

# What's it Mean to You?

*“Education is the key to everything.”*

Coralie Nepoose, Valedictorian  
Mamawi Atosketan Native School's  
1st High School Class

It was an emotional moment for Coralie Nepoose. She and Frederick Crier-Jamerson had come through their entire education together—all the way from daycare, in fact. Now, surrounded by family and friends on graduation night, they knew they were making history.

“We have changed our school forever,” said Nepoose. “We are the first Grade 12 graduates Mamawi has ever had.”

It was a meaningful occasion for Freddy and Coralie's families as well, an affirmation of the power of Adventist education to impact lives and families for good.

“I didn't believe you three years ago,” Coralie's father, Levi Nepoose, told Principal Gail Wilton, “when you told me my daughter would graduate from high school and go on to university. Because of this school and the scholarships,” he said, offering an apology for his doubt, “we can see it's actually going to happen.”

Long-term teachers who average more than 8 years at MANS; an Adventist pastor who they know they can turn to (and chose as their grad night speaker); a principal who holds them accountable but helps them sort out better paths—it all added up to success. It's an accomplishment that Coralie, Freddy, and their families didn't know was attainable in one of the toughest environments in Canada.

And Coralie wants to give back.

Coralie knows teachers and other professionals who don't give up can turn a life around. Her parents prayed about university; Burman University recognized Coralie's achievements with scholarships on the same basis as every graduate of Canadian Adventist schools, and the Church in Canada added a scholarship for Burman as well. MANS' valedictorian plans to attend Burman University to become a teacher—perhaps the first of many to return to MANS, and to continue changing the direction of First Nations lives.

***“There is nothing Freddy and I can give back to our teachers and our parents,” Coralie concluded in her valedictory speech. “But let's start with ‘thank you’.”***



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