

# MISKANAWAH ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



## Protecting the Smudge with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle (08:45)

In this video Elder Patrick Daigneault shares about Miskanawah's Cultural Mandate: Protecting the Smudge and how it helps build relatives. He shares how the smudge governs us in our journey through life, the importance of applying this knowledge in everything that Miskanawah does, and acknowledging the importance of creating space for our families who weren't born into smudge and prayer. He discusses how the smudge helps us in communication with self, spirit and with one another, supporting us to walk in a Wahkotiwin way: living in relationships.

**"Grounding yourself, bringing yourself up into the present, in the moment. Being able to answer those questions, because now it becomes ethical space. It becomes a sacred space."**



**miskanawah**  
empowerment • strength • family



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# Message from the CEO

### Message from the CEO Kirby Redwood - Lead Oskâpêwis (06:52)

In this video Kirby Redwood, Lead Oskâpêwis of Miskanawah, shares about Miskanawah's transitions, challenges and highlights over the past year. He focuses on how Miskanawah has embraced its cultural mandate: **Protecting the Smudge**. Kirby discusses how that has guided Miskanawah to lead with culture, make decisions based on our values, and create opportunities to build new relationships. New relationships with funders that align with Miskanawah's values, who understand and respect both Indigenous and Western world view. New relationships within the community that are the result of growing Miskanawah's focus to including the homelessness sector, gender-diverse supports, and land based stewardship through traditional ways of knowing and being. Relationships built on the principles of Wahkotiwin. And lastly, he thanks everyone for being a part of this last year and what is to come!



"We thank you for the gifts and the contributions that you've made to our organization and our circles this past year. And we look forward to building relatives with each and every one of you going forward in the next year and many years after that."

3343

individuals served  
across programs

68

community partnerships

289

youth served

423

parents/caregivers  
served

659

children served



### Year in Review with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle (01:48)

In this video Elder Patrick Daigneault shares about the resiliency of Miskanawah staff and families. He congratulates the hard work of everyone involved in what has been a year of growth, and how much he is looking forward to what the next year holds.

"When we talk about Wahkotiwin, there's no disappointments, there's only possibilities."



# Letter from the Board

## To our Stakeholders and Community Members

### 2022/23 Board Members



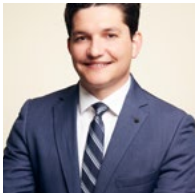
**David Bruce Randall** *Chair*  
Occupation: Retired



**Jennifer Findlay** *Vice-Chair*  
Occupation: Senior Manager, ESU Services at Pembina Pipeline Corporation



**Daniel Rochon CPA, CA** *Treasurer*  
Occupation: Retired



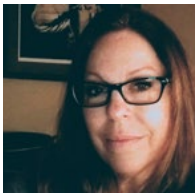
**Alex Montiel** *Secretary*  
Occupation: Director of Projects and Engagement at Pro Bono Law Alberta



**Jay Gerritsen** *Member*  
Occupation: Senior Consultation Advisor at Natural Resources Canada



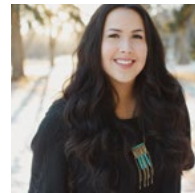
**William (Bill) Dickson** *Member*  
Occupation: Retired



**Katelyn Lucas** *Member*  
Occupation: Executive Director at Elizabeth Fry Society



**Robert (Bob) Grier** *Member*  
Occupation: Business Development Manager at G4S Solutions



**Lana Garcelon** *Member*  
Occupation: Independent Contractor



**Virginia Baescu, CPA, CGA** *Member*  
Occupation: Director of Finance and Administration Alberta Law Foundation



**Robert Hamilton** *Member*  
Occupation: Assistant Professor at University of Calgary

### Tansi/Oki/Aanii/ Danit'ada/ Aba-wath-tech/Hello/Salut

Once again, thank you for allowing me to share greetings and observations from Miskanawah's Board of Directors. As Chairperson of the Board, I am humbled to serve with a dedicated group of Directors, our passionate and courageous CEO Kirby Redwood, and all of the amazing team at Miskanawah.

As stewards for Miskanawah's services and programs, the Board's role is to ensure Miskanawah has the resources required to continue serving our community.

The Board remains steadfast in our support the awesome work of our management, staff, other front-line personnel, many volunteers and our Elders. Their collective passion, compassion, energy and dedication to delivering excellence to our children, youth and families truly inspires us all.

While this past year has been challenging, Miskanawah more than rose to the occasion. Kirby spoke to the many ways in which Miskanawah continues to develop, change and adapt – these remain the means by which Miskanawah serves the community.

One of the key developments amongst the Board, Kirby and the team has been our on-going appreciation of Wahkohtowin, Cree for the interconnectedness of relationships, communities and the natural world all around us. This is our governance framework, ensuring we can continue to support our community with the dignity, respect and resilience required.

Sanctified Kindness is the phrase that comes to mind. Our management team led by Kirby set the example with tremendous day-to-day leadership. Our staff and front-line personnel demonstrated it each time they met with members of our community. Our Elders taught us and passed on valuable knowledge and ways of knowing about how to move forward. And our community showed us what Sanctified Kindness can do. As our Elders have told us, with Sanctified Kindness, nothing is impossible.

Every Child Matters Hiy Hiy

**Bruce Randall,**  
**Chairperson**



# Vision/Mission/Values

**Vision:** Children, youth, and families thrive within a culturally responsive community.

**Mission:** Miskanawah offers evidence-informed, supportive services to people in the Calgary area as they strengthen their circles of self, family, community and culture.

**Values:**



**CULTURE**

Miskanawah is firmly grounded in Indigenous cultures and strives to strengthen cultural identity for Indigenous people in the greater Calgary community, by inviting the community to join us in Indigenous traditions, ceremony and celebration. Miskanawah recognizes people are influenced by the cultural diversity of our staff and persons served.



**RESPECT**

Miskanawah practices respect by honouring staff and client knowledge of themselves, encouraging the practice of honest and non-judgemental listening, and making space for cultural protocols from diverse backgrounds.



**COMMUNITY**

Miskanawah centres its practice in the establishment of community as a means of creating natural supports, both as supplement to and when transitioning out of formal/professional supports. Staff work to create community by sharing resources, creating partnerships, and participating in gatherings, celebrations and ceremony.



**TRUST**

Miskanawah understands the responsibility of working with vulnerable populations, and seeks to meet and exceed that responsibility. Staff create and nurture trust by being reliable, responsive, and consistent with their colleagues and clients. Staff at all levels are encouraged to be innovative, express their ideas, and provide open and honest feedback.

