

a story of stories

2017-2018 Annual Report

Pathways Community Services Association



A Story of Stories

On June 22, 2017, the Misakamaso conference invited community members to “discover for themselves” their road to Truth and Reconciliation. Hearing the stories and lived experiences of keynote speakers, panelists, and participants, we learned together about the resiliency and strength of Indigenous people, and we committed to creating healing for individuals, families, and our community.

This annual report invites each of you to “discover for yourself,” through the stories shared by Pathways’ youth and families, the healing and hope that is possible for us all.

Disclaimer

This report includes descriptions of trauma that may cause emotional distress for some readers. Some names have been changed.



Our Story

Like our circle, the work of the Pathways community has no beginning and no end. It started long ago and is forever in motion to help the changing needs of every single relationship.

Pathways exists to support children, youth, and families to heal and grow strong. Pathways was founded on the strong understanding that culture and ceremony were integral pathways for healing and wellbeing among youth and families involved in the Child Welfare system. We saw how decades of colonial policy and practice had stripped many of our families of their culture and identities.

Today, we focus our work on supporting all families in seeking the good life (mino-pimatisiwin), regardless of their age, cultural heritage, or systems involvement. We continue to grow to best meet the needs of the people we work with, and to promote the immense value of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in social service delivery.

Our Mission

Guided by Indigenous teachings, Pathways offers evidence-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.

Message from the Chairperson

To our stakeholders,

I am so thankful that another year has passed and I have an opportunity to communicate with you all, our valued stakeholders. We are blessed to have such an incredible community and its support of Pathways CSA. I speak for the entire Board of Directors when I say “Thank you!”

In the spirit of this year’s theme, *A Story of Stories*, I would like to share a story of my journey with Pathways over the last 5 years. I was a friend of Pathways as a volunteer and as a business acquaintance to Kirby Redwood. It wasn’t apparent to me, at the time, how special of an organization and team, Pathways was. I was asked to join the Board as it was in a rebuilding stage. Governance is a passion of mine, and I assumed it would be a typical Board role as I had played for other organizations. This couldn’t be further from the truth. This turned out to be one of the most mutually beneficial experiences I have ever had outside of my own business. I was afforded the opportunity to chair an organization that serves my community and people. While growing and rebuilding the Board I have built friendships that will be life long, and in those friendships I found people with equal passion for giving back and a desire to help contribute to the vision for Pathways’ future. It was so obvious to me that Pathways was deeply rooted in traditional and cultural practices, and uses them to guide all that it does. This has a profound affect on both my personal life and in my business.

“There has been no greater gift than to play a role, no matter how small, in helping our youth and families live strong and healthy lives that will allow them to be successful now and in the future.”

I don’t think this would have been possible for me without the partnership and friendship of Kirby Redwood and unique organization that Pathways is.

I look forward to my last year with Pathways as Board Chair, and will cherish every moment as the organization catapults into its destined future.

Respectfully,

Colby L Delorme
Chairperson

Message from the CEO

Tansi/Okii/Aanii/Hello,

I am excited and proud to share our 2017/2018 annual report with the community.

This year, Pathways has placed renewed focus on living and practicing the values of Wahkotiwin (Cree Natural Law); to find balance and create ethical space that honours Indigenous traditions within Western realities. Part of our Wahkotiwin teachings challenge us to respect and honour oral traditions and storytelling as a way of knowledge sharing. When we started planning for our annual report, we knew that Wahkotiwin needed to guide our work, and that our families were the best tellers of their own stories, and also of the stories of Pathways' programs.

So I share with you *A Story of Stories*; to honour the stories our clients have shared with us; to honour the untold stories; to honour the hard work and dedication of our volunteers and staff; and to acknowledge the importance of storytelling as a way of living in relationship with self, with community, and with Creator (Wetaskiwin). As Pathways reflects on our own story, we honour the importance of Indigenous languages in all of our communications. We think that this may even lead us to change the name of our organization.

