tuesday. Winkler, meanwhile, hosts the Holland A's Thursday and then plays in Carman Friday night.



Father-son team Rick and Ryan Denbow in the Team Roping event.

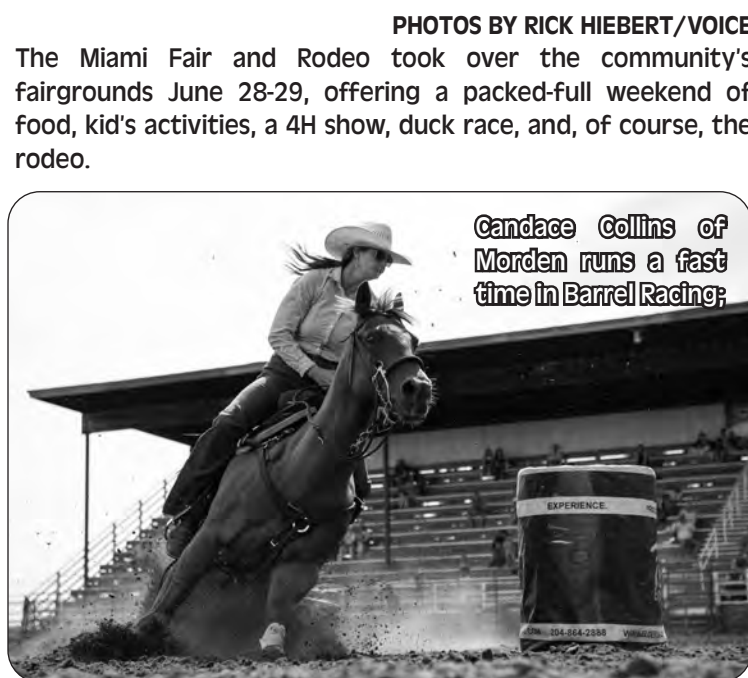


This historic stagecoach was pulled out of storage to mark 50 years since the famous Miami Mule Derby;

Miami celebrates



Rachelle Boyes throws her loop in the Breakaway event.



Candace Collins of Morden runs a fast time in Barrel Racing;



A bull riding competitor hangs on tight.

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

The Miami Fair and Rodeo took over the community's fairgrounds June 28-29, offering a packed-full weekend of food, kid's activities, a 4H show, duck race, and, of course, the rodeo.

Classifieds Announcements The Winkler Morden Voice

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CAREERS



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CAREERS



**Morris
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**TOWN OF MORRIS
 Invites applications for the position of
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The Town of Morris is seeking a highly organized and enthusiastic individual who, under the direction of the CAO, will be responsible for overseeing the comprehensive planning, organization, coordination, scheduling, upkeep, and management of the Town of Morris' recreation facilities and related departments.

Facilities and areas of responsibility include the Morris Multiplex, Morris Community Pool, Morris Splash Park, Morris Baseball Diamonds, Willow Park, Stagecoach Park, Morris Area Recreation, and the Morris Daycare Centre.

Qualifications and skills necessary include:

- Post-secondary education in Recreation Management or a related field and/or a suitable combination of education and experience. Experience in a municipal environment would be considered an asset.
- Demonstrated experience in the development, implementation, and delivery of a wide range of recreation services.
- Proven budgeting and financial management experience.
- Experience managing recreation facilities with an understanding of local recreation, culture, and tourism is considered an asset.
- Demonstrated experience in leadership, staff supervision, and training.
- Strong communication skills with the ability to interact effectively with the public, staff, and stakeholders.
- Ability to problem solve, make decisions, demonstrate initiative, and work as a flexible team player.
- Experience with facility maintenance, including HVAC and outdoor grounds upkeep, is considered an asset.

Job Details:

Full-time (70 hours biweekly). Salary based on qualifications. A municipal benefits package is available after a 6-month probation period. The primary job location will be the Morris Multiplex, located at 380 Stampede Grounds.

A full job description is available at www.townofmorris.ca

Please submit your application by 5:00 PM on July 4, 2025, to:

Arien Peterson, Facilities Manager

Email: facilitiesmanager@townofmorris.ca

Phone: 204-746-2531

*Thank you to all who apply. Only those selected
 for an interview will be contacted.*

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

MUNICIPALITY OF RHINELAND

Public Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 194 of the Municipal Act of Manitoba, the audited financial statements for the Municipality of Rhineland for the year ending December 31, 2024 have been completed and are available for inspection by any person during regular office hours at the Municipality of Rhineland Administration Office, 109 – 3rd Street NE, Altona, MB.

Michael Rempel
 Chief Administrative Officer

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Please contact your municipality if you have questions about zoning bylaws and requirements.

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- We respond to all formal objections and will work to resolve objections before issuing a licence.
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Congratulations to the Graduating Classes of 2025 Garden Valley Collegiate



“You are ready, you are capable”

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Garden Valley Collegiate’s class of 2025—142 strong—proudly walked across the stage to receive their diplomas at a ceremony at the Winkler Mennonite Church June 25.

“On behalf of the entire GVC team, I want to acknowledge that while today marks a major milestone, graduation itself was never the final goal,” said outgoing principal Carrie Friesen. “Throughout your time at GVC, our purpose wasn’t just to prepare you for this ceremony, but for every moment that lies ahead.”

The past 12 years of schoolwork served to fill each graduates’ toolbox with “re-

silience, communication skills, critical thinking, and the ability to be a kind and thoughtful neighbour,” Friesen said. “And today, we believe that your toolbox is full enough for you not just to survive, but you will thrive. You are ready, you are capable, you are GVC graduates.”

Guest speaker Jordan Peters shared how he’d gotten to know the graduates during his time as a teacher and coach at GVC.

“From the beginning I’ve emphasized that character, not talent, is what truly matters,” he said. “What I value most is how you carry yourselves, showing up with a positive attitude, treating others with kindness and respect, and giving your best efforts.”

Continued on page 4

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE
GVC valedictorian Janika Friesen addresses her fellow graduates.