# Indigenous Teachings

## ▶ **Wahkotiwin (02:51)**

with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault explains **Wahkotiwin** (wah-kow-teh-win): the Cree Natural Law of interconnection and kinship. Wahkotiwin is a major guiding force for the work that Miskanawah does with our relatives and helps protect Indigenous teachings, oral traditions, values, and protocols. It is similar to the Blackfoot teaching of Siimohksin (sim-ox-seen) meaning, "a relationship to all things". Wahkotiwin keeps the cultural and spiritual part of Miskanawah alive by reminding us of our relations to Mother Earth and all peoples, animals, objects, and spirits. **"Wahkotiwin means in relationship with everything – with Mother Earth but in relationship with all people" – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

## ▶ **Siimohksin and Wahkotiwin (04:07)**

with Elder Reg Crowshoe

In this video Elder Reg Crowshoe talks about **Siimohksin and Wahkotiwin**. He shares his experience of learning from Elders as a young person and how he received teachings to keep from getting into trouble. He and other young people were given teachings on how to live in a culture of respect, responsibility, accountability and discipline. He shares how young people today do not have access to this knowledge and teachings, and how community Elders saw an opportunity to share these teachings when the 215 children were recovered. Elders meet young people where they are at by creating healing circles to share their own experiences in Residential Schools, and encourage the young people to channel their energy into "good trouble." **Elder Reg is reminded of a quote from U.S. Congress John Lewis, "Never let anyone — any person or any force — dampen, dim or diminish your light ... Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness. Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won."**

## ▶ **Nagatohe (02:31)**

with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle

In this video Elder Patrick Daigneault shares his teachings on **Nagatohe**, or safety. He talks about how nagatohe has a spirit of its own, a spirit of kindness and how we need to acknowledge this spirit. With that spirit and following the protocols and teachings comes a natural respect of people and our families. Patrick talks about how we must protect our families and our way of life by participating in ceremonies, listening to teachings and encourages us to always go back to nagatohe and our smudge. **"That's how we look at it from an indigenous perspective. We take care of it, we protect it. And when we do that and we follow that way of life, it protects us. It protects whoever falls under that space, within that space. That includes all of our families, like I said all of our ceremonies."**

## ▶ **Setoskatowin (03:26)**

with Chantel Large

In this video Chantel Large shares the teachings she's been given on **Setoskatowin**. She talks about how it means coming together, supporting each other in creating community and how that's not exclusive to one another as people, but also everything that is provided to us in nature, the smudge and animals. Chantel talks about her journey to sobriety and how lonely it felt when everything had to change. She shares that with supports that are naturally built into community, those changes and shifts became easier. **"When I look at our weekly lodges for example, I see these people and they're coming out of these challenges in their life and they're looking for other people who can support them in walking in a different way. And that's what they find there."**

## ▶ **Miyo-pimatsiwin (05:11)**

with Elder Elizabeth Nadolnick

In this video Elder Elizabeth Nadolnick shares that she hasn't always had a good life. She gives credit to the life she lives now by following the seven sacred teachings and daily connection to medicine as a guide to living a good life. She shares about her journey to forgiveness, how she prays and whom she prays for as a way to do her part to support others who are struggling. She also shares the importance of learning from one another and sharing a part of yourself to connect slowly. **"Try to make small steps. A little at a time. Because look how long it took us to get here, to heal, to be the people we are today. That didn't come over night."**

## ▶ **Community (02:12)**

with Elder Violet March

In this video Elder Violet March talks about the importance of participating in culture together, being mindful and grateful for the things that Mother Earth provides us, supporting our families and each other, and encouraging growing together in our cultural ways. **"It's all about unity. It's all about family. It's all about supporting families and supporting each other. Encouraging growing together in our culture ways, respect and honor all of us, all together and praying together. That's the key- family and being together."**

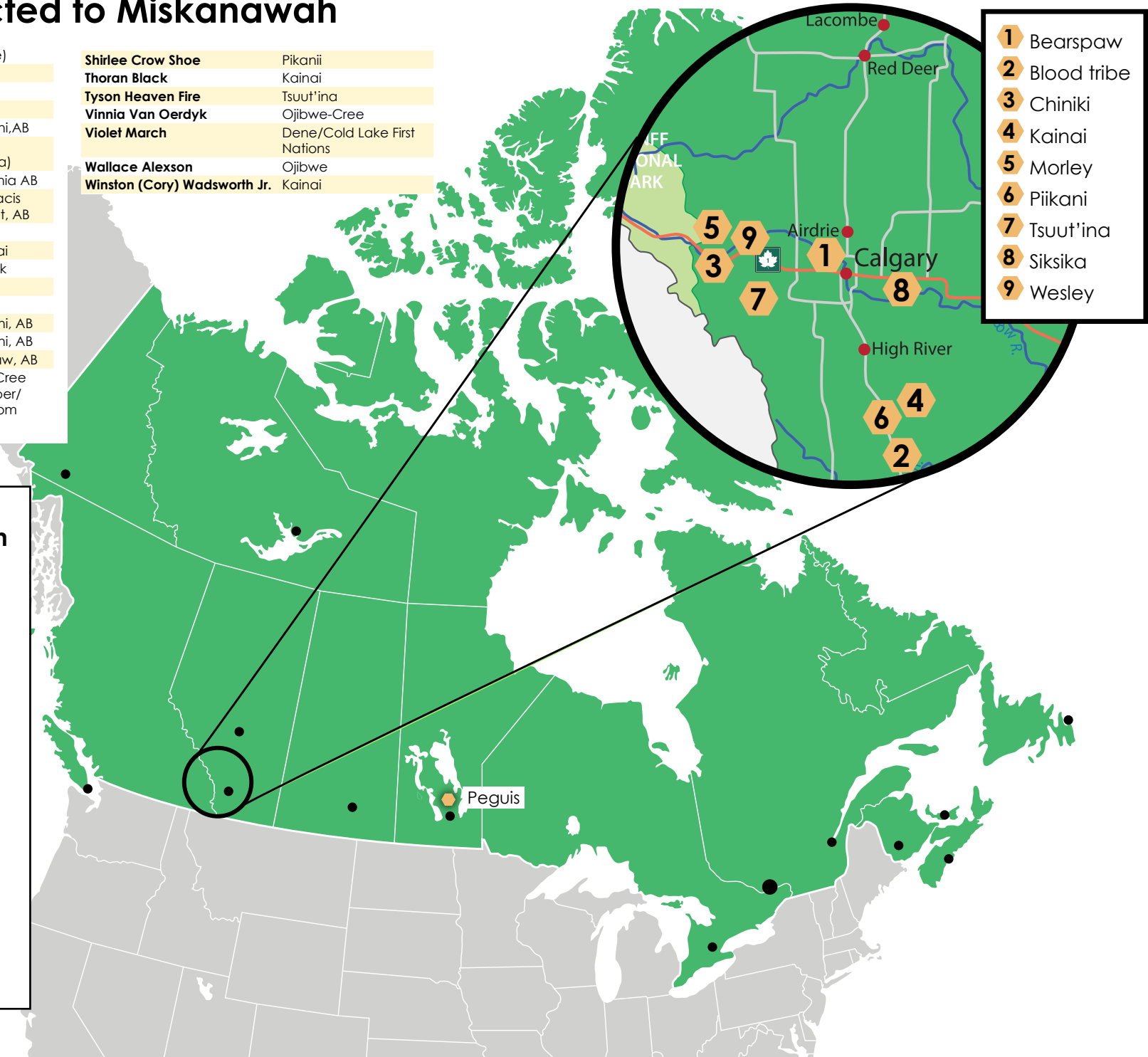
# Elders and Knowledge Keepers Connected to Miskanawah