I sincerely thank all of the families who shared their stories with us, and all who read them.

All my relations,

Kirby Redwood, CEO



Mary

Nehiyaw Kihokewin Client (“Families visiting with the spirits of our Grandmothers” in Cree)

Mary, her husband and their two children moved to Calgary in 2012 after picking up the pieces after the Slave Lake fire. Their youngest daughter was born shortly after arriving in Calgary. Pathways began working with Mary and her youngest daughter through the Nehiyaw Kihokewin program.

“She wasn’t talking much when we first started - you couldn’t get her to talk or say anything at all, and when she would talk, you couldn’t understand her,” Mary explains, “it was a real struggle.”

Mary and her daughter have worked with their Nehiyaw Kihokewin Home Visitor, Lou, for 3 and a half years. “She’s going to Kindergarten in September and our goal is to have her totally prepared to start school. She knows her name, how to spell her name, her address, she is just skyrocketing - her ASQs (a developmental screening tool) are coming back really well!”

Since the family started working with Pathways, Mary’s teenage son also began attending our Miskanawah Youth Camps. “He’s gone to 4 camps now...I thought he’d hate it. He was very introverted and wouldn’t talk to anybody he didn’t know. He’s really come out of his shell - last time I picked him up from camp, he was talking to all these kids and now it’s like he has his own community.”

“The biggest positive change in my life since connecting with Pathways has been the culture - gaining the identity.” Mary explains her belief that culture can really heal, “I try to get them [my kids] to strengthen their own identities.” Mary adds that just the simple presence of Lou in their home every week helps the family to connect with culture and cultural events that are happening around the city.

“They say people enter your life for a reason, and I needed Lou.”

As Mary’s daughter nears her sixth birthday, the family will no longer receive supports from the Nehiyaw Kihokewin program. “It’s been really rewarding for me, I’ve gotten to know the family and the kids - we’ve built a relationship that will far surpass their participation in the program,” Lou says.

Mary and her family will continue attending cultural programs and camps at Pathways.

78

families served in
Nehiyaw Kihokewin

56%

of families improved
in their child
development goals

4

Kokum's Councils
held



229

children and youth
served through
Regional After-Hours
Youth Support
(RAYS)

63

youth joined us in
Miskanawah Youth
Camps

4

Traditional Family
Gatherings were held



Justin and Emily

Miskanawah Cree Language Participants

About a year ago, Justin hit rock bottom. Drugs and alcohol had taken a hold of his life and he was struggling to cope.

Justin grew up in Maskwacis, where he was well connected to his culture as a teen. “My dad taught me how to smudge and pray and do things right. I’ve been to lots of sweats, a lot of pipe ceremonies, I danced Men’s Fancy in my teens...I was really into my culture.” He says, because of his struggles with addictions, he lost that connection.

Emily was familiar with addictions, and recognized the signs in Justin. She offered the information for a centre for addictions treatment that her late grandfather had attended. Shortly after, Justin checked himself into the program.

“Reconnecting with my spirituality has motivated me to get back in touch with my culture, and has helped me through my alcohol and drug addiction,” says Justin.

“I want to show First Nations, and anybody in general, that it can be done. You can go from doing drugs and drinking a lot, all the way to working for the City as a firefighter, and saving lives and helping out the community. I want to be a role model.”

46

people learned Cree

13

Pipe Ceremonies held

2000+

people joined us in
Round Dance

Justin and Emily moved to Calgary in 2014 so that Emily could pursue her studies. Emily began taking courses in child development psychology, minoring in Indigenous Studies. “As Justin progressed through his recovery, it got a bit more clear to me what I wanted to do.” She now hopes to work in the field of addictions and traditional treatments after she graduates this year.

“Learning the culture is very important, and I want to learn as much as I can before I start my work with Indigenous communities,” Emily says.

