

MISKANAWAH ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022



[▶ Protecting the Smudge with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle \(02:00\)](#)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault discusses the sacredness of smudging and the power this form of prayer brings into Miskanawah's work. Miskanawah lives by the mandate, "protecting the smudge" which guides Miskanawah's work with our relatives. Here, Elder Patrick describes the power of smudging that is tied to the blessings one asks for and the importance of "speaking below the smudge". For Indigenous peoples, smudging acts as a "call to order" and the Spirit of the smudge carries these words and protects these blessings. At Miskanawah, "protecting the smudge" means we are protecting the words of our relatives, honouring their blessings, and holding ourselves accountable as both relatives and helpers. **"Once that smudge is lit and the prayers are done – for us Indigenous people it's like a "call to order"...whatever we are talking about resonates with the Spirit of the smudge" – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**



miskanawah
empowerment • strength • family



Click this icon to play a **video**



Click this icon to play an **audio file**

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Letter from the CEO

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

2020-2021 brought immense change to Miskanawah, as the world continued to grapple with a global pandemic we continued to develop, change, and adapt. Despite challenges, there were frequent opportunities for celebration. We were able to honour our Elders with an in-person Elders Gala in our newly renovated Gathering Space. We held our annual Friendship Round Dance in-person and virtually with our relatives in Moh'kins'tsis, and beyond. We forged a new and exciting partnership with United Way to embark on the Planet Youth initiative; an Icelandic prevention model proven to reduce substance misuse amongst youth and positively impact other life and health outcomes. We stepped into the Homelessness sector for our relatives, moved our Land-based cultural programming, celebrated our first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and held a beautiful naming ceremony for our Indigenous Home Visitation program. We are pleased to introduce Miywasin Nohkom which translates to "my good Grandmother".

At the end of the year, we were notified of a shift in priorities in the Ministry of Children's Services, and with that the coming closure of our Mahmawi-atoskiwin program. While this news came as a shock we continue to be so filled with gratitude for the care that the Mahmawi-atoskiwin team has provided our relatives. Some have moved on to new opportunities outside of Miskanawah while many have transitioned into new roles within Miskanawah. Because Mahmawi-atoskiwin was created in ceremony our Elders remind us that there is no closing of a spirit, instead, we look forward to creating new paths in how we honour and feed the vision and spirit of Mahmawi-atoskiwin.



As times remain uncertain and we all adjust to this new normal between pandemic and endemic, Miskanawah continues to shift and lead with culture. Our cultural mandate Protecting the Smudge will guide and prepare us in protecting our relatives and finding innovative ways to offer programming. Challenges will arise and will be met by our passion and dedication to our relatives and the communities we serve. Please join me in celebrating another year of growth, healing, and spirit here at Miskanawah.

Hiy Hiy; Kinanaskomitin

Kirby Redwood CEO

Oldman Rockboy

Letter from the Board

To our Stakeholders and Community Members

2021 Board Members

Bruce Randall *Board Chair*

Executive Director at Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC)

Daniel Rochon *Treasurer*

Alex Montiel *Secretary*

Director of Projects and Engagement at Pro Bono Law Alberta

Jay Gerritsen *Director*

Senior Consultation Advisor, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada at Government of Canada

Holliston (Holly) Logan *Director*

Indigenous Program Coordinator at Cybermentor, University of Calgary

Robert Hamilton *Director*

Assistant Professor at UofC, Faculty of Law

Kaitlin Naglis *Director*

Controller at Tsuu T'ina Nation

Lana Garcelon *Director*

Robert (Bob) Grier *Director*

Associate Director Sales/Business Development Energy at S&P Global

Jennifer Findlay *Wahkotiwin Director*

Senior Manager, ESU Services at Pembina Pipeline Corporation

William (Bill) Dickson *Wahkotiwin Director*

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

Thank you for allowing me to share greetings and observations once again from Miskanawah's Board of Directors. As Chairperson of the Board, I am truly blessed 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 of 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.

This past year has been difficult, challenging us at every turn.

The on-going coronavirus pandemic may have changed the way we delivered our many services and programs, but it did not change the care and attention we brought to our families. Miskanawah proved to be flexible and adaptable in its approach to ensure we met the needs of our community.