<b>Adrian Wolfleg</b>	Blackfoot/Siksika, AB
<b>Alice Kaquitts</b>	Stoney/Wesley, AB
<b>Alvine Wolf Leg</b>	Siksika
<b>Alycia White Buffalo</b>	Kainai (Bloods), AB
<b>Anita Crowshoe</b>	Blackfoot/Kainai, AB
<b>Anita Eagle Bear</b>	Blackfoot/Kainai, AB
<b>Anne Kokak</b>	Inuit
<b>Billy Joesph</b>	Metis
<b>Blair Thomas</b>	Cree/Peguis, MB
<b>Brenda Many Guns</b>	
<b>Bryan Little Chief</b>	Siksika
<b>Casey Eagle Speaker</b>	Kainai (Bloods)
<b>Chantal Chagnon</b>	
<b>Clarence (Skip) Wolf Leg Jr.</b>	Blackfoot/Siksika
<b>Clarence Wolfleg</b>	Siksika
<b>Cynthia Provost</b>	Kainai (Bloods)
<b>Dakota Eagle Woman</b>	Ojibwe
<b>Darryl &amp; Linda Brass</b>	Cree-Ojibwe (Midewiwin)
<b>Diane Eaglespeaker</b>	Kainai
<b>Dion Neison</b>	
<b>Doreen Healy</b>	Kainai (Bloods)
<b>Duane Mistaken Chief</b>	Blackfoot/Kainai
<b>Dustin Louie</b>	
<b>Edmee Comstock</b>	Metis
<b>Eileen Black</b>	Blackfoot/Siksika
<b>Elizabeth Nadolnick- Flying Dust FN- (Plains Cree)</b>	Blackfoot/Siksika, AB
<b>Emile Ward</b>	Drift Pile FN (Plains Cree)
<b>Ernie Poundmaker</b>	Cree
<b>Evans Yellow Old Woman</b>	Blackfoot/Siksika, AB
<b>Florence Alexson</b>	Ojibwe
<b>Florence Kelly</b>	Ojibwe
<b>Francis &amp; Ruth Scalplock</b>	Siksika AB
<b>Francis Littlelight</b>	Siksika AB
<b>Gitz Derange</b>	Blackfoot, Haudenosaunee and Dene
<b>Hal Eagletail</b>	Dene/TsuuT'ina
<b>Helmer Twoyoungman</b>	Stoney
<b>Henry Holloway</b>	Chiniki Lake – (Stoney Nakoda)
<b>Herman Many Guns</b>	Siksika AB
<b>Jackie Bromley</b>	Siksika AB
<b>Janis Favel</b>	Cree, Sask
<b>Jessie Pelletier</b>	Siksika
<b>John Chief Moon Jr &amp; Sr</b>	Blood Tribe
<b>Jonathan Red Gun</b>	Siksika
<b>Kalyn Kodiak</b>	Metis
<b>Karen Wadsworth</b>	Blackfoot/Kainai
<b>Kelly Good Eagle</b>	Blackfoot Siksika, AB
<b>Kerrie Moore</b>	Cree-Metis
<b>Kida Luffrell</b>	Cree
<b>Kristen Acuna</b>	Metis

<b>Lee Crowchild</b>	Tsuu Tina (Dene)
<b>LeeRoy Meguinis</b>	TsuuT'ina
<b>Luela Henderson</b>	Dene
<b>Marion Lerat</b>	Cree
<b>Mary Simpson</b>	Blackfoot/Piikani, AB
<b>Mina Powderface</b>	Chiniki Lake – (Stoney Nakoda)
<b>Monica Chief Moon</b>	Blood tribe/Kainia AB
<b>Myra LaFrance</b>	Siksika/ Maskawacis -Cree/Blackfoot, AB
<b>Norton (Spike) Eaglespeaker</b>	Kainai
<b>Pablo Russel</b>	Blackfoot/Kainai
<b>Patrick &amp; Patricia Daigneault</b>	Cree-Metis, Sask
<b>Paul Daniels</b>	Morley
<b>Peter Daniels</b>	Dene
<b>Randy Bottle</b>	Blackfoot/Piikani, AB
<b>Reg &amp; Rose Crowshoe</b>	Blackfoot/Piikani, AB
<b>Rod Hunter</b>	Stoney Bearspaw, AB
<b>Russ Baker</b>	Ahtahkakoop Cree and Ghostkeeper/ Metis/Carrier from Lheidit'enneh

<b>Shirlee Crow Shoe</b>	Pikanii
<b>Thoran Black</b>	Kainai
<b>Tyson Heaven Fire</b>	TsuuT'ina
<b>Vinnia Van Oerdyk</b>	Ojibwe-Cree Nations
<b>Violet March</b>	Dene/Cold Lake First Nations
<b>Wallace Alexson</b>	Ojibwe
<b>Winston (Cory) Wadsworth Jr.</b>	Kainai

Click the names below to show location of each Band region:









# Community Programs

## Ka-pe-kiwehtahat (ka-pi-kiwih-ta-hat)

Cree for “bringing them home.”

Ka-pe-kiwehtahat (Cree for “bringing them home”) is a new Homelessness Prevention program for Indigenous youth, families and single adults in the Calgary community.

Miskanawah recognizes our home fire as the heart of belonging and essential to building strong, resilient Indigenous communities. Founded on the principle of Wahkotiwin: living in relationship, Ka-pe-kiwehtahat is an extension of Miskanawah's community of care, where we envision our circle of relatives supporting Indigenous children, youth, families and single adults in building their home fire using traditional approaches to healing and wellness. Through culturally grounded housing support services, Ka-pe-kiwehtahat seeks to support access to safe, affordable housing options and prevent housing breakdown for Indigenous people in the Calgary community.

### Supports Offered

The Ka-pe-kiwehtahat Housing Support Team supports Indigenous people at risk of homelessness to assess existing housing challenges and risk factors, provide available resources, create a plan for housing security, and build strategies to prevent homelessness in the future. One-time financial support is available for qualifying youth, families and single adults. Ongoing connection to cultural and social supports is provided upon request.



### Who is Eligible?

Ka-pe-kiwehtahat is a barrier-free shelter prevention and diversion program for youth, families and single adults seeking short-term housing support to remain housed and/or be supported access to safe, affordable housing.



# Nanatawiho Kamik (na-taw-i-haw ka-mik)

Cree for "healing lodge."