This is how the couple were connected to Pathways in the fall of 2017. Since then, Emily and Justin have attended Cree Language Classes and have joined us in Sweat.

“I’m over 13 months clean and sober now, so having [Cree Language Class] to look forward to really helps me cope with it, it keeps me busy and you have to keep busy sometimes.”

Justin is grateful to Emily and Pathways for guiding him on his path of recovery and healing, and he shares his ultimate goal of becoming a firefighter with the City of Calgary. “I’ve looked into their requirements and you have to be clean for 3 years, so I still have a long way to go, but I just want to give back to the community and that seems like a good way to give back.”



Elena

Former Indigenous Mentor Homes Youth

Before moving into my Mentor Home, I was 14 years old and didn't have much stability or desire to focus on school, or to just be a regular teenager. I felt like I was always having to worry about adult things, and I would stress about where I would end up. I was anxious and unable to care about things that didn't seem as important to me.

I knew my Mentor Family was different on my second day of living at their home. I didn't have any clothing from my last placement so they took me shopping. I remember asking my youth worker if the family would be reimbursed for this and she said she wasn't sure; sometimes people just do good things for other people. I remember thinking, wow, these people are different and actually care.

Before I moved in, I was doing terribly in school. I was skipping a lot and not doing my work. I just didn't want to be there. I also wasn't eating properly or taking care of myself. It was about 2 months into living at the Mentor Home that a teacher pulled me aside at school and told me just how much of a change they had seen in me: I was focusing on school and they noticed how happy I was every day. I attribute this to living in a Mentor Home and finally feeling like I was wanted and part of a family.

While living in the Mentor Home, I was also given more opportunities and life experiences that I would have never had living in foster care. I was treated like I was part of the family and went on family vacations. I got to experience what travelling was like and see some other parts of the world.

“I also got to see what kind of life you could have if you work hard and have a successful job, and I wanted that for myself.”

10

youth served in
Mentor Homes

100%

of youth were
enrolled in school

50

goals were set by
youth (in areas like
school performance
and employment)

During high school, I didn't really put a lot of thought or planning into what I wanted to do after I graduated. I was grateful that my Mentor Parents didn't push me to figure this all out. They let me carve my own path and discover for myself what my passions were. They were also great role models and by watching them and the way they ran their home, lived their lives, how they parented their other kids, and what kind of work they did, I came to the conclusion that I too wanted to help people. My Mentor Family dedicate their lives to helping people and helping youth that need a home and a family. It was from this influence that I decided to pursue a career as a lawyer so that I would be able to help people every day with their lives and problems and give them a voice.

I just graduated from CDI college this month with my Legal Assistant diploma. My goal is to attend the University of Calgary for a BA in Social Work and then apply to law school. This is my dream and I'm on my path to achieving it. I still keep in contact with my Mentor Parents and will always consider them family and their home a home away from home.

Tanya

Nitsanak Mamawintowak Client (“Families coming together” in Cree)

Tanya is a 32-year-old mother of three children. Her two eldest have been adopted in Saskatchewan by the foster family that they have lived with since they were young. Tanya maintains a close relationship with both of them and their foster family. Her youngest son lives with Tanya full time.

In 2014, Tanya survived a brutal attack by the father of her youngest child. She was confined for eleven days and tortured repeatedly, while her young son was forced to watch. This left the family devastated and unable to cope with everyday life.

Tanya was living with post-traumatic stress disorder that affected every aspect of her and her family’s life, “I was drinking and into drugs” Tanya explains. She could not leave her house alone and was isolated from friends and family. She lived each day in fear. After accessing some community supports, Tanya learned about Pathways in January of 2017.

“Because of my anxiety, it took me 2 months to pick up the phone and call the Nitsanak program,” Tanya admits. “The supports for culture, Sweats, and healing motivated me to call.”