Gerald Aplacador Michelle Beckstedt Kate Bergen Olivia Blochtchouk Milena Braun Azalea Bueckert Asher Cortez Jana-Eileen Dinkel Nico Dinkel
Sariah Driedger Serena Driedger Caleb Dueck Emeli Dueck Jasmin Dueck Carter Dyck Kara Dyck Shaylin Dyck Jaydon Eggert

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Bria Friesen



Caleb Friesen



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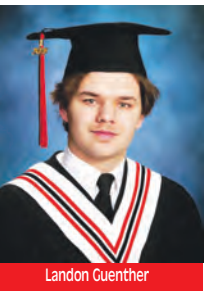
Violetta Colovchenko



Dre Guenther



Jason Guenther



Landon Guenther



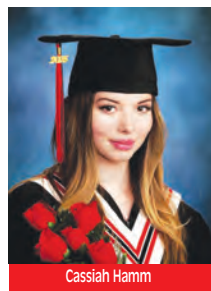
Renny Guenther



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Guest speaker
Jordan Peters

From Pg. 2

“As you now head off in different directions—whether in trades, farming, university, travel, the arts, athletics—I want you to know that success is not only measured by career paths or accolades; it is measured by how you live.”

Peters boiled down the values he hopes the former students take with them into the larger world to three.

“First, live your life with kindness. You will touch more lives and have more fun in life if you learn to look for opportunities to be kind.

“Second, say yes to difficult things. Looking back over my own life, I can’t think of a yes I regret ... every

time I said yes to something difficult—whether it was a new job, a new city, or a new challenge—I was also saying yes to growth, yes to adventure, yes to learning something new about myself.

“Third, strive for excellence wherever you are ... that type of mindset opens doors, not because of a perfect resumé, but because people recognize character, work ethic, and a desire to do things well.

“Skills can be taught, job tasks can be learned, but integrity, kindness, and the pursuit of excellence, those are rare and treasured traits.”

Valedictorian Janika Friesen reflected on the long journey it took for the class of 2025 to get to this day.

Continued on page 22



Marciano Heinrichs Penner

Milo Hildebrand

Samara Hildebrand

Taylor Hildebrand

Lily Hildebrandt

Enrico Holland

Eh Htoo

Della Isaak

Bryn Janzen

Olivia Jaworenko

Jan Keller

Liam Kezema

Aleah Klassen

Ihor Kolesnyk

Jolene Kort

Laura-Dianne Kraemer

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Riley Schellenberg

Northlands Parkway Collegiate
Allyssa Alegro

Canadian Mennonite University B.A.
Sage Penner

University Of Manitoba B.Sc. Fall 2024
Jonah Penner

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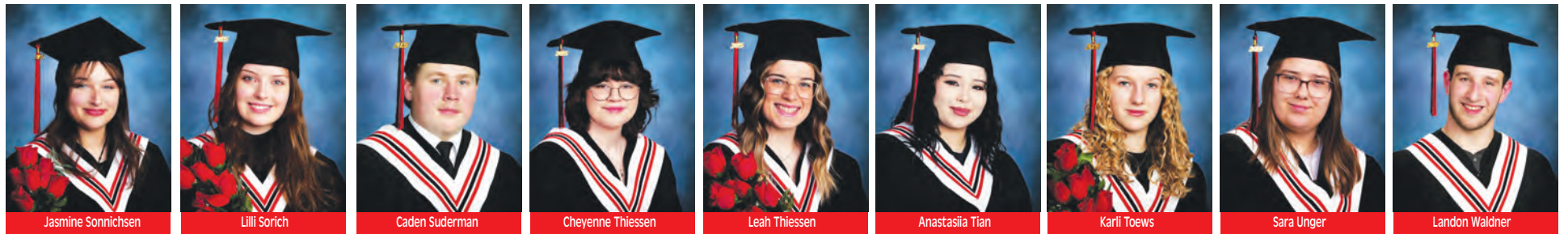
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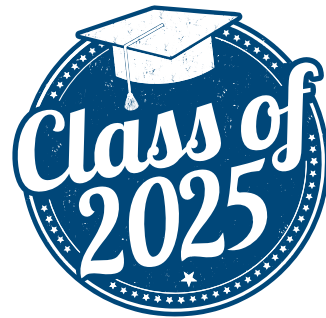
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Class Of 2025

Congratulations to the Graduating Classes of 2025 Northlands Parkway Collegiate



Guest speaker Andrew Clark.

From Pg. 7

He went on to offer the grads some advice.

"The first lesson is going to be the gift of getting it wrong ... mistakes are something that happens in life, and everyone makes them," he said. "It isn't necessarily the mistake itself, it's how you learn from it ... your actions and decisions after are the important part."

"Learning isn't just about academics, although it is a key part. It is also about learning what you like, what you don't like, what's important to you, who your true friends are," Clark added.

He went on to encourage them to

embrace change.

"The thing about change is no one likes it ... [but] change is something that will constantly happen."

Finally, he urged them to always find the positives in every situation and go into it all with positivity and to live in the moment.

"To truly enjoy life, this is a must ... you will come to realize that life comes fast."

"This moment has always been the destination that we have dreamed of ... however, we're reflecting on the many memories made in this building," said class valedictorian Maya Janz.

She noted the many moments and

the side paths and detours taken along the way, including "the places where we messed up and had to learn to pick ourselves back up, the times we had to apologize, the days we had to sacrifice, the moments we were graciously offered a second chance."

Some of the most memorable lessons were often unplanned, she added, and there are long-lasting lessons that can apply to many aspects of life.

"The world we're stepping into will be filled with pressure to achieve, to impress and to always move forward," she concluded. "The person you are and the impact you have on those around you is what measures success."