Kirby spoke to the many ways in which Miskanawah continued to develop, change and adapt – these are indeed the means by which our organization will continue to serve the community.

One of the key developments amongst the Board, Kirby and team has been our collective deepening of our understanding of **Wahkohtow-in, Cree for the interconnectedness of relationships, communities and the natural world all around us**. This is our governance framework that helps ensure we can continue to support our community.

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.

Teachings

with Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle

▶ Pipe Ceremonies (02:41)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault discusses the importance of **pipe ceremonies**: a traditional Indigenous practice where cloth and tobacco are offered, medicines such as sweetgrass and sage are lit, and both the space and those who are present, are smudged. All Miskanawah meetings and gatherings begin with a smudge and larger bi-monthly pipe ceremonies where both relatives and Miskanawah staff can participate, are held in our NE Miskanawah location. Elder Patrick describes how smudging brings good energy, good conversations, and sets good intentions for conversations at hand. Click here to learn more about pipe ceremonies from Elder Patrick and the value they bring to the work we do for our families, here at Miskanawah. **“The reason why we do the pipe ceremony with our staff is to bring good energy, bring conversation, make people comfortable about what you’re doing...how can we support...we’re putting spirit to those issues” – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

▶ Sitting in Circle (02:31)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault describes the act of **sitting in circle**: an important Indigenous tradition that honours both the Wahkotowin way and acts as a “call to order” for all individuals within the circle. Circles give respect, equality, voice, and spirit to those engaged in the circle and guide Miskanawah’s evaluation and assessment processes as living oral documents. **“We are not linear thinkers – we think in circle” – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

▶ Sweat Lodges (02:16)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault discusses the value of **sweat lodge**. By making this traditional Indigenous ceremony accessible to our relatives, Miskanawah is providing an important cultural healing practice to both staff and families. **“There aren’t a lot of places or venues that they [Indigenous families] can go to do pipe ceremony or sweat...and they say, ‘wow, I can go to the sweat lodge and bring my family’” – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

▶ Wahkotowin (02:50)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault explains **Wahkotowin** (wah-kow-teh-win): the Cree Natural Law of interconnection and kinship. Wahkotowin 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”. Wahkotowin 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. **“Wahkotowin means in relationship with everything – with Mother Earth but in relationship with all people” – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

▶ Oral Traditions (02:19)

In this video, Elder Patrick Daigneault discusses the importance of **oral traditions** within the program evaluations process. Elder Patrick has been with Miskanawah since its former Pathways days and works hard to ensure that parallels are created between both Western and Indigenous knowledge systems as Miskanawah programming is developed and assessed for our relatives. Click here to listen to Elder Patrick describe the power of oral story-telling and the impact this has on the evaluations process by amplifying the voices of relatives, sharing stories in ceremony, and speaking from a place of authenticity and honesty. **“The Western way has always been written...how we evaluate programs at Miskanawah is through an oral way and we allow people to speak about the programs...we are paralleling that” – Elder Patrick Daigneault, Swift Eagle**

▶ Elder Elizabeth Nadolnick on Working with Relatives (14:01)

As an Elder, Elizabeth Nadolnick, is often called upon for her expertise, wisdom, and lived experiences to help Miskanawah relatives when they need it most. Elder Elizabeth shares the power of listening and sharing her own life experiences with others to help Indigenous relatives live better lives. Click the sound icon to listen to Elder Elizabeth share a story about a Metis single-mother that was struggling to connect with her culture, language, addiction, abuse, and separation from her children. Through Elder Elizabeth’s guidance and support, this young woman was able to overcome her hardships and learned to accept herself. **“They want to know more about the medicines...they want to know more about the teachings... all the cultural stuff” – Elder Elizabeth Nadolnick**

Family Programs

TAWAW - Family Resource Network

Miywasin Nohkom

(Indigenous Home Visitation)

On March 28, 2022, Indigenous Home Visitations was gifted a Cree name: Miywasin Nohkom; meaning "My good grandmother." Tawaw's Indigenous Home Visitation program works with families with children ages 0-6, in their homes through a family-centered approach. The program offers connection to culture, ceremony and Elder supports and strengthen the families' connections to community and needed supports. In-home sessions focus on parental capacity building and awareness of each child's development.