Through Nitsanak Mamawintowak, Tanya has visited with Elders, accessed ceremony, intensive therapy, and community events, and has made connections with other programs and services in the broader community.

With supportive home visits, access to transportation, and information about community supports, she has been empowered to take steps toward her own healing.

“I can see a clear path to where I want to be. I’m not there yet, but I’m getting there.”

54

families served
in Nitsanak
Mamawintowak

6

women’s healing
circles were held

123

people recieved
therapeutic and
counselling supports



Mahmawi-atoskiwin

“A group of people coming together to work as one” in Cree

Mahmawi-atoskiwin is an alliance between Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, Enviro, and Pathways Community Services Association, in partnership with Children’s Services. The program offers Collaborative Service Delivery (outcomes-based service delivery) for Indigenous families in the Calgary area.

Mahmawi-atoskiwin offers support through a holistic approach to advanced safety and wellness, connects families with cultural and natural supports, and helps build personal assets and accountability for families that will enhance healthy living as they move through life’s journey.

448

children served in
239 families

196

visits with Elders

13

Indigenous languages
spoken by clients

Patricia and Lily

Miskanawah Cree Language Participants

Patricia was first challenged to explore her heritage in the third grade, when a teacher asked where she came from. In her family, being Indigenous was not a positive thing - cultural practices weaved themselves into daily life but they were never discussed or identified.

“It’s almost as though I’d been looking in a mirror my whole life and not seeing an arm or a leg.”

“I always felt the lack of my roots, but particularly when I moved from Saskatchewan to Alberta,” says Patricia. “One day, in my twenties, my father said to me ‘you know we’re Métis right?’ and that was the illuminating moment. That made me want to explore our heritage, and it became particularly important to me when my daughter, Lily, was born. I didn’t want her to experience the same awkwardness I have experienced trying to access a culture that you’ve been split from.”

Patricia had tentatively begun her journey of rediscovering culture, but when her grandmother passed away, she knew she had to more fully follow this path. “She was the last of the knowledge keepers,” says Patricia.

Patricia and her daughter Lily joined us in Cree Language Classes in the fall of 2017, and attended a community Sweat Lodge soon after.

“I think there’s a blood memory, something at the cellular level - hearing the Cree language was like a puzzle piece fitting in place; one more connection in our journey of connection”



612

people engaged in
Miskanawah

118

people joined us at
Sweat Lodge

143

youth engaged in
Miskanawah

“We went to the Sweat because Lily had gone through some significant traumas in her young life, it just seemed like one event after another,” Patricia explains. “It would take hours for me to explain the impact of the Sweat, and I’ve only been to one. I felt a lightness - an absence of worry - that I hadn’t felt since my late teens...It was incredible.”

Since attending the Sweat, Lily joined us at a Miskanawah Youth Camp where she felt that she could escape the pressures of her everyday life. “When I’m in a whirlwind, the Sweats put me back in one place so that I can be grounded where I belong, and I’m not dealing with the chaos,” Lily says. “I feel lighter. When I have a worry, I can accept it and then let it go for the time being,” Lily explains that there has been less stress in her life since connecting with Pathways.

Patricia chimes in “I didn’t realize the Sweats did that for her, I’m so grateful for that. Any resource that is a support to her emotional and spiritual health has meant a great deal.”

Patricia shares many stories that have occurred as a result of her participation in Miskanawah. “Over Christmas, we went to my dad’s house and he started speaking Cree to me. It was really neat to see him experiencing the positivity of his heritage again...because it’s not always been viewed as positive in our family.”

“It’s almost like having family connections back. I can ask questions that I would have asked my grandmother, and not feel stupid. Pathways is the human link that was missing in my identity journey.”

Raeda

Healthy Families Client

“Our story is a miserable one!” Raeda’s husband laughs as their Home Visitor translates from Arabic to English.

Raeda, her husband, and their five children escaped war-torn Syria and came to Calgary over 2 years ago after living in a Jordanian refugee camp. When Raeda delivered their sixth child in Canada, the family was referred to Healthy Families.