Stefan Gergert

Caleb Giesbrecht

Cassidy Gildenberg

Nayana Gottfried

Rosa Habtemariam

Braeden Harder

Kolten Harder

Samuel Harder

Zachary Harder

Selena Harms

Willie Harms

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Katelynn Heinrichs

Liliana Hernandez

Jessica Hiebert

Simon Hiebert

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Mykhailo Hordienko

Maya Janz

Hayden Janzen

Alyssa Klassen

Brooklyn Klassen

Emmalyn Klassen

Heidi Klassen

Memphis Klassen

Ksusha Kononenko

Kat Krahn

Mackenzie Krahn

Makenzie Krahn

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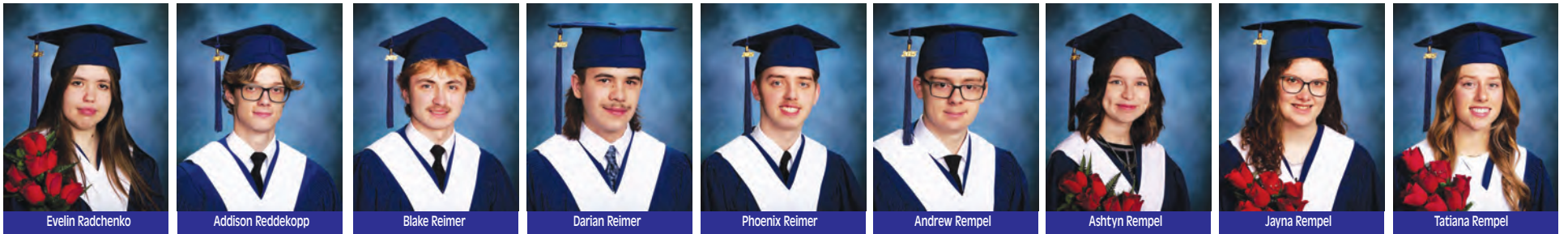
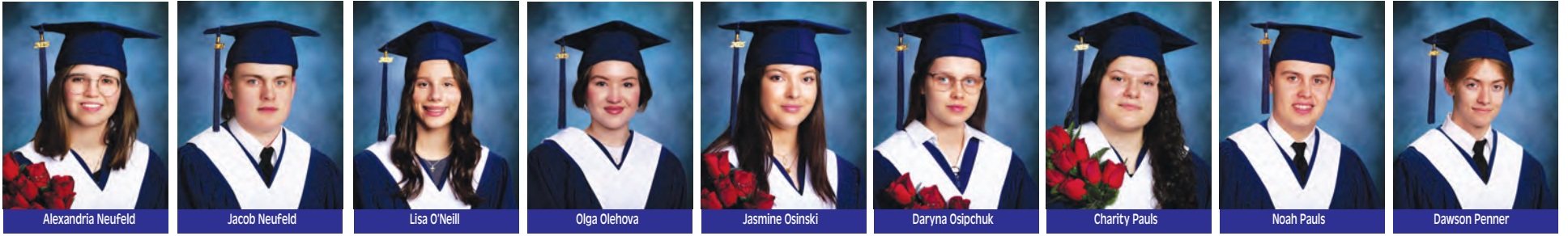
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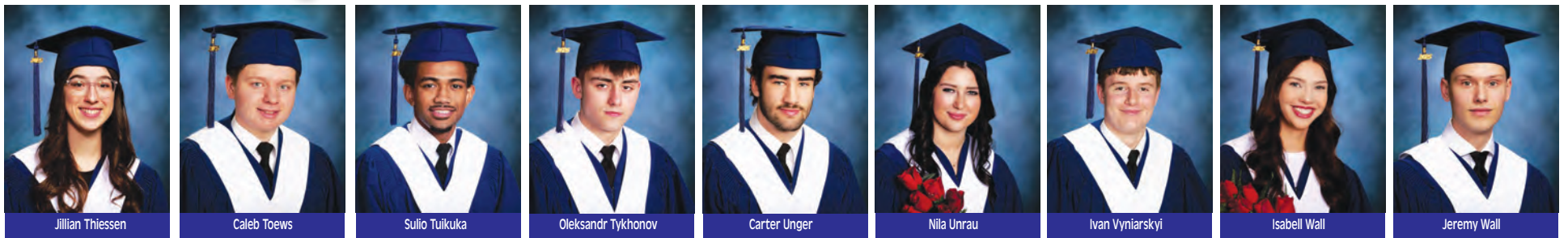
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Northlands Parkway Collegiate



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Sulio Tuikuka

Oleksandr Tykhonov

Carter Unger

Nila Unrau

Ivan Vyniarskiy

Isabell Wall

Jeremy Wall



Kennedy Wall

Ashley Wiebe

Meski Wiebe

Daniel Wilson

Edna Wolf

Yaroslav Yagudin

Judith Zacharias

Anna Zahrai

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George Dyck
Maksim Gatilov
Heidi Harder
Benny Harms
Ricky Heide
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Pavel Liudmer
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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Morden Collegiate



“You can achieve anything you dream of”

By Lorne Stelmach

Morden Collegiate’s graduating class of 2025 was heralded for its character in overcoming the adversity of the pandemic.

“I know that most only remember the masks and spaced-out desks, but it beat seeing our school through a computer screen,” valedictorian Lane Fehr commented in his address June 25 at the Access Event Centre.

“While it wasn’t ideal, we got to experience it together. Through all the growing pains that came with it, we managed to

grow as a class, find new friendships and create new memories,” Fehr said. “It wasn’t easy then, and it’s still tough now, but we took it head-on, and now we can look back and appreciate the effort we put in and use those experiences to guide us through whatever comes next.”

Fehr offered his thanks to the Western School Division and specifically school staff who guided, challenged, and gave them the tools they needed to succeed.

“And to our parents, grandparents, and family, thank you for being our biggest fans, taxi drivers, snack providers, and occasional reality-checkers.”

Fehr thanked his fellow grads for voting for him to be their valedictorian.

“I must say, this is a step up from my two terms as president where my competition did not exist, though it was still quite special to be known as ‘Mr. President’ these last two years. I am glad you are all willing to put your trust into me, and I am proud to be the voice of this amazing class.”

Fehr also offered some parting words of praise and encouragement to his classmates.

“This is a day we all aspire to reach ... soon will come the day that we step out on our own ... no matter how daunting this next step may seem, you are in control. Learn from the past, and use it for your future, and you can achieve anything you dream of.”