"Thank you for being there and teaching me, big impact on me and I take it all in, and yes because of how loving I am and of who we are, I stand strong. I'm excited to join the groups again, and fully be welcome on learning. As at times I have had times on sick days, and stay in to listen, but I'm excited to be more able to learn. I'm a woman who is honored to be a part of this group and many more. I will not stop learning our ways, and share with my own family, always. You're making a positive outcome and happily with your spirit and soul, you being a part of ours. I'll not forget you in my prayers. I love the gift of breastfeeding you gave me hope and I'm happy to say I'm full time breastfeeding mommy. I'm happy, but sad, only cried hard because those fears and tears needed to shed yesterday. I'm more alive, and spiritually awoken."



Tawaw ("welcome, we have made space for you here" in Cree)
– Family Resource Network (01:04)

Listen to a young woman who felt lost and needed Miskanawah's support. Through community and the aid of Elders, this young single-mother was able to find her path.

Cultural Program

Tawaw Cultural Programs connect children, youth and families to culturally relevant supports. Elder supports and ceremony are integrated into program offerings and programming changes over time based on family needs.

"Facilitator had done a little exercise that had demonstrated how self-reflection through reaffirming one's identity can help to strengthen one's position as a parent and make parental goals more apparent". - Father's Moving Forward

"I am hopeful that all these practice put me on the right path, and that circle always helps me". - Iskwewak Circle



A single mother of 3 moved to Calgary from Winnipeg, fleeing an abusive partner. She was able to keep her family safe in an emergency shelter but has limited family support in Calgary and didn't know what resources were available. She was interested in getting involved with Miskanawah for resources, especially cultural resources. One of the first ways we were able to support her well-being was by providing a smudge kit and sage, she likes to smudge with her children on a daily basis and was grateful be able to do this now. She was referred for Elder support to help deal with the trauma she experienced, and was working with Victims Assistance to get a protection order and a parenting order. She recently became aware that her former partner was now in Calgary knew where she lived, we were able to come up with a safety plan in case he showed up and have advocated with the second stage family violence shelters to get her into one of these units. She said she really appreciates the help she has received and having someone to talk to during these difficult time.



A Relative's Story: Cree Classes (03:23)

Listen to Jackie M., one of Miskanawah's beginner Cree Class students', as she discusses her lived experiences of struggling to connect with her language as a Cree woman. Despite her shyness, Miskanawah's Cree classes helped Jackie accept her own learning processes and grow. Click the sound icon to hear Jackie tell her story of overcoming her language fears, develop a new-found closeness to her culture, and hold a fluent conversation in Cree. **"When I saw the opportunity to learn my language...I jumped on it and I am so grateful for this class because it has healed a lot of hurt that I had related to my language"** – Jackie M., Miskanawah Relative

TAWAW Con't

Early Intervention

The program offerings acknowledge and integrate Indigenous cultural teachings from our Elders and Knowledge Keepers that span over centuries. It is an intrinsic part of nurturing identity and purpose for the next generation—our children, the most sacred and precious gifts who are at the center of this Circle. Our team along with Elder and knowledge keeper support, have taken the nurturing parenting curriculum and created an indigenous perspective filled with teachings and offerings of traditional parenting in a good way.

By nurturing the spirit of our children through their caregivers, they flourish within a beautiful exchange rooted in the story of resiliency and survivance.

"I learned that it is ok to talk about deep feelings and that there are lots of ways to deal with grief and loss. I think that it's good to learn about the negative effects as well as the positive ones so that we can be aware of both sides."

- Spirit of Forgiveness



"Ben [name changed] is an enthusiastic participant in the Little Wonders program. He loves to watch Little Wonders on Zoom, creating his own set up of stuffed animals and puppets to interact with while singing and reading with the group. He also did crafts about the 7 sacred animal teachings to show the group with great pride. He often led the home practice activities with confidence by reciting the numbers, colours, and the 7 sacred animals in Cree, as part of our group teachings. He articulated the Cree language masterfully. He enjoyed the opportunity of coming to participate in-person in August and was a wonderful cohort to Miss Natalie. Ben also came in person to experience rock-painting in the Free Spirit art program with Nouran. He was excited and engaged by the hands-on and sensory-based activities. Ben made everyone's heart happy through his joyful and curious spirit".