The Healing Lodge treatment program integrates traditional cultural values with other non-Indigenous approaches to create a **holistic approach** toward healing.

# 498

total sessions booked

# 105

individuals served

## Land-Based Healing

Miskanawah's land-based ceremonies and activities focus on **protecting the smudge, healing the spirit** and **building relatives** by engaging with traditional languages, songs, stories, and teachings within the natural surroundings of Mother Earth.

# 48

Sharing Circles

# 2

Blackfoot Tea  
Dance Ceremonies

# 4

Ceremonial Fasts

# 24

Pipe Ceremonies

# 64

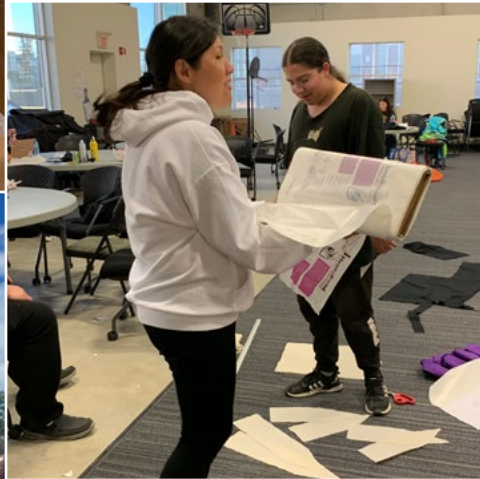
SWEAT LODGE  
CEREMONIES

# 1300+

ATTENDEES









# Family Programs

## Tawaw Family Resource Networks (ta-wow)

*Cree for “welcome, we’ve made space for you here.”*

The Tawaw Family Resource Networks (East and West) use a hub-and-spoke model of service delivery to offer a range of **early intervention and prevention** services that are grounded in Indigenous culture and teachings. This includes Cree and Blackfoot language instruction, singing and drumming.



“I am Métis but I was raised outside of the community. My father didn't tell me that I was Métis until I was about 22 years old (about 2006). After that, I began the long journey of reconnecting. A year ago, I was able to learn from my father's older cousin, that both my great grandfather and great grandmother had been fluent Cree speakers, and that my Grandma too had been a Cree speaker, before attending the convent school in Morinville.

I am very excited and grateful to be learning the language of my ancestors. **The day I picked up my textbook, I was so overwhelmed with emotion that I began to cry.** To me this is the ultimate act of resistance. The government tried to erase the language of my ancestors, but they failed. I have studied several languages and I am fluently bilingual English/French. I am so excited to apply my skills to Cree.”

-Sarah (Cree Language Class)



“The Pipe and Naming ceremony was an exceptionally impactful day for all who were gifted with the invitation to participate. Not only will our son now walk through life with a sacred connection that was not afforded to us as children, but he will do it with the support of a family with an ever-strengthening connection to our roots. **The moment our elder called on the spirits of our grandfathers and grandmothers, we felt their presence and pride.** My grandmother tended to deny or hide her own Indigenous identity due to the trauma it brought to her and her family, but at that moment I could feel her pride and her relief that this was finally her moment to celebrate openly. She danced her way into that circle and smiled the whole time.

My mom and sister were both bursting with pride from the moment they were invited. They were so excited to hear all of the details leading up to that moment and did everything they could to attend, including a 4-hour drive to be there with us that morning. When I asked my sister how she felt about the ceremony her response was ‘It was so raw, it was like just being there stripped you down to allow in new growth and the richness of ancestral teachings. The start of a new foundation, individually and as a group.’ Never having met anyone in the group, she felt welcome and belonging. Tawaw.

My best friend shed a tear for the honour of being invited to share this ceremony with us, bonding us further in our shared Indigenous roots. **The ceremony was a gift in itself, but it was even more special to able to share the experience with the other birth keepers.** Each child was given a name with such deep meaning and hearing each family's connection to the name was powerful.

It was a day we will remember always, along with the people who shared it with us.

Hiy hiy, all my relations.”

Kendall (Birth Keepers, Naming Ceremony)



# Tawaw Data\*

**259**  
Number of referrals  
(Tawaw West)

**1,036**  
Number of contacts  
(Tawaw West)

**557**  
Number of referrals  
(Tawaw East)

**2,228**  
Number of contacts  
(Tawaw East)

**896**  
people accessed cultural  
supports and programs  
(Cultural Supports)

**30**  
youth accessed this program  
(Youth Holistic Wellbeing  
Program)

**416**  
children and youth  
accessed programs  
(Aawaaksi Towata  
- Indigenous Early  
Intervention)

**287**  
parents/ caregivers  
accessed programs  
(Aawaaksi Towata  
- Indigenous Early  
Intervention)

**136**  
parents/ caregivers supported  
(Miywasin Nohkom  
- Indigenous Home Visitation)

**234**  
children supported  
(Miywasin Nohkom  
- Indigenous Home  
Visitation)

**120**  
families served  
(Miywasin Nohkom  
- Indigenous Home  
Visitation)

Note: The following spokes (Miywasin Nohkom, Aawaaksi Towata, Cultural, and Youth Holistic) data points reflect Tawaw East and Tawaw West numbers in total.



**"I really enjoyed being able to explore different sides of my mind and self. Program allowed me to re-think situations in a different light, which I really needed. To say the least, exposure to different stories helps align my judgment and how I move in the world."**



"Truly, I was overwhelmed with the feeling of being 'home' when I walked into the ceremony room and gazed about at the community moments that were taking place. In awe of the connectivity that I felt to complete 'strangers' but - all my relations - none the less. It was indeed a paradoxical moment in my life, one that I have not experienced before. **This moment I shall tuck deep into my heart for future moments of loneliness, to be reminded that I 'belong' somewhere.** Into my soul to bring forth healing of my spirit from generations of my ancestors that I have never met or even known/learned about, but I know they watch over me. Then into my mind, to recall when I have opportunities to share with those that I come across on my journey, sharing with them the community that is contained within Miskanawah."



## Tawaw Con't

### Formal Spoke Partnerships

**Rapid Access Counselling (Tawaw East & Tawaw West):** Rapid-access, on-site counselling for parents and families. Offered at Kindred (formerly known as Catholic Family Services).

**Grand Mother Turtle (Tawaw East):** Culturally safe early development programming for Indigenous children 0-6 years and their parents, grandparents, and other significant caregivers. Offered at Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society.

**Culturally Informed Youth Well-Being Program (Tawaw East):** Culturally safe and trauma-informed child and youth development programming for Indigenous children and youth ages 7-18 years and their parents, grandparents, and other significant caregivers. Offered at Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society.

**Ke Mama Nnanik – “Our Mother Earth” Parent and Child Development Program (Tawaw West):** Weekly group parent and child development activities with peer support, mentoring, Elders, and direct one-on-one supports. Open to all urban Indigenous families with young children. Offered at Métis Calgary Family Services.



