

MANS's First Graduating Class Accepts Responsibility



MANS's first high school graduates, Coralie Nepoose and Frederick Crier-Jamerson.

Frederick Crier-Jamerson and Coralie Nepoose are the school's first high school graduates. Together they were awarded more than \$26,000 in scholarships to continue their educations at university or other post-secondary institutions.

Coralie's valedictory speech (abridged below) inspired the many Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) students who attended, reflects the attitude of gratitude and responsibility, and lets her teachers know that their work is making a difference. Fredrick entered the Junior Forest Rangers, a program of Alberta Forestry and Agriculture, in July. Coralie, class valedictorian, plans to attend Burman University to become a teacher.

Valedictory Speech 2015 —by Coralie Nepoose

Being the first graduates of Mamawi is truly rewarding. Freddy and I couldn't be any more thankful for our teachers, our friends, our classmates, and most of all our parents, for always supporting us and pushing us to finish Grade 12. There is no better feeling than accomplishing a goal. We have changed our school forever. We are the first Grade 12 graduates Mamawi has ever had.

This is what we can look back to 10 years from now. By that time we'll have well-paying jobs, we'll have families, and we'll be people who can say, "I made all of this happen."

This is what we have to show the rest of our students at MANS. Education is the key to everything.

A quotation from actor Bradley

Whitford says, "Take action. Every story you've ever connected with, every leader you've ever admired, every puny little thing that you've ever accomplished is the result of taking action. You have a choice. You can either be a passive victim of circumstance or you can be the active hero of your own life."

It wasn't the people around us who made the decision to finish Grade 12. It was our decision! We made this happen for ourselves! We decided that this is what we wanted to do! This has been our goal since we were in Kindergarten.

I have never been more thankful for the help and support I got from everyone around me. My daughter and my mom are my motivation for everything. They were my motivation to finish Grade 12

and to go to university this coming fall. All the struggles I went through have only made me stronger and the person I am today. That said, there is nothing Freddy and I can give back to our teachers and our parents. But let's start with "Thank you."

Thank you teachers, staff, and families for all that you have done for us. We couldn't have gotten this far without you and your support. I'm sure the both of us will go further in life. There is absolutely no better feeling than being with the people who make you happy on a daily basis, and with the people who mean the world to you. I love you all. ■

*Mamawi Atosketan Native School,
May 28, 2015*