Tawaw Data

23 PARTICIPATED IN
FAMILY DRUMMING
WITH **43**
CHILDREN

60 PARTICIPATED IN
HOME VISITATIONS
WITH **22**
GRADUATED

2 FULL REGISTRATION
BLACKFOOT CLASS
WITH **32**
PARTICIPANTS

36 ELDERS
CONNECTIONS
WITH **41**
FAMILIES PARTICIPATING

20 WOMEN
PARTICIPATED IN
ISKWEWAK CIRCLE

Nitsanak Mamawintowak

Nitsanak Mamawintowak ("families coming together" in Cree) supports families with young children and expecting mothers, through one-on-one, in-home and group-based supports in child development, parenting, family cohesion, connection to cultural resources and supports, and life skills.

“I’m so grateful for the opportunity to fast. Many of our people do not have access to Elders to help facilitate fasts in a good way. We are so lucky. It is important we take these few days for ourselves and our healing.”

“Having a team to rely on for support, ceremony and friendship is what made the difference for us working during the toughest day of the pandemic.”

Mahmawi-atoskiwin

Mahmawi-atoskiwin ("a group of people coming together to work as one" in Cree) works to increase the overall well-being of Indigenous families involved with Children's Services through parental capacity building and addressing issues that create unsafe or unhealthy home situations. The integration of Indigenous culture is fundamental to the delivery of the program. Mahmawi-atoskiwin also offers supported visitation services so that children and their families can stay connected.

39

families engaged in Supported Visitation

3367

total number of visits

Nitsanak Mamawintowak (03:16)

Listen to Janis Favel, one of Miskanawah's Home Visitors within the Nitsanak Mamawintowak program ("families coming together" in Cree) and from Treaty 4 Kawacatoose and Gordon's First Nations community, discuss what it's like working at Miskanawah: a place where you can start your day by grabbing a coffee and having a smudge. Click the sound icon to learn more about the importance of asking Indigenous relatives who they are, where they are from, who are their people, their connections to land, the role of aunts, and the trust and relationships that Janis has built within her time at Miskanawah since 2016. **"For many of our families, they don't have the answers to these questions...through colonization, residential schools, the 60's Scoop, and today's current child welfare system many people have lost these connections to their communities or to themselves...I feel very privileged to help people find the answers to these questions"** – Janis Favel



Mahmawi-atoskiwin ("a group of people coming together to work as one"): Sharing Stories (02:45)

In this video, listen to some of our Mahmawi-atoskiwin leadership team share fond memories and stories during their time with Mahmawi-atoskiwin: an intervention support program for Indigenous families involved with Children's Services. Although this program will be coming to an end as of December 2022, Mahmawi-atoskiwin has helped hundreds of families and children over the years by providing parenting supports, strength-building, enhancing safety and wellness, and cultural and natural supports. **"What stands out for me is the connection to ceremony and Elders and how we are encouraged to participate with our families and learn and grow together – I am going to miss that"** – Ira Jairath, Program Manager with Mahmawi-atoskiwin

Youth Programs

Re:Vision Youth Employment

The Re:Vision program supports Indigenous youth, ages 18-29, to find employment that meets their needs. The program offers ongoing support from pre through post-employment, through one-to-one mentorship in areas such as resume preparation, connection with employers, and interview practice. The program also works with employers in the Calgary area who are interested in better supporting the Indigenous community, by offering trainings and support on Indigenous cultures, intergenerational trauma, colonization, contemporary Indigenous experiences, and how to better support Indigenous employees in the workplace.