#### Importance of supporting our Youth (03:14)

Elder Rose Crowshoe shares the importance of supporting our youth. She recognizes that youth do not have the same supports that were available to them growing up, to help teach them how to live a good life, how to ask for help or to process their traumas. Sufferings that stem from the impacts of Residential Schools through intergenerational trauma. She talks about how it's important to give back to the young people by supporting them.

“People will ask for help, and we will help them. Even in their most desperate times they think they're alone, and say they're going to give up. So, we encourage them, because this is the encouragement we got. There was always someone out there looking out for us. And I think for our young people, there's nobody looking out for them and that's why they feel alone. But with services like Miskanawah, these are the ones that are helping and healing, healing the parents and the youth. So, it's vital that we help.”

## Nitsanak Mamawintowak (nit-sa-nak-mama-win-to-wak)

*Cree for “families coming together.”*

Nitsanak Mamawintowak provides parents, babies and their young children with **home-based parenting** support and education from Indigenous and western perspectives. The program includes facilitated groups, created with participant contribution, to help families learn about parenting, resources, and culture while creating natural supports and building community.

2

volunteers

155

unique participants

8

community partnerships



“I love the services offered through Miskanawah and the resources – the amount of programs. **Our ways are truly embraced here** and if we can sit in circle together more frequently – to sit and speak openly with each other – I think this has such a healing impact for our community.” - *Sisters in Circle (Nitsanak Mamawintowak)*

“I draw my success and wellness from this circle. **This circle has made me a better person.** I've come a long way because of the women here. My patience and my knowledge has grown, the teachings I have learned, and the connections I have formed through Miskanawah and Sisters in Circle. I am grateful to walk such a meaningful path—from offering tobacco to the Earth, to picking the medicines, to smudging at home with my children. This is a very real representation of how far I've come.”







# Youth Programs

## Strengthening Home Fires

Operated by Miskanawah, Strengthening Home Fires (SHF) is a new Scattered Site Supportive Housing program that will support Indigenous youth to identify, access, secure, and maintain housing.

SHF is founded on the understanding that colonization, trauma and systemic discrimination are major causes of homelessness for Indigenous peoples, and that strengths-based, trauma-informed and culturally-grounded approaches to working with Indigenous youth are critical to their success and wellbeing. The program name "Strengthening Home Fires" communicates the overarching goal of creating a safe and stable place to call home.

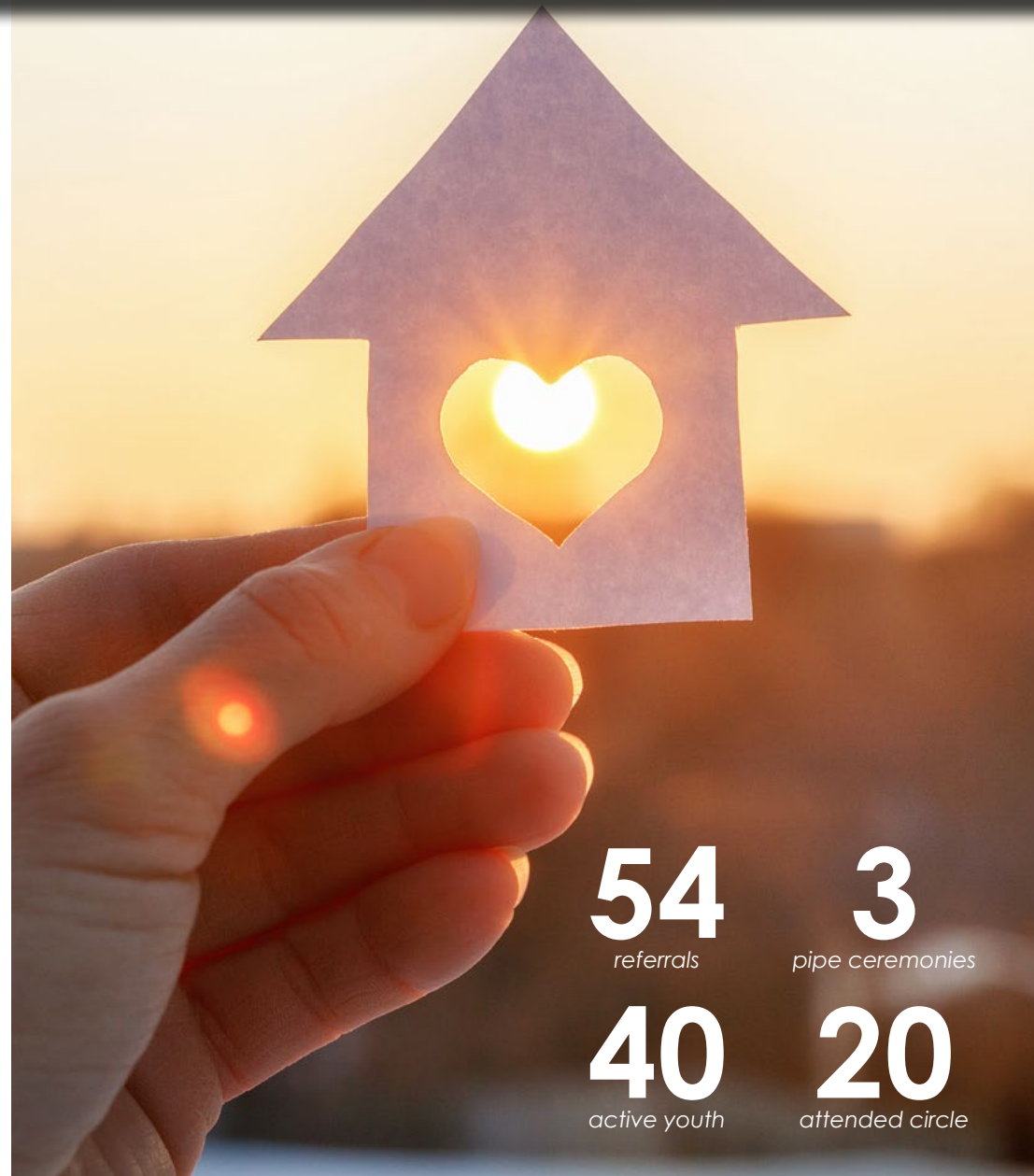
In addition, SHF will provide support to non-Indigenous homeless serving agencies to strengthen their capacity to service Indigenous youth through cultural connections and activities, such as: engaging in partnerships and outreach support, invitation to participants from other agencies/programs to take part of cultural and ceremonial activities; workshops and group-based cultural programming; healing opportunities and ceremonies; cultural awareness, competency, and humility training.

### Who is Eligible?

Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Metis, Status, or Non-Status) youth aged 14-24 who are homeless and in need of supports, and non-Indigenous youth who are open to supports that are grounded in Indigenous cultural teachings.

SHF will connect youth facing variable complexities and barriers (low to high) to housing, and will work with participants for as long as they need, or until they are ready to transition to an adult/family-serving program.

All referrals to SHF are made at the Youth Placement Committee beginning January, 2023.





