

Bringing Them Home

REFLECTIONS • 2024



miskanawah
empowerment • strength • family



With heartfelt gratitude, Miskanawah acknowledges the support from our sponsors, community partners, and relatives for their contributions to our recent 'Bringing Them Home' event.



Hosted by Miskanawah, **Bringing Them Home** offered a traditional four-day sacred fire that took place October 1 until the early morning of October 5, in honour of National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Bringing Them Home is a dedicated commemoration gathering to honor and take care of our Elders, the survivors, and the children who never made it home.

Importantly, **Bringing Them Home** extended an invitation to Elders and survivors within Miskanawah's community network to participate in collective healing. Grounded in the teachings of wahkotiwín (Cree Natural Law of interconnection and kinship), connecting our Elders, survivors, and the spirits of those who never made it home to the land and sacred fire was at the heart of this offering. We wish to honour and acknowledge the circle of **16 Elders** who joined us on the land: Patrick and Patricia Daigneault, Reg and Rose Crowshoe, Ruth Scalplock, Francis Melting Tallow, Wallace and Florence Alexson, Linda and Darryl Brass, Emile Ward, Elizabeth Nadolnick, Violet March, Casey Eagle Speaker, Bryan Ernest and Bertha Twin.



In a deeply meaningful turn, this event is centered on the experience of our Elders, who have long dedicated themselves to others, offering their wisdom, healing, and spiritual guidance. This event provided a sacred space for our Elders to replenish their spirits, find solace, and support them in their own healing journey. A special occasion for the Elders, who often place the community's needs before their own, were the recipients of collective care and intentional healing. **Bringing Them Home** was a humble way for the community to express gratitude and give back by supporting our Elders and Knowledge Keepers in strengthening their own Home Fires.



Bringing Them Home honored intergenerational healing for survivors of residential schools, their families and the children who never made it home, through the following offerings:

- 4-day Sacred Fire Ceremony
- Opening Pipe Ceremony
- Ceremonial Sweat Lodge
- Sharing Circle
- Prayer Round Dance
- Traditional Feast
- Cultural Gifting (ceremonial gifts and honoraria)
- Ceremonial Offerings; in honor of our children that never made it home

In the words of Elder Emile Ward:

“To be recognized as an elder and to be respected that way. It’s overwhelming.”

In the words of Elder Bertha Twin:

“People here have a great deal of respect for the elders. And that’s what stood out for me is, being taken care of in any way.”



In the words of Oskapewis, Chris W.:

“There’s just something about being out at the land that brings out that opportunity for people to express themselves in a safe way. You know, we practice love and acceptance out here, where we come from a place of non-judgment.”

In the words of Elder Bryan Ernest:

“What stood out about the camp was the talking circles. They’re really emotional, like, I really felt all the emotion; I spoke with an open heart because that’s what I feel here. It’s like family.”

In the words of Elder Patrick Daigneault:

“Inviting people to come into this space and sharing that perspective of coming back to the land, coming back to the sacred fire, to the smudge, to the drumming, to the song, to the ceremony itself, and sharing in a circle of healing. Not only from residential school but from being a colonized people. And sharing that perspective and listening to those stories. It’s very emotional. It’s very raw.”









In the spirit of **reconciliACTION**, Miskanawah welcomed community partners and relatives from diverse backgrounds to contribute to **Bringing Them Home** through donations, community engagement, and volunteerism in an effort to strengthen cultural capacity building within Moh’Kinsstis. Helpers, witnesses and supporters were impacted through the principle of reciprocity, bringing forth a collective awareness and healing experience.

A special thank you to the following organizations who dedicated volunteers to support our Elders during the 4-day Sacred Fire Ceremony: **Aramark, Burns Memorial Fund, Calgary Homeless Foundation, Inn from the Cold, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association, Momentum, Radiance, and Trellis**. Because of the strength and solidarity of our community volunteers, Knowledge Keepers and Oskapewis (Cree for ‘Elder’s helper’), our Elders felt valued, supported and held by community throughout the 4-day ceremony.

**In the words of
Knowledge Keeper, Brenda-Dean H.:**

“It’s all moving to me. The friendship, the love that is here, the generational love, the respect for the elders, for the children. And you know, for celebration, for culture.”



**In the words of
Elder Violet March:**

"We're talking about, you know, 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?"



**In the words of Youth
Oskapewis, Olivia March:**

"I would say the wisdom from all the elders, listening to their teachings and just, being here in all the ceremony and this sweat lodge, and being by the sacred fire."





nanâskomowin (gratitude) to our funders and sponsors:

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A special note of gratitude is extended to our Fire Keepers, the Miskanawah Cultural Team and the Planning Committee for their dedication and tireless efforts in organizing, hosting, and cooking for **Bringing Them Home**. Their commitment to this event did not go unnoticed, and it played an integral role in creating an atmosphere of healing, warmth, and community.

As we reflect on the impact of **Bringing Them Home**, we recognize the power of community and shared healing. This event has ignited a spark that we hope will continue to burn brightly in the hearts and minds of all those who participated. Looking to the future, Miskanawah hopes to build on this offering for our Elders, in creating and growing land-based initiatives that promote intergenerational healing within our community.



Photo credit: Miskanawah's staff took all these fantastic photos during Bringing Them Home.

Cover: Will Grant

Page 2-3: Kenzie Webber

Page 4: Will Grant (top), Tara Fillo-Hunt (middle left), Kenzie Webber (middle row), Jen Fox (bottom)

Page 5: Paige Cairns (top left), Kenzie Weber (top right, bottom left & bottom right)

Page 6-7: Will Grant (top left), Ellie Henderson (top right), Kenzie Webber (middle row left, bottom),

Paige Cairns (middle row: middle & middle right)

Page 8-9: Kenzie Webber (top left, middle row: left & middle, bottom left & right), Orlean Twin (middle right),

Ellie Henderson (top right)

Page 10: Kenzie Webber (top left, middle), Tara Fillo-Hunt (top right, bottom)

Page 11: Kenzie Webber (left & right)

Back Cover - Top row: Tara Fillo-Hunt, Ellie Henderson, Kenzie Webber, Will Grant

Middle row: Tara Fillo-Hunt, Kenzie Webber Bottom row: Kenzie Webber



Click or scan to watch our 2024 Truth and Reconciliation: Bringing Them Home reflection video.