32

Youth who joined

12

Employers engaged in program

Diamond Willow Youth Lodge

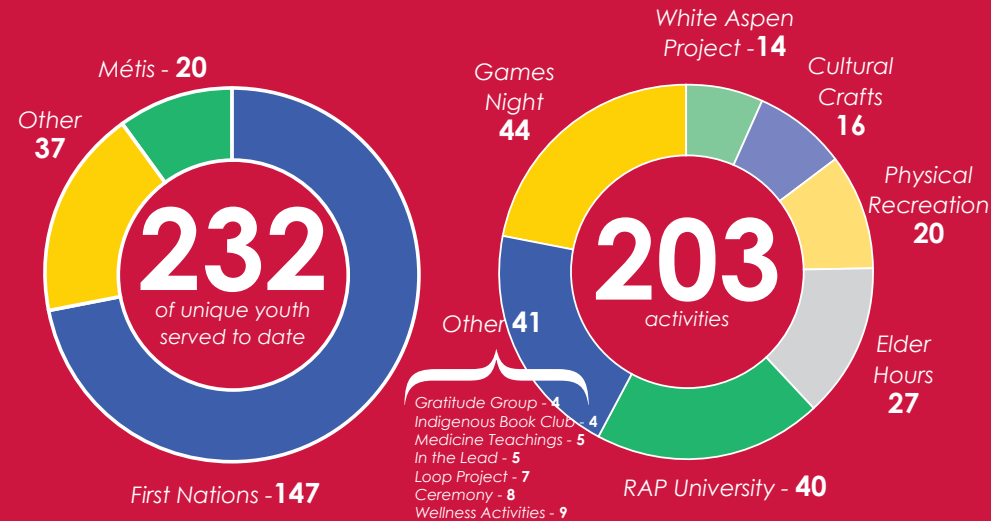
Diamond Willow Youth Lodge is a safe, welcoming place designed by young people, for young people. The lodge is a hub where youth connect with peers and participate in their own healing and well-being, while accessing a variety of programs and supports. Which combine cultural learning and self-discovery with health and wellness to foster creative expression, leadership development, and positive connections with peers, family, and in the community.

53

unique facilitators/
Elders/staff

19

Average age of
Youth Participants



Re:Vision (02:27)

Re:Vision, a unique pilot program within Miskanawah that works closely with Indigenous youth and local Calgary-area employers to foster employment opportunities for Indigenous youth, is making waves within our communities. Listen to Tyra Vedan, Indigenous Employment Strategist with Re:Vision, describe how Indigenous cultural values that honour community and treating guests as relatives, living by Wahkotowin, relationship-building, and wellness assist Tyra's work as both an Indigenous person and mentor. Re:Vision exemplifies Miskanawah's Indigenous and Western paralleled approach which aids Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives to work and cohabitate, together. **"Re:Vision operates in the importance of working and living within Wahkotowin values which means there is always a high prioritization of connection, relationships, and community"** – Tyra Vedan

Diamond Willow Youth Lodge (02:29)

In this video, listen to one of our youth staff from Diamond Willow Youth Lodge (DWYL) discuss all of the amazing programming and activities that the Lodge has to offer. DWYL is Miskanawah's in-house, youth-led, drop-in centre for youth ages 12 – 29 years where youth have the opportunity to experience Indigenous cultural activities, programming that interests them, and the opportunity to spend time with other youth with shared interests. **"It's nice to have a space where you can get together with fellow Indigenous people and connect together through food, culture, and music...connecting with people who you have similar stories with...and I think it's important to have that support...especially for youth that feel misunderstood"** – Youth Staff Member with Diamond Willow Youth Lodge

Nipisis & Oskipmatsahk

Nipisis means “young willow” In Cree and the program was formally know as Indigenous Mentor Homes. The program is designed to move Indigenous youth, many who have experienced multiple out-of-home placements, towards permanency within a culturally supportive home environment. Youth are supported in building a solid foundation of trust and mutual respect so that they may go out into the world as strong, healthy, positive, contributing individuals within the community.

Oskipmatsahk supports youth who are transitioning out of a Nipisis placement, who can still benefit from ongoing support and cultural opportunities. We work with youth towards community engagement, cultural supports, family connection, basic needs support and homelessness prevention.