Guest speaker Julie Kalinowski, who is retiring as a teacher, encouraged the graduates to examine themselves.

“If I could give each of you grads a mirror right now and you were to look into it, who would you see?” she asked. “Through your own eyes, who are you ... it is your own sense of who you are that will be most important.

“Your original and personal ideas belong to you—to the core of you—and you must cherish them and protect them,” she continued. “As individual as you are, you are also a part of many teams

**“IT IS YOUR OWN
SENSE OF WHO YOU
ARE THAT WILL BE
MOST IMPORTANT.”**



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE
Valedictorian Lane Fehr reflected on the impact the pandemic had on the class of 2025—and how they overcame those challenges together.

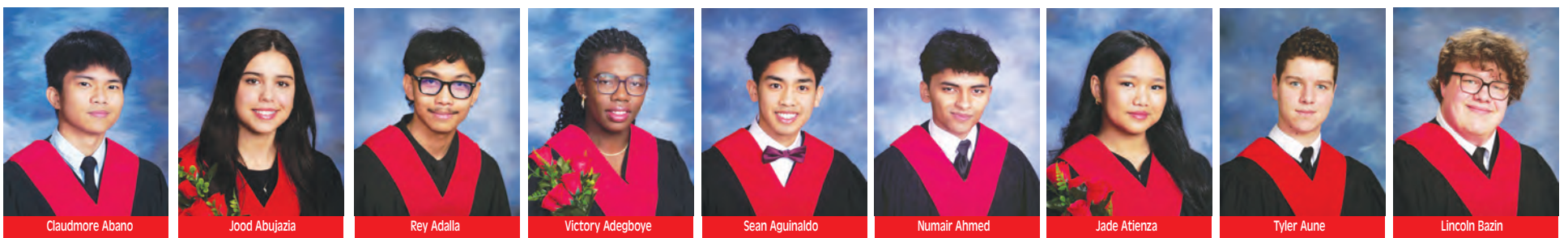
of other individuals. Those teams will change and morph as you live your life.

“You are each a human being with a soul and an intellect that prepare you and allow you to think about and prioritize the greater good,” said Kalinowski. “You are able to not only tolerate differences but to understand and learn from them.

Continued on page 12



Guest speaker Julie Kalinowski urged the grads to look for the good in life.



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Jood Abujazia

Rey Adalla

Victory Adegboye

Sean Aguinaldo

Numair Ahmed

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Morden Collegiate



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From Pg. 11

"You are a member of a global human community. You can choose to always look for common ground, to try to cooperate, to embrace and to treasure the differences you discover as you wander."

Kalinowski urged the graduates to look for the good that is always there.

"That is faith, no matter who you are," she said. "The road ahead is really more of a gravel path than a highway. It meanders. As you walk

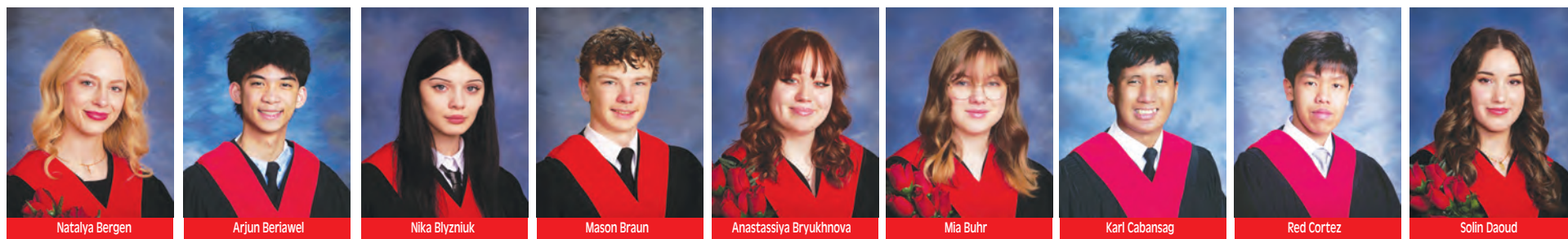
Morden Collegiate's class of 2025 prepare to enter the arena for the school's graduation ceremony June 25.

it, hang on to that mirror and check it occasionally. Sometimes, your eyes will be wet with tears. Walk on. Sometimes, they will be full of joy. Walk on. Let those eyes flutter and close when you need to rest. Your eyes, whether full of fear or courage, are windows to your soul.

"And don't be afraid or ashamed to wander a bit. Tolkien said 'not all who wander are lost.' Truly, it is in wandering that we find ourselves.

"Putting others first always helps us understand what happiness is really made of," Kalinowski concluded. "Try hard not to be offended in this life. Try hard to be okay with being wrong sometimes. Find your people and be authentic in their company. Try to be brave and true."

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Natalya Bergen

Arjun Beriawel

Nika Blyzniuk

Mason Braun

Anastassiya Bryukhnova

Mia Buhr

Karl Cabansag

Red Cortez

Solin Daoud



Summer Davison

Nicole Delos Santos

Gracie Denechezhe

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Louis Lescano

Logan Lesser

Hailey Letkeman

Blake Loewen

Chaelyn Lorenzo

Rory Lumgair

Jill Manlapaz

Christine Marilla



Cassidy Marsolais

Isaiah Meilun

Macie Miller

Emily Mitchell

Matthew Neufeld

Simon Neufeld

Riley Neuman

Kayla Nikkel

Grady O'Ray



Theodore Obordo

Daniela Oglaitė

James Orola

Grace Parrott

Brooke Plett-Roberts

Kerri Plett-Roberts

Caleb Rempel

Ethan Rietze

Jakub Rucinski



Lee Sarto

Gage Sawatzky

Emely Schüetz

Jonathan Schulz

Addison Siler

Jack Simoens

Ysabel Solomon

Ella Sterling

Nash Sugden

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Riley Schellenberg

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Allyssa Alegro

Canadian Mennonite University B.A.
Sage Penner

University Of Manitoba B.Sc. Fall 2024
Jonah Penner

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Class of 2025!

