

Dear CDIC Bursary/La Bourse SADC,

Thank you for your generous donation towards the Indspire's Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards program,

I received this Award in October 2021 to help me through this hard financial time and celebrate my contribution to my school's indigenous community. I send you a deep thank you for donating these funds and helping me continue my education program. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and that as a Métis woman I am able to be considered for this award. In the past I have been lucky enough to find employment while I attend school to help with my living costs, unfortunately, with the hardships of the pandemic my pursuits of employment were unsuccessful. Not being able to find employment has allowed me extra time to help out in my community and get involved in my university. I am the President of the Education Student Association and am doing a mentorship with STMU's Indigenous Initiatives Director, Michelle Scott. When the pandemic started, I was living in Lethbridge finishing my degree at the University of Lethbridge. After much deliberation, I took a leap of faith, moving my life to Calgary to come to school at St. Mary's University. Although there has been financial hardship this year, I am so glad I made the choice to come to Calgary and am able to finish my second degree at St. Mary's April 2022.

I am in my second year of a two year after degree program in Elementary Education. I have previously completed a Business Management diploma and a Bachelor of Arts degree. I am working hard to become an educator and help young people find a passion and curiosity for learning like my teachers have done for me. The two past semesters my courses have been all education focused courses for the first time in my post-secondary career and it reaffirmed my pursuit of becoming a teacher. At St. Mary's University I have had the opportunity to learn more about indigenous ways of knowing in my classes and how I can contribute to reconciliation as an educator. My favorite classes this semester were ones that talked about kindness, inclusivity and building an education philosophy to make my classroom a happy place for all my students. Through this journey I have been getting to know the St Mary's indigenous liaison, Michelle Scott who has held many elders talks and meet ups to help indigenous students connect with elders. This relationship with Michelle Scott has developed into a mentorship where I have been able to get involved with the indigenous community at STMU, help with administration duties and even help teach a university course focused on indigenous ways of knowing and building a relationship with the land. Michelle and I have put together a two part workshop for the Education students at STMU where they will build their pedagogy focused on reconciliation. I have learnt a lot from Michelle Scott already in the last year and half at St. Mary's and I look forward to bringing as much indigenous knowledge to my classroom.

Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to continue to focus on my studies, get involved with my community and help me through this trying time. I have been able to maintain a 4.0 GPA during my first year of Education and hope to continue this academic excellence for my final year of Education in the fall. I will continue to work hard towards my goal to be an educator and bring the kindness you have given to me into my future endeavors.

Caij Meloche