“In the beginning, it was very difficult but it has gotten better,” Raeda reflects on their early days in Canada, “the toughest part is the cold weather and snow!” she jokes.

Raeda is working very hard to learn English and wants her 16-month old daughter to get a start in life just like other Canadian kids. She explains that at first the program was strange for her, because she had never experienced anything like it back home. Now the family likes being in the program, “very good!” says Raeda’s husband.

The family is thankful for their Home Visitor who helps them with basic necessities like diapers, formula and food bank referrals. They also appreciate the support with their language barriers, which has helped them gain access to Calgary’s Fair Entry Program.

“Now we have access to transportation, so we can get out and about more and are learning more about Calgary and the community.”

Raeda also remarks that her children (who range in age from 20 years old to 16 months old), are all enjoying Calgary. She says that the kids are all doing well in school, and they are encouraged and treated nicely.



families served in
Healthy Families

76%

of families were
new to Canada

93%

of families improved in
their parenting goals

“Canada is a beautiful country, and the people have been very kind.”

“I know that I’m doing the best I can for my daughter, and I’m being the best mom that I can be.”

Kristina & Brooklyn

Healthy Families Clients

“It was really stressful when my daughter was in the NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] for over two months,” says Kristina, who has been involved with the Healthy Families program at Pathways for over 6 months now, “and it was definitely a big change when she was released and was finally home with me,” she adds.

Kristina was connected with a Healthy Families Home Visitor when her daughter Brooklyn was born prematurely. At first, Kristina felt grateful to have somebody to talk to every week, to answer the many questions she had about this new chapter in her life. Now she reflects on the positivity, support, and encouragement that her Home Visitor brings to her life as a new mother. “My experience with Pathways has been great!”



George & Wendy

Healthy Families Clients

“Life goes smoother and we are happier... because of the baby and the new things we learn from the program.”

“Canada and China are very different,” says George, “we have no family for support and sometimes we feel like we’re alone.” George and Wendy joined the Healthy Families program 5 months ago when their son Daniel was born.

“When we first got the news about the baby’s eyes, we were scared and sad,” the family says. Doctors noticed problems with Daniel’s eyesight right away and originally thought he may be blind. “Our visits have helped us get some supports for the baby’s eyes, and we learn about raising the baby... we have a lot to learn because this is our first baby.” The family is tackling Daniel’s eyesight one day at a time.

Wendy and George share that not only are they getting support for their baby through the program, but they are learning a lot about themselves as well. “We’re learning how to keep our relationship healthy. Now we can cope better and calmly deal with problems between us.” George says.

Leanne and Kallea

Pathways Practicum Student and Miskanawah Participants

28

Iksokapi Youth
Leadership sessions

Leanne joined Pathways as a practicum student with Mount Royal University's Social Work program this year. Her daughter Kallea also became involved with Pathways' programming. "The reason I got into social work was to work with Indigenous families - that's what I'm passionate about. It's about helping people."

"I didn't really know what Pathways was about, I thought you strictly promoted Children's Services," Leanne explains. "Working here has opened my eyes to learn more about how you work with the community."

100%

of Iksokapi Youth felt
more included in the
Indigenous community

Leanne moved to Calgary in 2009 for a fresh start. "We came here on the Greyhound and I got rid of everything but pictures. There was a lot of toxicity and addictions in my family and I didn't want to raise Kallea in that environment," says Leanne.

Leanne knew she wanted to get involved with Indigenous organizations when she moved to Calgary, so that she and her daughter could connect with cultural resources in the city. "I wouldn't have had the opportunity to become more involved in my culture back home, so I feel that moving here was more a calling in a sense," says Leanne.