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Hailey, Lane, Emily & Caleb**

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Skylar Turner

Oliver Unrau

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Ethan Voth

Darra Waddell

Jaxson Waite

Jesse Wall

Mitchell Walske

Zackary Walske

Landon WaterChief

Oliver Westhaver

Benny Wiebe



Zander Wiebe

Lana Woychuk

Rayna Woychuk

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025 *The Voice*

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

- Tristen Bergman
- Avery Guenther
- Kaeden Kanski
- Jennifer Klassen
- Viktorii Kryknitska
- Tilar Nelson
- Isabel Nickel
- Nawar Obaid
- Harrison Prevost



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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Nellie McClung Collegiate



'Be agents of change'

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Nellie McClung Collegiate bid farewell to 21 students at its graduation ceremony at the Manitou Arena June 20.

Graduation is a monumental moment in a person's life, noted principal Melissa Pearce.

"You're leaving behind the familiar routines, the same faces in the halls, the comfort of a place that has been your second home. This might all feel a little scary. Change, even positive, often brings a mix of excitement and apprehension ... but consider how much you've already changed.

"You've tackled your subjects, learned different ways of thinking, and adapted to new technologies. You've grown physically, intellectually, and emotionally. The person sitting here today is not the same person who walked through our doors all those years ago. You've become more resilient, more adaptable, and more aware of the world around you. You've learned to navigate friendships, resolve conflicts, and advocate for yourselves. These are all profound



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Above: NMC's class of 2025. Right: Valedictorians Desirae Sanders and Rylan Wubbe shared memories of their classmates.

examples of embracing and adapting to change.

"The world you're stepping into is one of constant change ... this isn't something to fear—it's something to embrace," Pearce stressed. "The ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn will be one of your most valuable lessons. Be open to your ideas, new people, and new experiences. Don't be afraid to change your mind to try something different, or to work on a path you haven't initially considered.

"Go forward, class of 2025. Don't just adapt to change: be the agents of it. Be the ones who innovate, who challenge, and who lead."

Guest speakers Brodie and Charissa Dobson, owners of Charlie's Coffee Company, also shared some words of wisdom for the grads.

Continued on page 28



Gracie Beckett

Hannah Cross

Jill Cross

Hunter Derksen

Trent Desender

Maverick Ehnes

Jynelle Giesbrecht

Tristen Giesbrecht

Angela Li

Cooper Livingston

Kristie Martens

Aiden Rondeau

Desirae Sanders

Jake Sanders

Abby Scharf

Riley Shiskoski

Hailey Stewart

Madison Toback

Caleb Wall

Cherri Wiebe

Rylan Wubbe

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025

The *Voice*

Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

W.C. Miller Collegiate



A time of endings and beginnings

By Lorne Stelmach

Music was a common theme throughout the ceremony that celebrated the 2025 graduates of W.C. Miller Collegiate in Altona June 26.

Valedictorian Aidyn Isaak and guest speaker Dennis Friesen both used music as a basis for much of their messages to the assembled graduates, family, and friends.

"These past four long years have not only given us countless stories but taught us some lessons along the way ... at the end of the day one thing connects us together: the music," said Isaak. "Music isn't just songs you hear on the radio; it's the noise that surrounds us in every moment, the

rhythm of our lives, the beat of each day.

"The music that was with us all these years is now ending. That music was singing together around a fire or the concerts for the bands and the choirs. But it was also the different kind of music."

Isaak reflected on how the past year had a lot of focus on the lasts: last first day of school, last Christmas banquet, and last day at one's first job.

"It's become clear to me that high school being over isn't necessarily about the lasts but about the new firsts ... our first full-time jobs or first time travelling the world or first year at post-secondary school," she said.

Continued on page 18



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

W.C. Miller Collegiate graduates at the school's graduation ceremony June 26.



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W.C. Miller Collegiate



Valedictorian Aidyn Isaak

ing with our lives, but I'm guessing that's called adulthood."

Isaak reflected on graduation being bittersweet.

"Bitter from leaving the comfort we've learnt to know over the years; bitter from worrying about the friendships and where they will go from here; bitter from knowing the last cafeteria cookies I ate were the last cafeteria cookies I'll ever eat.

"But sweet ... sweet from the phenomenal fact that we're free to be who we are. Whoever we want to be is at the tips of our fingers and we can just go get it. Sweet from the new bonds and people we get to meet. Sweet because it only goes up from here—we won't let high school be our peak."

Friesen used a record of Neil Young's *Heart of Gold* album as a prop in his address to the grads, noting how people want the song on the A-side but there is also the B-side, or flipside, that was usually just a throw in.

"So this morning, I want to talk about the flipside wisdom, when conventional wisdom might be equaled or even surpassed," he said.

"In school and societal institutions, it is important to respect authority. Don't rock the boat. Compliance is relied on to keep the system working. But on the flipside, there are times when challenge and confrontation are necessary. Whether speaking up for yourself or for people that don't have a voice, you may need to make the uncomfortable choice of speaking up.

"You try hard to be successful and avoid failures at all cost. That is usually necessary in school and life, but on the flipside, failure is not the enemy. So be brave, and

don't say no to some opportunity just because there is a chance of failure," Friesen continued. "On the flipside, don't underestimate the importance of your daily smaller decisions. They might not impact what you become, but they will impact who you become. Deciding to be kind, compassionate, and empathetic are choices we are all able to make. Don't underestimate the power of these small decisions and actions in transforming your lives and those around you.

Continued on page 19

"WHOEVER WE WANT TO BE IS AT THE TIPS OF OUR FINGERS ... IT ONLY GOES UP FROM HERE."



Guest speaker
Dennis Friesen

From Pg. 17

"This graduation really marks the start of each of us flourishing into who we are as individuals. Instead of looking at all the things coming to a close, its time to open our eyes up to the new beginnings. These lasts are no longer somber times but beautiful memories and moments that shaped us into who we are.

