

raising

# expectations



## Raising a child and going to school are each full time jobs,

but somehow the students at the Louise Dean Centre, like Ashley and Lani, manage to do both. Louise Dean is an innovative school that provides pregnant and parenting teen girls with the extra support they need to finish high school.

"Every one of the girls here is inspiring," says Louise Dean's Principal Brenda English. "To be in high school and be pregnant or parenting, to create success for yourself and raise a child... it's above and beyond what most people can accomplish."

To help students graduate, the school uses a wrap around service model where each student is paired with an educator, a social worker and a health professional to ensure the student and her child have the assistance needed to maintain emotional, mental and physical wellbeing and improve the student's academic achievement. Many of the extracurricular programs and enhancements make the difference between graduation and dropping out.

Ashley's been involved in many programs including one that addresses issues of self discovery and personal empowerment.

"It's an opportunity for trust building and coming to terms with how hard life has been," says Louise Dean student

Ashley McDonald. "People think we'd all be really close because it's an all girls' school, but we all have babies so there's no time. It's nice to have a chance to talk and tell your story."

Ashley now shares her story at different junior and senior high schools throughout the city in the hopes of preventing other students from becoming teen parents.

Lani never thought she'd complete school. Her life has been a series of challenges both on and off the reserve, not the least of which is the fact that she's a young mother

of two children: Blaze and Elise. But thanks to the Louise Dean Centre for never giving up on Lani, she was beaming when she tried on her grad dress for the first time.

"The funding that EducationMatters and its donors have provided has expanded the quality of life for our students," says Brenda. "It's going to make an impact on the future of our community."

### Louise Dean Centre programs funded in 2009:

- Peer Leadership & Support Program
- Emergency Student Supports
- Total Body Wellness Centre
- Discovering Your Opportunities Project