# Diamond Willow Youth Lodge

Designed by young people, for young people, the lodge is a **hub** where Indigenous youth connect with peers, and participate in their own sense of healing and well-being while accessing a variety of programs and supports.

**20+** **690** **230**  
*community partnerships* *visits* *unique youth served*

**“No matter how hard life gets, think about the buffalo, the buffalo’s strength is beyond anything else, it runs into the storm until it reaches the light. Diamond Willow is where I found my shine.”**



## Diamond Willow Youth Testimonials (04:03)

In these clips the young people connected to Diamond Willow Youth Lodge share the impact that the program has had on them, how those connections have helped them overcome challenges by being a part of a community.

- “They do everything they possibly can to make sure you learn everything and that you become who you want to be.”
- “Diamond Willow is community. Diamond Willow was there for me in my hardest times. I don't think I'd be here without their help”
- “Connected through Facebook and Orange shirt day and I kept coming. It's my second home.”
- “The Alex connected me with Diamond Willow. They've given me the opportunity to reconnect with my culture, make new friends and be more social with other in the same culture group.”
- “Encouraged me and supported me through a difficult time.”
- “Diamond Willow has helped me in many ways such as getting to know my culture better and helped my social skills.”
- “Diamond Willow has brought me more out of my shell and helps with my anxiety.”







## Oskâpêwis (oska-pe-wis)

Cree for “Elder’s helper, helper at ceremonies.”

Oskapewis supports Indigenous youth to take part in land-based activities and traditional learning environments, that **connect youth** with Indigenous culture and ceremony.



### Oskapewis program (07:17)

Tricia March talks about the Oskapewis program and the importance of supporting our youth who are at risk, or are experiencing justice system involvement. She shares the personal connection and importance to her as she herself had experiences with the justice system as a youth. She discusses how it was out of a lack of connection to culture, support and guidance to stay on track that contributed to her struggles. She speaks to how the program is steeped in ceremony, teachings and opportunities to achieve things they didn’t believe were possible. **“Today I love taking part in helping our youth either get back on track or to stay on track in a high-risk society, that’s what it is. Especially for our Indigenous youth.”**

### Oskapewis Testimonials (07:17)

In these videos our young people share what the Oskapewis program means to them, they share personal challenges and take the opportunity to encourage others to join them.

- “I like to learn new things about culture and it boosts confidence.”
- “The program has helped me to become a better person. I’ve grown to be knowledgeable. Everyone is welcome.”
- “This program means community. I felt alone in my culture and that I didn’t have a right to be here. But instead I found my family. I can’t put into words what it’s done for me.”
- “It’s been a way for me to reconnect, grow and participate in learning my culture.”
- “It means tranquility and unity.”
- “I really encourage other youth who’re interested in pursuing their indigenous heritage to join.”

“Shortly after beginning her participation in the Oskayapewis Project, my daughter began to express that she had developed relationships and friendships with other youth whom she looked forward to seeing every week. Those relationships further developed into what we consider family, as the youth participated in ceremony, learned more about their culture together and began to support and trust one another. **My daughter began to show confidence in sharing her culture and the cultural support and ceremony helped to support her mental health and wellness by acting as a protective factor.** She developed relationships with the leaders of the project, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members, all of whom have acted as role models for healthy living through culture and relationships. She has grown to be more resilient, confident, and has found a strong sense of self through her involvement in the program.

Since having learned and grown with the program, my daughter convinced our youngest daughter, who is ordinarily painfully shy to join and attend with her. Within a very short period of time, she was able to connect with the leaders and other youth to explore her culture in a safe environment, where she has been able to see success in developing healthy relationships and was able to find her voice. The youth in the program truly see each other as family and refer to each other as cousins because the leaders positively emphasize the value of relationships, kindness, acceptance, and responsibility to each other. Our daughter has developed a friendship with one of the youth in the group in particular, as they have become confidants, companions, and serve as emotional supports for each other. Her confidence has soared in the small amount of time she has been involved in the project. We are incredibly grateful for the positive impact that the Oskayapewis Project has had on our children and family in such a short amount of time and are excited to see them continue to benefit from the incredible cultural supports, relationships, and people who work to offer the program to youth in Calgary.” - from a parent



# Re:Vision Youth Employment

re:VISION is focused on supporting Indigenous youth in our community to **gain employment** with employers who are open to learning about the unique needs of the Indigenous community.

- Re:Vision transitioned their Employer Training Sessions to in-person in Nov 2022.
- Re:Vision had their first Pipe Ceremony June 2022 that included stakeholders, employers working in the program and youth from the program.
- Re:Vision celebrated 2 youths in January 2023 who held their employment for 2 consecutive years.
- Onboarded Knowledge Holder Myra La France and Elder Emile Ward to support our Employer Training Sessions.
- 2 re:Vision youth were hired to help with Miskanawah's Buffalo Tracks Conference.
- Collaborated and worked with partnering employment/educational organizations like Npower, Youth Employment Centre, Momentum, Trellis, RIEL, where re:Vision youth were referred for wrap around supports.

**61**  
youth served

**15**  
youth hired

**16**  
Companies engaged

**28**  
youth who interviewed with employers

**2**  
Employer Training Sessions (Indigenous Awareness & Cultural Safety Training)



“The reVISION program helped me find a job in a field I may not have otherwise approached, and I’m very happy where I am. At the time I was just looking for any job, and now I’ve built connections somewhere I’m happy to be!”

“Thank you to re:Vision & Momentum for all the support through my employment and financial journey”

**Re:Vision Employer Quotes: (Mostly from the ETS trainings)**  
“Very grateful to have shared this experience, thankful to Myra, Emile, Tyra and Jennifer for being such wonderful facilitators & educators, thank you!”

“I really enjoyed the warm, casual and safe space to share & learn. It was very interactive and welcoming which made the learnings more effective in the training”

“I loved how welcoming everyone is and it doesn’t matter how much experience or knowledge you have, everyone is welcome”

# RAYS Regional After-Hours Youth Support

RAYS provides intervention and crisis services to children, youth, and families via the Southern Alberta Child Intervention Services. RAYS Crisis workers provide support with childcare, transportation, one-to-one support, behaviour management and medical supervision.

**253**  
clients served

**202**  
referrals

**2277**  
total number of direct hours

# Planet Youth

The Planet Youth initiative is adapted from an Icelandic model designed to **reduce substance misuse amongst youth**. Planet Youth Calgary is spearheaded by the United Way of Calgary and Area and is intended to be a long-term prevention initiative focused on the well-being and resilience of children and youth in Calgary. Miskanawah provides Indigenous parallel expertise and perspectives to the Core Partnership group in the development of the overall approach and activities related to the initiative.



## Nipisis

Cree for “young willow.”