"The truth is, the future doesn't come with a rubric or a syllabus. There's no guidelines to follow or criteria to abide by. There's gonna be hard days and times where we have no idea what we're do-

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W.C. Miller Collegiate



From Pg. 18

“Lastly, you have probably been encouraged to act mature or grow up, but the flipside, youth is your strength. In a world too often permeated by tired skeptics, cynics, and pessimists, you offer energy, enthusiasm, and idealism.”

Friesen concluded by quoting Bob Dylan, who he noted was the only songwriter to win a Nobel Prize for literature. Dylan wrote the following for his children when they were graduation age: “May you grow up to be righteous. May you grow up to be true. May you always know the truth and see the light surrounding you. May you always be courageous; stand upright and be strong. May you stay forever young. May your hands always be busy. May your feet always be swift. May you have a strong foundation. When the winds of changes shift; may your heart always be joyful. May your song always be sung ... and may you stay forever young.”

W.C. Miller Collegiate's graduates received their diplomas at a ceremony at the Millennium Exhibition Centre June 26.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Kingston Estwick

Alyssa Ewankevich

Nelson Faurshou

Maddox Fehr

Keegan Fowler

Dalyce Friesen

Madelyn Friesen

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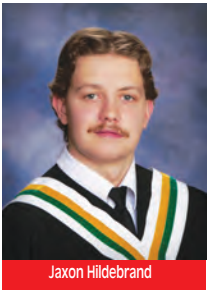
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Aidyn Isaak



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Elliot-Gray Sabourin

William Sawatzky

Aivery Schellenberg

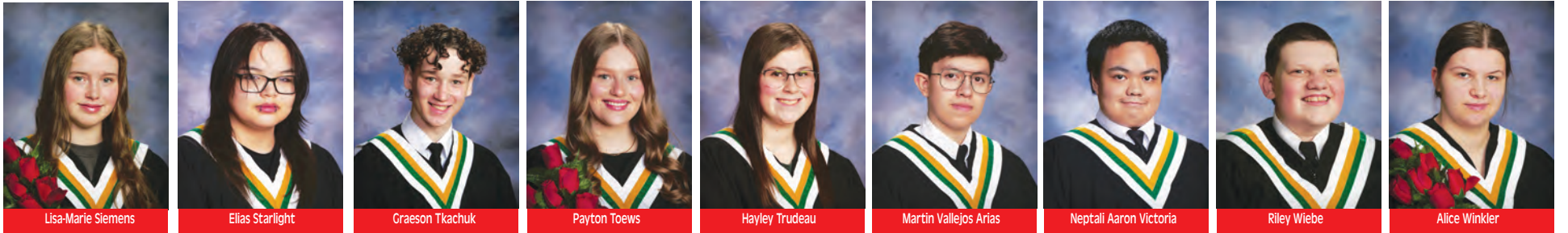
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Lena Schmik

Mya Schroeder

Amy Schwittek

Lauren Seenie



Lisa-Marie Siemens

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Payton Toews

Hayley Trudeau

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Neptali Aaron Victoria

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École régionale Saint-Jean-Baptiste



ERSJB Saints take home awards, scholarships

The École régionale Saint-Jean-Baptiste class of 2025 featured a host of bursary, award, and scholarship winners, including:

- Gunnar Cummins, Bourse Seed-Ex.
- Marilou Delorme, Bourse Rosemarie Bissonnette, Prix de mérite en Musique, Bourse DSFM, Bourse Caisse Assiniboine, Bourse Chevalier de Colomb de Saint-Joseph, Bourse Gardenland Co-op, Miller Environmental Scholarship, Bourse Français pour l'avenir, Bourse d'admission USB, Prix Fierté francophone, Prix Savoir-être et savoir-vivre, and the Governor General's Academic Medal.
- Kyle Edel, Bourse Comité scolaire ERSJB and Bourse Rempel Insurance.
- Kalley Gilmore, Bourse Morris

Bigway and Bourse d'admission USB.

- Ava Hunter-Dreger, Bourse AGT Foods and Bourse Morris Bigway awards.
- Tanner Manning, Miller Environmental Scholarship, Bourse GJ Chemical, Bourse Municipalité Montcalm, Providence College Bursary, and Prix Sportif.
- Genevieve Robinson-Phaneuf, Bourse Lavallée Trucking, Bourse Jablonski Carpentry, and Prix Dylan-Bérard.
- Kaden Sabourin, Bourse Lavallée Gravel, Prix de mérite en musique, Bourse Comité culturel de Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Bourse d'étude Denis Clément, Prix Arts et culture, and Prix Savoir-être et savoir-vivre.

GVC, from Pg. 4

"It has taken a lot of dedication, determination and hard work to get here—for some more than others—but we made it," she said, going on to thank the assembled parents, guardians, teachers, family, and friends. "You have all made such an impact in our lives. You may not realize how much we appreciate you and the influence you have had on us, but it is because of you that we stand up here today ready to face tomorrow."

Friesen went on to compare life to a photo album.

"We start at the beginning with that first picture of us as a newborn, crying in a strange, unknown world, yet embraced in loving arms. Skip a few pages and we're staring at ourselves on the first day of Kindergarten, some of us beaming at the camera, excited to try something new, and some of us with tears in our eyes, too scared to leave home.

"A couple pages later, we see ourselves throughout the years of high school as we find that the world is a whole lot larger than we thought it

was. Then, as we flip through memories, we wonder where the time has gone, for suddenly we find ourselves looking at the Gr. 9 version of ourselves ... boy, we sure didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. But as time passed, we slowly adjusted and settled into becoming a part of the Zodiac Nation."

Their younger selves came to find their places at GVC, thrived, and, before they knew it, found themselves starting their senior year of high school.

As they now close the book on their high school years, the class gets to embark on their next adventure.

"We may not know how these empty pages will be filled, and we will likely feel a mixture of anticipation, curiosity, and a touch of fear towards the unknown," Friesen said. "But this is a new and exciting opportunity for us to bring a splash of water where life feels dry, or to sing a new melody where the music has faded.

"We are stronger than we know, we have more courage than we think, and we have the capacity to change the world as we know it."