9

youth served

67

goals achieved

16

youth supported

79%

personal goals set were reached (47 goals total)



C has been in Nipisis for almost two years. He is 13 years old and this is the longest time he has remained in one placement since coming into care at a very young age. C came to Nipisis as an “emergency respite placement”. There had been a breakdown at his previous foster home and there were no foster care beds available. Although Nipisis homes are only licensed for one youth (unless it is a sibling group), Nipisis Team Leader and The Placement Services Office Team made the decision to place C in a mentor home that already had another youth placed, under “respite” on an emergent basis. The plan was for C to move to a new placement as soon as one could be identified. After 2 months, C was still in “Respite” at the Nipisis home and the case team as well as C advocated that C be placed in the home permanently. Although there had been some significant behavioral struggles, the case team indicated that C was the most stable and successful in the two months that he had been in the Nipisis Home than he had been ever. After much consultation, the decision was made to increase the license in the home to 2, to accommodate the request of the case team and C. Almost two years later, C remains in the Nipisis home and has found continuous stability and success. His caseworker praises the strides that C has demonstrated over the past 2 years and attributes much of his success to his Nipisis Parents and the Nipisis program. C’s challenging behaviors have decreased and he appears very attached to the Nipisis Parents. C’s school has also attributed his academic and social success to the care, consistency and love he has found in his Nipisis home. We are incredibly proud of the strength and determination that both C and the Nipisis Parents have shown over the past two years.



Nipisis (“young willow” in Cree) and **Oskipmatsahk** (“young lives” in Cree) (06:04)

In this audio recording, Nipisis and Oskipmatsahk program staff describe what it's like to help youth as they navigate foster living and transition into adulthood. Nipisis is a family-based residential support program for Indigenous youth ages 10 – 18, who are housed in mentor homes where fostering parents help these youth participate in cultural practices, learn about their heritage, partake in Indigenous community supports, help with social/emotional skill development, and cultural identity. All Nipisis youth are assigned a Youth Support Worker that helps them develop goals, navigate school, and develop a strong sense of self. Oskipmatsahk is the transition program from Nipisis once youth are ready to leave their mentor homes and adjust to adult-living. Follow this link to hear from Paige Cairns (Team Lead of Nipisis and Oskipmatsahk), Jen Fraiser (Youth Support Worker), Sheila Sharma (Family Strategist), and Marlowe Lindsey (Nipisis and Oskipmatsahk staff), discuss the importance of culture, story-telling, and Indigenous identity in both their work and in the lives of youth they walk beside. **“I am incredibly blessed to have had the opportunity to experience culture directly influence my professional and personal growth and healing...I have increased my personal accountability within all my relationships...in turn, this has allowed me to strengthen my commitment to Creator, Mother Nature, my community, and my relatives...” – Paige Cairns, White Raven Woman**

RAYS Regional After-Hours Youth Support

RAYS provides intervention and crisis services to children, youth, and families via the Social Service Response Team with Calgary and Area Children's Services. RAYS Crisis workers provide support with childcare, transportation, one-to-one support, behaviour management and medical supervision.

252
children and youth
last year

Oskayapewis Project

The Oskayapewis Project engages youth who are at risk of involvement or re-involvement in crime. The program aims to enhance resilience and wellness by connecting youth with their own Indigenous identities, Elders, traditions and to the land through Oskayapewis and Wahkowitz teachings. Teachings are reinforced with creation stories, Laws and ceremony.

19
individual
participants

18
Average age of
Youth Participants



My family is Métis Cree from my mother's side and Irish/Newfie on my father's side. My mother's family was always raised as being "FRENCH". It wasn't until 2011 when Nevaeh was 5 and starting kindergarten that we discovered our truth (our ancestry).

[\[Click for full story \(PDF\)...\]](#)

RAYS: Regional After-Hours Youth Support (01:13)

RAYS is one of Miskanawah's most valued youth outreach programs. This team of specialized crisis-response staff work tirelessly to assist youth and their families during evenings, weekends, and holidays as unique crisis work arises. Whether a youth needs a lift to a safe place or a family is in need of crisis intervention or counselling, RAYS staff are there to help. Listen to Karleen Van Dyck, Crisis Worker on the RAYS team describe the impact this work has had on her as both a teacher, learner, and counsellor. **"We are all humans and deserve dignity and love from everyone"** – Karleen Van Dyck, Crisis Worker with RAYS



Community Programs

Healing Lodge

The Healing Lodge at Miskanawah is a safe and caring healing therapeutic environment designed specifically for Indigenous people. We offer culturally appropriate services and programs to individuals and families in a way that incorporates Indigenous values, traditions, and beliefs. The Healing Lodge treatment program integrates traditional cultural values with other non-Indigenous approaches to create a holistic approach toward healing. These values and practices foster respect, honesty, generosity, strong cultural identity and hope for positive life changes.