Nipisis is a Specialized Indigenous Foster Care program designed to meet the individualized needs of Indigenous youth in a variety of **family based homes**. The program is designed to support youth who have experienced multiple placements to develop healthy relationships with families who are culturally competent and dedicated to maintaining long-term relationships with the youth.

11

youth served

25

personal goals set

637.5

average length of days stayed

67%

goals achieved



“For me, Miskanawah has always been a place where I **felt like I belonged**, and where I was valued for who I was. I have been placed with two lovely caregivers through Miskanawah, and have always felt at home with them. It's had a very significant, positive effect on the outcome of my life I think.”

## Oskipmatsahk

Cree for “young or new life.”

Oskipmatsahk provides services to young people who have transitioned out of the Nipisis foster care program and could benefit from continued **one-to-one support**.

9

Indigenous youth

32

personal goals set

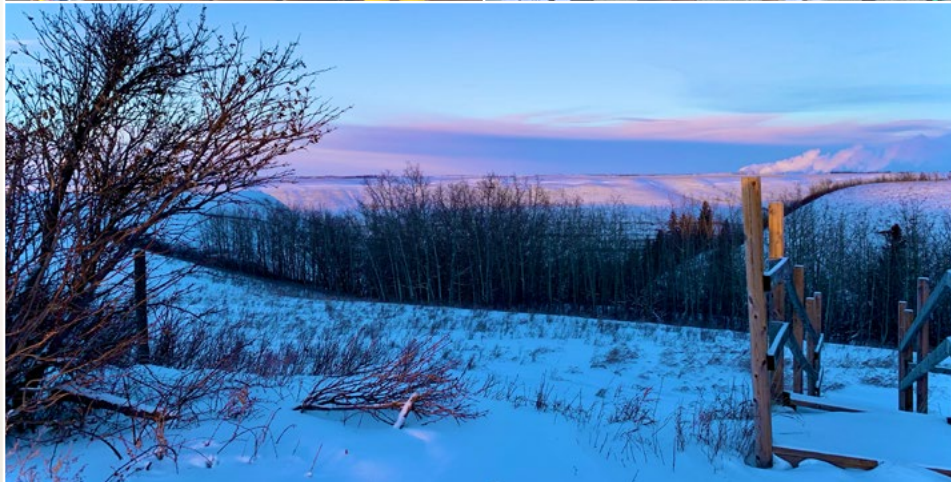
78%

goals achieved



“I was 13 when I joined what was called Pathways, but now its called Miskanawah. I was originally a Nipisis youth for 3 years then went on to be a Oskipamatsik youth. My journey with Miskanawah has been amazing. When I was thirteen I was afraid to tell people I was Indigenous - because of the stereotypes people put on Indigenous people. I didn't really know much about my culture, I felt ashamed for being Indigenous. **But Paige's team [Nipisis] helped me realize how beautiful my culture is**, and that I should wear it on my sleeve and prove people wrong about those negative stereotypes. I'll never forget the day my youth worker brought me to a sweat lodge or when Jen took me to go sage picking with our Elder Blair. Jen, my youth worker and the rest of Paige's team helped me not be ashamed about my culture and to embrace it. When I hit high school, I always told myself, I'm not gonna be another statistic of a high school dropout. I wasn't going to give people that satisfaction. I was determined to be a part of breaking the cycle of what people had to say about Indigenous youth dropping out of school. But in grade 11, that changed. That was a hard year for me and I started to believe those stereotypes because of what I was doing - I was okay with giving people that satisfaction. I started to fade away from my beautiful culture but, I remembered all the beautiful things elders' Patrick and Blair and the Diamond Willow group taught me. Miskanawah helped me realize that I can create my own path and that I can prove all those people wrong about indigenous people. So, I am creating my own path. I graduated high school and hop to attend child studies at MRU, helping other Indigenous youth create their own path.”  
- Youth has been in both Nipisis and Oskipmatsahk







# Highlights/Major Events

## Elder Capacity Camp and Cultural Celebration

August 22-25, 2022

Now in its second year, the Treaty 7 Elders' Capacity Camp and Cultural Celebration is uniquely guided by the Elders, for the Elders. This year's gathering was called with the intention to support and lend strength to one another in their healing journeys.

Over the course of four days, nearly 30 esteemed Elders representing various nations, including Treaty 7 and beyond, gathered in beautiful Kananaskis Country. Taking place August 22-25, 2022, this event was hosted by the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA), in collaboration with Mahegun Tails Inc., the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary, Miskanawah, Trellis, and ATB Financial.

[Click here for full article](#)

**30**

Elders

**6**

agency partners



## 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Truth and Reconciliation Event

September 29, 2022





## Iskwewak Mama Wellness and Medicine Making 2022

December 3, 2022

Entering into Winter Solstice and a time of shortened daylight, this workshop offered the opportunity to focus on wellness, rest and insulation. This workshop was curated for nourishing ourselves using traditional plants. Participants learned how to make their own herb-infused salves, medicinal tea blends, bath salts, bath bombs, herbal oil and vinegar infusions. All materials were provided, and participants left with a package of self-care items!

This gathering of women was medicine, where the women were filled with gratitude for importance of the teachings about clarity in mind, body, soul, the talking circle, the drum, smudge and teachings.

# 50

families registered

# 55

(55 children, 22 served by our Child Development Team)