Gunnar Cummins



Marilou Delorme



Kyle Edel



Kalley Gilmore



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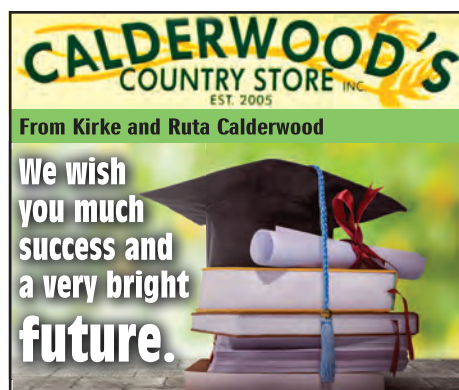
Tanner Manning



Genevieve Robinson-Phaneuf



Kaden Sabourin



Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Roseau Valley School



RVS class of 2025 is just getting started

By Ashleigh Viveiros

"We made it. That alone deserves a round of applause," began Roseau Valley School (RVS) valedictorian Kasen Mateychuk in his address at the June 21 graduation ceremony.

"Standing here today, it's hard not to think about how far we've come," he continued. "From awkward icebreakers on day one, to late-night study sessions, to cramming entire courses into our brains the night before an exam, somehow, we survived it all. Some of us even thrived. Others, well, we became really, really good at pretending we had it together.

"But honestly, these past few years weren't just about textbooks and deadlines. They were about growth—the kind that comes from trying, failing, and trying again. From friendships that turned into family. From discovering who we are and who we want to become—even if we're still figuring that last part out.

"To our teachers, thank you for challenging us, guiding us, and, sometimes, curving the grades. To our families and friends, your support, your love, your food got us through more than you know.

"And to my fellow grads, give yourselves a pat on the back. As we head into whatever comes next—jobs,

more school, travel, whatever it may be—let's take what we've learned and make it count. Let's stay curious, stay kind, and keep showing up, even when it's hard.

"Congratulations, class of 2025. We did it. We're just getting started."

Presenting the address to the graduates was Jason Mateychuk, Kasen's father and former RVS principal and teacher.

The elder Mateychuk shared reflections on each of the 16 former students before getting into his three pieces of parting advice for the group.

"Life passes by quickly ... please do not take a single minute for granted," he began. "Make the most out of every moment."

Secondly, "dreams are nothing with out action," Mateychuk continued. "And even with action, there's no guarantee that you will achieve them."

You need a plan and a commitment to that plan—with some flexibility for when things go sideways—to make your dreams a reality, he stressed.

Finally, Mateychuk urged the grads to be "kind in a world that can be unkind.

"Kindness and bitterness manifest in yourself and others. My hope for the present and future is that we focus on kindness," he said. "Be kind



SUPPLIED PHOTOS BY RELIVED MOMENTS ALICE GUIMOND

Above: The RVS class of 2025. Right: Valedictorian Kasen Mateychuk urged his peers to take what they've learned and make it count.

and smile ... it makes good people feel better and makes not so nice people wonder what the heck you could be so happy about.

"My hope is for the best for you as you move forward, knowing there will be speed bumps. There will be adversity, but you are strong. And, combining some quotes from Candace Owens and a redneck somewhere, my final words are: Life is hard. Wear a helmet, but just get 'er done. No excuses."



Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Rosenort School



“Oh, the places you’ll go”

By Siobhan Maas

Rosenort School celebrated their 31 graduates of 2025 on June 24 with the theme “Oh, the Places You’ll Go” by Dr. Seuss.

Principal Arlin Scharfenberg started the ceremony by acknowledging the 35-year legacy of outgoing Red River Valley School Division superintendent Brad Curtis, who served eight

years in the position.

“Red Hawk family,” welcomed Scharfenberg, “our chosen topic is the final literary work of Dr. Seuss, popularized years after his death as a final send-off to graduates.

“The powerfully simple word ‘go,’” continued Scharfenberg, “is one of the shortest words in the English language, yet packed

PHOTO BY SIOBHAN MAAS/VOICE

Rosenort School's class of 2025 tosses their caps high.

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CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025

The **Voice** *Altona Rhineland*

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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Morris School



“Go forward with courage, curiosity, and kindness”

By Siobhan Maas

With standing room only, the 58 graduates of Morris School celebrated their achievements on June 24, entering the Morris Multiplex to the lyrics of Taylor Swift’s “Long Live” with lyrics of “we will be remembered” and “long live all the magic we have made.”

“This is the largest graduating class in my seven years here. Perhaps ever,” said principal Mike Watson in his address.

“And hearing Taylor Swift like 15 times confirms it,” he joked to the gathered families and friends.

Watson brought the graduates’ journey into perspective, reminding them of everything they have experienced

since their school journey began in 2012, back when the province was recovering from flooding, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was still under construction, and “TikTok” was still just the sound a clock made.

“Although virtual learning was ending as you came into high school, you have reconnected and readjusted, and finished with strength. That journey says more about you than a report card ever could. As you graduate, know that you don’t have to have it all figured out.”

Co-valedictorians Kathryn Friesen and Nicolas Leflar honoured the commitment of the staff who made their high school experience memorable and the “important people in the crowd ... all of whom have shaped



PHOTOS BY SIOBHAN MAAS/VOICE

Above: Morris School’s class of 2025. Right: Valedictorians Kathryn Friesen and Nicolas Leflar.

our character” and, alongside Watson, remembered two classmates no longer here.

Two benches “made by the skilled hands of our welding shop students” will memorialize Eli Jashyn—“Who made everyone happy”—and Tyrelle Darling-Khan—“Who made my



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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Morris School



PHOTO BY SIOBHAN MAAS/VOICE

Bethany Wiebe receives the Governor General Award.

From Pg. 25

classes 10 times more enjoyable," said Leflar—at the school's new outdoor courts.

"Every time someone sits, reflects, or gathers there, they will be reminded of Eli and Tyrell and their lasting impact," Watson said. "Their spirit will always be a part of this graduating class."