137
individuals served

397
total session conducted

Ka-pe-kiwehtahat

Ka-pe-kiwehtahat was born in ceremony and translates to “a person that brings someone home.” Ka-pe-kiwehtahat assists youth, families, and single adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness by providing opportunities to connect to appropriate cultural and ceremonial resources and individualized supports. Ka-pe-kiwehtahat staff also advocate on behalf of relatives with landlords and provide navigation support to reduce emergency shelter needs.

88
families

25
single adults

5
youth

Forge new connections
and new abilities.

Forge your path
to wellness.



2021/22 Highlights

“Calling Them Home” Ceremony

We have all been impacted by the ongoing recovery of Indigenous children and at several Indian Residential School sites in Canada. This is a continuous reminder of the trauma inflicted on Indigenous people by settlers and colonial systems.

In honour of those lives lost, Miskanawah, in partnership with the United Way supported Elders in a healing ceremony. In this ceremony, attendees tied multi-colour prayer cloth to 13 teepee poles. Once the teepee poles were raised, a 14th teepee pole tied with orange cloth was then added to honour and acknowledge the children. The beautiful, ‘dancing’ teepee of cloth and ribbon reflects the individual prayers of everyone in attendance and the offerings carried forward for those who join us in spirit.



Elders' Culture Camp

Over the course of five days, nearly 30 distinguished Elders representing various nations, including Treaty 7 and beyond, gathered in the spirit of capacity building and cultural transference. Taking place August 23-27, 2021 in beautiful Kananaskis Country, this event was held in collaboration with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA), Trelis, and Miskanawah. Guided by the Elders, this gathering was called with the intention to share and organize knowledge, honour inter-nation traditions, and to teach the younger generation of Elders.

Elders and knowledge keepers shared stories through oral teachings that have been passed down from generations. These stories honour culture while acknowledging and respecting the diversity in ceremony, language, and tradition across nations.

Compelling stories and narratives were shared, reflecting the impact of displacement and the harmful historical events that took place in the last century. Elders shared their personal experience of residential schools and the road to truth and reconciliation.



The Land

As an Indigenous-led organization, incorporating land-based activities into our programming is vital for our relatives. In November of 2021, Miskanawah transitioned from our land-based site in Sibbald Lake to land located southeast of Calgary near Okotoks in the Dalmead district with the beautiful Bow River Valley as it's backdrop. This new piece of land has allowed our staff, relatives, and Elders to steward it with more sovereignty and in turn, it has been more accessible to our communities for important ceremonial practices such as sweat lodges, pipe ceremonies, cultural camps, medicine-picking, and fasting ceremonies. This land is rich with medicines, animals, and plants such as mint, saskatoon berries, and prairie sage. Eagles, pelicans, and falcons frequent the area as well as deer, elk, moose, coyotes, and fish. Miskanawah would like to thank Paul Sabatini for allowing us to steward this land and support our relatives, staff, and Indigenous practices. Although there is much work to be done, the healing that land-based activities provide for our families is exponential.



16th Annual Round Dance

On February 26, 2022, we hosted our Friendship Round Dance virtually for the first time with our new video and sound equipment. We invited drummers and singers from five different Treaty areas to showcase songs and beats from around North America: Alberta, North Carolina and Minnesota.

[Click here for full gallery.](#)

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LIVE VIEWS

 Click on this video icon to view **Miskanawah's annual Friendship Round Dance**. This combined virtual and in-person ceremony is a traditional Indigenous practice for healing and communal bond. Our Round Dance encourages many Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals to learn, connect, and engage with Elders, Knowledge-Keepers, and community members through culturally-grounded ceremonial practices. **(00:27)**



Elder Gala

On March 17, 2022, Miskanawah held a ceremony to honour our sacred Knowledge Keepers. This celebration began with an opening prayer, smudge, words of welcoming, and storytelling. Elders were gifted a handmade star blanket to demonstrate our deep appreciation for the support and love that they pour into Miskanawah's clients, staff, and greater community.