## Iskwewak Land-Based and Traditional Wellness Workshop 2023

February 10 & 11, 2023

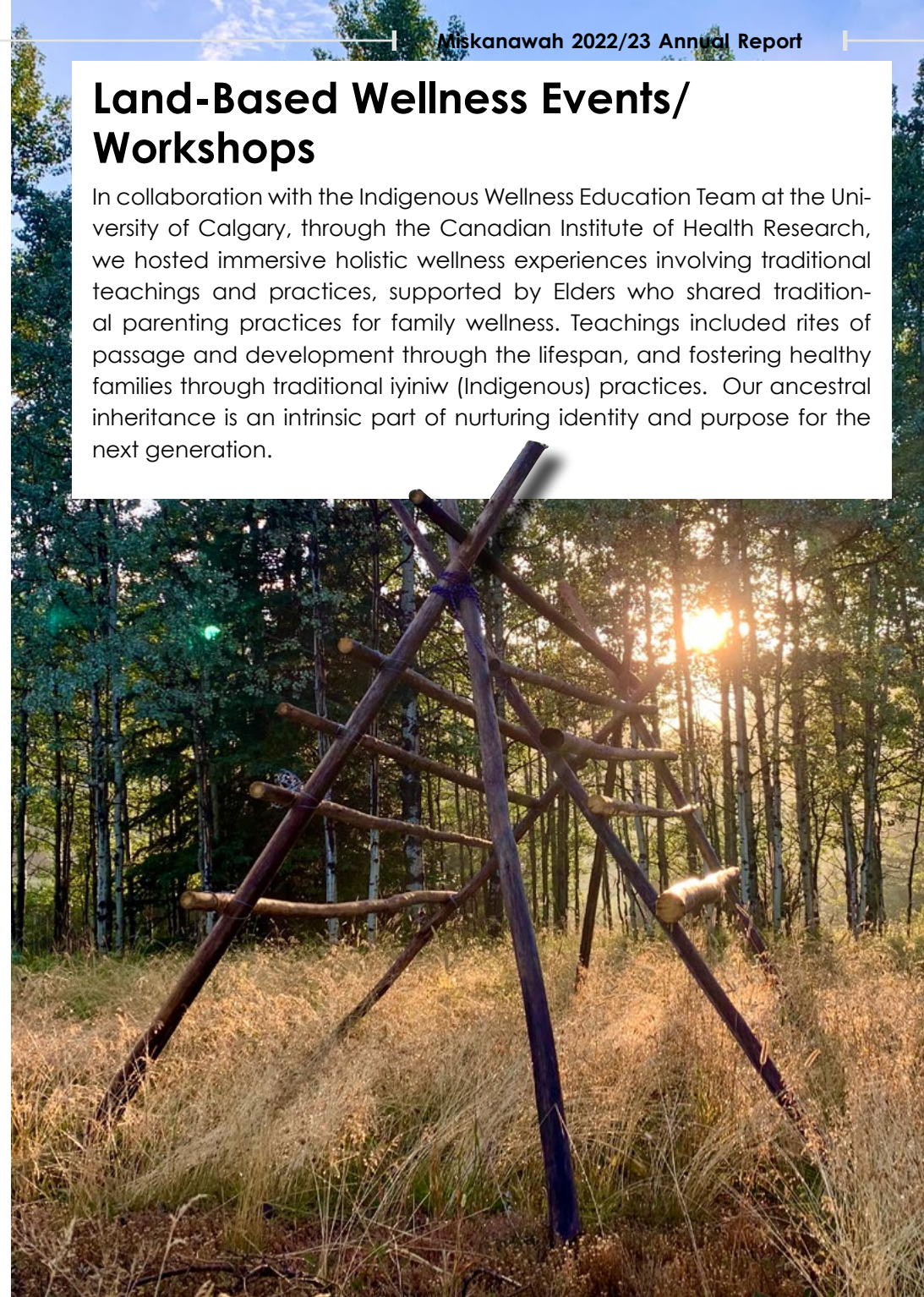
**“A LOT goes into planning an event like this, a lot of prayer, a lot of offerings, a lot of resources and a lot of sacrifices. Know that the work you do ripples out healing waves into this world with an inter-generational impact you will never fully understand in this lifetime. From what I gathered from the iskwewak relatives and the energy felt, was that a powerful space was created for breath, for shifts, for refreshment, for vulnerability, and for healing.”**

# 52

families registered  
(with 50 children, 21 served by our Child Development Team)

## Land-Based Wellness Events/ Workshops

In collaboration with the Indigenous Wellness Education Team at the University of Calgary, through the Canadian Institute of Health Research, we hosted immersive holistic wellness experiences involving traditional teachings and practices, supported by Elders who shared traditional parenting practices for family wellness. Teachings included rites of passage and development through the lifespan, and fostering healthy families through traditional iyiniw (Indigenous) practices. Our ancestral inheritance is an intrinsic part of nurturing identity and purpose for the next generation.





## 17th Annual Friendship Round Dance

On February 25, 2023, we finally hosted our Annual Friendship Round Dance in-person. With nearly **3,800 guests in attendance**, the venue permeated with drumming, singing, dancing and collective energy from the community. Miskanawah is grateful for the opportunity to come together and join hands. This event was supported by over **20 community and individual sponsors**.



## Buffalo Tracks Youth Event

On March 18, 2023, Miskanawah hosted our first annual Buffalo Tracks Youth Conference. The focus of the conference was to highlight Indigenous people thriving in their chosen field, giving back to the community, and to encourage our young people to know that no matter where they come from, what they've been through or what they are going through in life, they too can succeed. This event was funded by the Calgary Homeless Foundation.









# Financial Summary

## MISKANAWAH COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

### REVENUE

Government of Alberta Children's Services	5,262,680	71%
United Way of Calgary and Area	677,438	9%
Calgary Homeless Foundation	368,416	5%
City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services	299,868	4%
City of Calgary - Connect the Dots!	278,661	4%
City of Calgary - Crime Prevention Investment Plan	125,369	2%
Collaborative Funders' Table	96,191	1%
Donations and other contributions	92,523	1%
Calgary Foundation	85,000	1%
Interest and other revenue	55,222	1%
Government of Canada	35,845	< 1%
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	26,498	< 1%
AGLC - Casino	8,289	< 1%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,412,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

### FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Salaries, benefits and elder services	\$5,387,446	73%
Direct client and program	826,266	11%
Facility	696,985	9%
Administration	384,147	5%
Amortization capital assets	39,583	1%
Vehicle	22,471	< 1%
<b>Total Functional Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,356,898</b>	<b>100%</b>

### PROGRAM EXPENSES BREAKDOWN

Tawaw Family Resource Networks	2,341,636	32%
Mahmawi-atoskiwin	1,561,604	21%
Nipisis	874,783	12%
Regional After-Hours Youth Support (RAYS)	371,683	5%
Nitsanak Mamawintowak	300,018	4%
Nanatawiho Kamik	278,661	4%
Diamond Willow Youth Lodge	278,157	4%
Land-based Healing & Cultural Offerings	274,791	4%
Strengthening Home Fires	184,026	3%
Planet Youth Initiative	149,836	2%
Ka-pe-kiwehtahat	149,100	2%
Administration, Fundraising & Other	143,087	2%
Oskâpêwis	126,027	2%
Oskipmatsahk and RAYS Fee for Service	107,685	1%
re:Vision Indigenous Youth Employment	96,191	1%
Friendship Round Dance	49,271	1%
Buffalo Tracks Youth Symposium	35,290	< 1%
Languages Cree and Blackfoot	35,052	< 1%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,356,898</b>	<b>100%</b>

Please visit our website or [click here](#) for the full Miskanawah Community Services Association Financial Statements



# FUNDERS

Alberta Gaming And Liquor Commission

Burns Memorial Fund

Calgary Homeless Foundation

Government Of Alberta – Children's Services

Government Of Alberta – Canada Alberta Job Grant

Government Of Canada – Canadian Heritage

Collaborative Funders' Table

Stoney Nakoda – Tsuut'ina Tribal Council Ltd. (G4)

Silver Gummy Foundation

The Calgary Foundation

The City Of Calgary

The United Way Of Calgary And Area

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# DONORS

ATB Financial

ATCO

Bearspaw Benevolent Foundation

BMO

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Westburne

YMCA Calgary



Miskanawah gratefully acknowledges  
all of our funders, community partners,  
corporate sponsors, and community and  
individual donors.



**miskanawah**  
empowerment • strength • family



Click here to see Miskanawah's Annual  
Oral Truthing Ceremony 2023 (55:43)

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