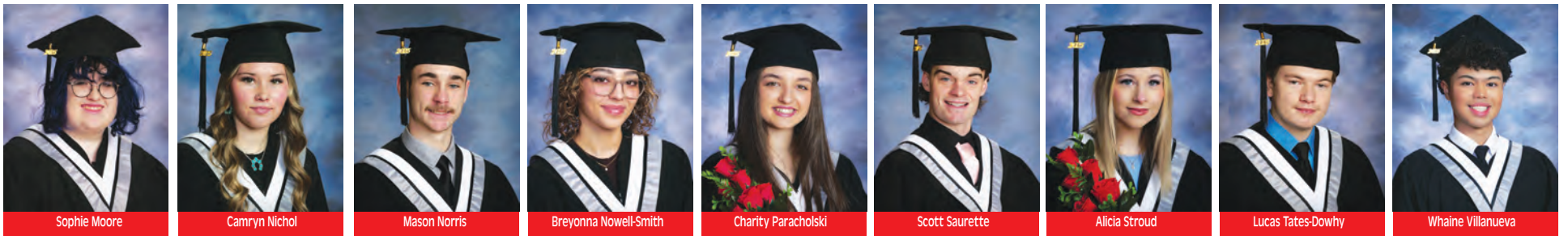
Teachers and school staff celebrated the graduates in a traditional video montage. New this year, the Morris Kindergarten class imparted their wisdom to the graduates by pre-recorded video. Crowd favourites included "Remember to look both ways before you cross the street," "Always remember to be nice," "If you get stranded on an island, drink some coconuts," and "Don't open the door for strangers."

From fine art degrees to equine ther-

apy, public broadcasting to a \$45,000 American rugby scholarship and Armed Forces training to engineering degrees, the graduating class of 2025 continues to make an impact in the local community, the province, and the world.

"What matters most is the kind of person you choose to be, and the best way to figure this out is in service to others," closed Watson. "Be someone who contributes, who shows up, lends a hand, who listens and helps. Life has a way of revealing purpose through the people and communities that we support."

"Your diploma marks not what you have done, but what and who you are becoming. You've lived through history and learned through change. Go forward with courage, curiosity, and kindness."



Sophie Moore

Camryn Nichol

Mason Norris

Breyonna Nowell-Smith

Charity Paracholski

Scott Saurette

Alicia Stroud

Lucas Tates-Dowhy

Whaine Villanueva



Nathan Wachna

Jared Wade-Kavanagh

Efrem Wall

Bethany Wiebe



Tyson Wiebe

Liam Wilson

Aaron Yu

Isabelle Zarecki

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

- Ryan Harder
- Alexander Krouse
- William North
- Tommy Paul
- Nico Sun

Congratulations

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MLA for Midland

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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2025**

Mennonite Collegiate Institute



MCI celebrates a “unique group” of grads

By Lorne Stelmach

Mennonite Collegiate Institute celebrated its class of 2025 in a graduation ceremony June 22 in Gretna.

CEO Chris Harms hailed it as an exciting time for the graduates, regardless of whatever comes next for them.

“You’ve all arrived here on your own journey. I encourage you to reflect often on the highs and the lows, the successes and the challenges, as all of those have contributed to shaping who you are today.

“This past year has brought much joy, seen the character that each of you possesses,” Harms added. “I’ve appreciated the leadership that you brought to the student body and what you’ve contributed to our school family.”

The undergraduate address was presented by Leo Dyck and Aliza Schroeder.

“When we first started high school, especially in Grade 9, we felt out of place and quite possibly invisible, especially to the older grades,” shared Dyck. “This amazing group of students has contributed to not only my personal growth but so many around the school.”

“Instead of having these awkward out-of-touch feelings, this group of students welcomed us wholeheartedly and made us feel instantly part of the family,” said Schroeder. “This class has been a major part of my faith journey.”

In her valedictory address, Nelia Fehr was grateful not only for her classmates and the school but also the community for how it has helped

shape her.

“MCI is more than just a school. It’s a community and a family,” she said. “It’s a place where we’ve been seen, known, and loved.”

“We built relationships that go deeper than academics,” she continued. “MCI has a way of pulling people in and making them feel like they belong. It’s in the way that our teachers mentor us, how our classmates support us, and how a faith in Jesus is at the centre of everything we do.

“Our grad class is without a doubt one of the most unique groups of people you’ve ever met ... the personalities, stories and memories that make this class unforgettable,” said Fehr, describing them as determined, passionate, opinionated, and adventurous.

She went on to offer praise for all of the teachers and staff.

“You didn’t just teach us. You encouraged us to become our very own people.”

Finally, she expressed her thanks for their parents.

“The deepest roots of who we are were formed long before we stepped into a classroom. You had the most important job of all—shaping our hearts, our character, and our faith.”

In contemplating how to describe the class, teacher Jennifer Klippenstein used the words Christ-centred, chatty, committed, courageous, community-oriented, classy, and just a little bit crazy.

“It has been a pleasure getting to know this class,” she said. “You are an inquisitive, formidable and memorable group.



SUPPLIED PHOTOS BY CHARLES KLIPPENSTEIN

Above: MCI’s class of 2025 throws their caps in celebration. Right: Valedictorian Nelia Fehr receives her diploma.

“Your attempts to derail my classes were mostly unsuccessful,” she joked, going on to cite examples ranging from Bible parable skits in Grade 9 to the grad prank where they turned her classroom into a beach.

“I also thoroughly enjoyed our many deep discussions after school. I also enjoyed how you found it interesting to learn to not be a quarrelsome wife or dripping faucet thanks to Bible class and the Book of Proverbs.”

Klippenstein offered the class some parting advice to be curious, be resilient, be humble, be patient, and remember who you are.

“Your strong willed nature, determination and even stubbornness, all of it will take you far, may get you in some



trouble, but ultimately will bring you towards whatever goals you have set for yourselves.”



Lexi Bilodeau

Zako Driedger

Dominic Enns

Theodore Enns

Nelia Fehr

Jayden Friesen

Rae Harder

Jade Ho

George Peters



Sophie Robinson

Ernie Voth

Finley Wiens

Kristina Zacharias

 *Meet the*
CLASS of 2025