[Click here for full gallery.](#)



Lodge Data

4 CREE GRANDMOTHER'S TEA CEREMONIES
 WITH **63** PARTICIPANTS

May 20, 2021 - **28** PARTICIPANTS
 October 21, 2021 - **18** PARTICIPANTS
 December 16, 2021 - **12** PARTICIPANTS
 March 18, 2022 - **5** PARTICIPANTS

47 SWEAT LODGE CEREMONIES
 WITH **766** PARTICIPANTS

24 PIPE CEREMONIES
 WITH **198** PARTICIPANTS

43 SHARING CIRCLE
 WITH **245** PARTICIPANTS

4 *Fasts:*
 2 in Spring & 2 in Fall

Future Project - Planet Youth (Summer/Fall 2022)

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.



▶ Planet Youth (06:34)

In this video, Planet Youth Team Lead Meghan Finnbogason of Anishnawbe and Icelandic descent from Treaty 1 territory, describes the Planet Youth initiative: an Icelandic support model that aims to reduce substance misuse amongst youth. Planet Youth incorporate funders, policy makers, and community leaders to amplify youth voices. At Miskanawah, the Planet Youth model has been adapted to better serve our Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth within the Calgary-area through an Indigenous/Western parallel approach. Click the sound icon here to learn more about this exciting new youth initiative. **"I don't think that we could move forward in supporting our young people in what they need without first hearing them and then building that connection with them and the community...between them and Elders...between them and ceremony"** – Meghan Finnbogason

Financial Summary

MISKANAWAH COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

REVENUE

Government of Alberta - Children's Services contracts	\$6,463,319	77%
United Way of Calgary and Area	710,553	8%
City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services	298,222	4%
Calgary Homeless Foundation	250,785	3%
Calgary Foundation	150,000	2%
Government of Alberta - Children's Services fee for service	145,132	2%
Donations and other contributions	125,878	1%
City of Calgary - Crime Prevention Investment Plan	93,772	1%
Collaborative Funders' Table	88,214	1%
Government of Canada	50,381	>1%
City of Calgary - Connect the Dots!	39,254	>1%
Burns Memorial Fund	17,150	>1%
Interest and other revenue	8,431	>1%
Government of Alberta - Justice and Solicitor General	-	0%
Calgary Learns	-	0%
Casino	-	0%
Total Revenue	8,441,091	100%

FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Salaries, benefits and elder services	6,059,475	73%
Direct client and program	1,247,720	15%
Facility	694,784	8%
Administration	326,212	4%
Vehicles	20,845	> 1%
Total Functional Expenses	\$7,853,493	100%

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



MISKANAWAH GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES ALL OF OUR GOVERNMENT FUNDERS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS, CORPORATE SPONSORS, AND COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS.

▶ Burns Memorial: Miskanawah Partner Perspective (01:35)

Kendall Quantz, Grant Manager for Burns Memorial Fund discusses the work that Miskanawah and Burns Memorial have accomplished through the Collaborative Funders Table: a group of funders currently focused on providing employment opportunities for Indigenous youth. Click the video icon to learn more about Miskanawah and the Burns Memorial Fund partnership in creating Re:Vision: an emerging program within Miskanawah that works collaboratively with employers to hire Indigenous youth while also assisting employers and youth to navigate the unique issues within Indigenous communities. **“One word that comes to mind when I think of Miskanawah is generous. Miskanawah has been very generous with their knowledge to guide us in starting this work off in a good way...”** – Kendall Quantz

▶ United Way (02:44)

In this video, Joanne Pinnow, Metis from Saskatchewan and Indigenous Strategy Lead at United Way, discusses the work that Miskanawah and United Way have done together. For Joanne, it is Miskanawah's relationship-building approach and strong collaborative skills that makes the greatest impact: **“That positive impact really runs deeply and it's just such a caring and authentic organization. They're very good at relationship-building...and they'll do the work with the Community that they need to do”** – Joanne Pinnow



miskanawah
empowerment • strength • family

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