

“Our language emanates from the land. And if we are to reconnect to our culture—our Indigenous ways of knowing and being—in a truly meaningful way, we need that spiritual and physical connection to Mother Earth, the land.” — Miskanawah Elder

# askiy-pimatsiwin (Earth Gives Life)

## Miskanawah Land Stewardship



**miskanawah**  
empowerment • strength • family

## Who We Are and What Inspires Us

Miskanawah (meaning “many little paths” in Cree) is an Indigenous-led charitable organization, grounded in cultural traditions and teachings, and has operated in Calgary for over 35 years. Miskanawah is a multi-service organization, offering programs and services in the areas of family support (ranging from prevention and early intervention to intervention), youth services, clinical and cultural mental health supports, crisis support, housing support, and cultural and ceremonial supports.

Central to our mission are land-based healing practices, which integrate traditional languages, songs, and teachings within the natural surroundings of Mother Earth.

Askiy-pimatswin is a natural setting where we can welcome all our relations to reconnect with culture and understand the land as our classroom and a vital, living source of knowledge. Askiy-pimatswin connects us to a deep heritage and represents a vision for the future: the continuation of Indigenous traditions, ceremonies, and healing practices grounded in and on the land.

Miskanawah has a unique opportunity to secure askiy-pimatswin: a 160-acre traditional historic site, that will preserve and promote Indigenous traditions and healing practices for future generations.

We invite you to join us in nurturing these vital connections to the land and community.



askiy-pimatswin (05:07)

Click or scan any QR code to access the video



Youth reflections on experiences at Miskanawah Moon Camp (07:57)



***The Camp gives families the freedom to learn—to be on the Land and to learn from the Land. The Land is where we come from. We don't own the Land. The Land owns us.”***  
- Métis Elder, Edmee Comstock

## Our Mission

Guided by Indigenous teachings, Miskanawah offers culturally informed, supportive services to people in the Calgary area as they strengthen their circles of self, family, community, and culture.

## Our Vision

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

Miskanawah strives to model:



**siim ohksin - Elder  
Reggie Crowshoe  
(Blackfoot Natural Law)**  
(04:06)



**wahkotiwin - Elder  
Patrick Daigneault  
(Cree Natural Law)**  
(02:50)

Connection to culture through wahkotiwin is the cornerstone of service delivery at Miskanawah, and is embedded in all areas of practice. Miskanawah maintains that relational approaches to wellness, grounded in culture and ceremony, strengthen our community capacity to heal and be a resilient people. By working in alignment with wahkotiwin, Miskanawah creates a stronger sense of community and inclusion, becoming more than an agency people can access or are referred to for services. Miskanawah becomes a community stream within itself, where those who choose to engage can miskamaso (Cree for 'discover for yourself') a wahkotiwin journey.

## Miskanawah Core Teachings



**wahkotiwin - Tara Fillo-Hunt (05:11)**

Cree Natural Law for living in relationship.  
Founded on the principles of Respect,  
Responsibility, Accountability, and Discipline.



**miyo-pimatsiwin - Ira Jairath (03:05)**

Living a good life in a balanced way so that  
you can help yourself and others.



**setoskatowin - Jennifer Fox (03:02)**

We are all well together, I will help you,  
you will help me



**nagatohke - Paige Cairns (05:07)**

Be careful; be safe.



“Wahkotiwin means in relationship with everything—with Mother Earth but in relationship with all people. When we light the smudge, we ‘call things to order’ in the Western way of thinking of it ... Now that smudge governs us and our language, it calls us to order. It governs how we speak, how we look at things, how we act.

When you start bringing the western and oral camps together with our smudge in the centre ... harvesting of knowledge is different now. It has life. Now it’s more grounded. It has truth; it has respect. It has all the things the families are looking for. Miskanawah has that. The smudge is more than the sweet-grass; it’s more than the sage.”

- Cree/Métis Elder Patrick Daigenualt, Swift Eagle



Testimonial - Mina (03:11)



## askiy-pimatswin (Earth Gives Life)

As an Indigenous-led organization, Miskanawah honors and acknowledges the land as a life source and foundation of sacred knowledge that is integral to maintaining holistic health and wellness. The knowledge embedded within the natural world brings together the teachings of wahkotiwin: living in relationship, and recognizes the importance of language, our oral stories, relationality, accountability, and a greater connection to Creator and self. Land-based ceremonies and activities offer significant benefits to Indigenous people by providing culturally relevant education, promoting opportunities for intergenerational knowledge transfer, and creating safe spaces for personal and collective healing.

Since 2018, Miskanawah has been conducting healing activities on a leased site in Foothills County, AB: 224 St East Dalmead. Askiy-pimatsiwin offers 160 acres of agricultural and recreational land, which can be accessed for hiking, fishing, and bird watching. Askiy-pimatsiwin is also a confirmed historic site that was accessed for ceremonial purposes over 500 years ago.

Miskanawah is seeking support in securing askiy-pimatswin as a sacred space to deliver cultural, land-based activities to children, youth, and families. Securing a permanent site for our land-based programs and services is a crucial priority for Miskanawah to effectively care for and steward the land for future generations. To Miskanawah, land stewardship is the reciprocal nature of **living in relationship with the land**. This means respectfully caring for the environment and cultivating a ceremonial site, to sustain the availability and continuation of essential healing opportunities for Indigenous people.



*It's really important right now. We're losing our songs. We're losing our language because we don't know oral systems ... it's so important to have a camp—something where we can bring young people to start teaching them about oral systems."*

*- Blackfoot Elder, Dr. Reg Crowshoe*



**wahkotiwin: Youth Perspective**  
- Doodle (02:42)

# Building Relatives through ReconciliACTION

Today, Miskanawah's community and cultural offerings have grown beyond a Miskanawah specific strategy, to embody a Building Relatives strategy, where Miskanawah's cultural resources, teachings and practices are relied upon heavily by our non-indigenous allies. Miskanawah has a strong reputation for being collaborators and leading a way that naturally creates ethical space between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. We understand that true Reconciliation involves learning and engagement by all communities, in an environment that welcomes collaboration, intergenerational knowledge sharing, and relational accountability.



## Truth and Reconciliation: Bringing Them Home 2024 (12:56)

Miskanawah welcomes relatives from diverse backgrounds to miskamaso (discover for yourselves) how we can walk alongside each other to enhance cultural connections, cultural understandings and Reconciliation within Moh'kinsstis. As a charitable organization, Miskanawah invites your support to ensure that these core healing opportunities are available for children, youth, and families for generations to come.

In the spirit of building relations on askiy-pimatsiwin, kinanaskomitin (we thank you).





We're talking about speaking the truth. That's all what it's about. It's speaking the truth. And having a conversation with the younger generations of what has happened, because that is the truth and that is history. And then moving it forward and reconciling. How do we know you know the truth? How do we reconcile that together and work together?"

- Dene Elder, Violet March



## References and Resources

The following resources inform our practice and may provide insight into further learning opportunities, conversations, and action. Please note this is not an exhaustive list rather potential resources for further exploration.

**Disclaimer:** We do our best to share helpful and accurate resources, but we can't promise that all websites will work or have the right information. We are not responsible for broken links or mistakes on other websites. Last updated December 2024.



References and Resources (PDF)



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LEARN MORE: [MISKANAWAH.CA](https://miskanawah.ca)

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