31%

of youth who engaged
in cultural activity also
attended ceremony at
least once

Leanne was able to bring her daughter to some of Pathways' evening cultural programs, like Iksokapi Youth Leadership and Drums & Sticks, throughout her time as a practicum student with us. "I really liked that I could bring my daughter because your child should be able to be involved and see the work you're doing - it instills learning and understanding in them," explains Leanne. "One thing I've noticed about my daughter, since coming to Pathways, is that she has come out of her shell, and is opening up a lot more around the other kids now."



Kallea explains that she enjoys the traditional aspects of the programs and ceremonies that she has attended at Pathways: “I know kids my age don’t really enjoy stuff like that, but I like it because it teaches me something and gets me more connected to my culture.” Leanne adds, “I’ve definitely implemented more cultural and traditional teachings in my own life since starting at Pathways.”

Leanne goes on to explain that Kallea has developed a passion for social justice, especially for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. “I’m not sure what I want to do, but I definitely want to help people,” says Kallea.

“Life’s had its challenges and there’s a lot of sacrifices I’ve made to put her [Kallea] first. I’ve always told her that she’s my saviour - I totally changed my life around because of her,” says Leanne.

Leanne is now finishing her studies, and the two plan on staying connected with Pathways.

3

Social Work practicum
students supported

Over 200 People Attended Our Miskamaso Conference



41 Community Sweat Lodges Held



13 Organizations participated in Building Capacity for Truth and Reconciliation

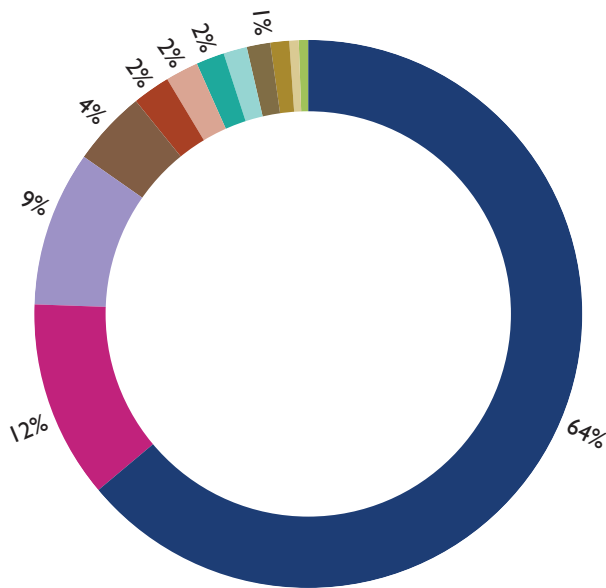


Over 150 Youth Served



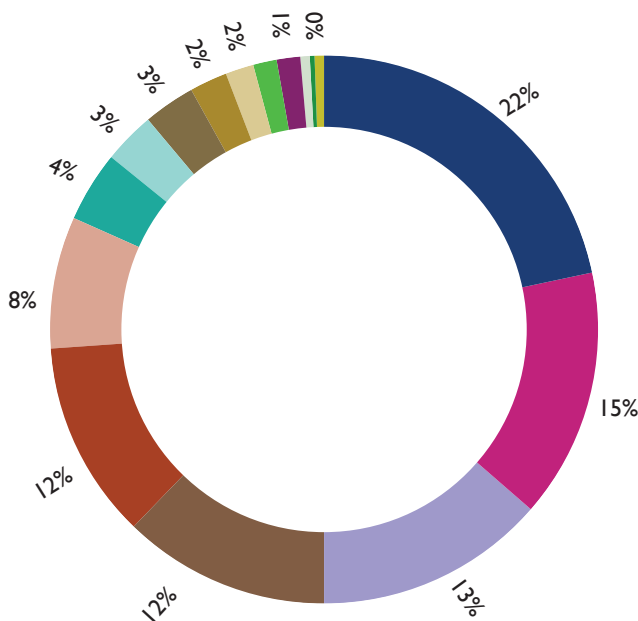
Pathways CSA Financial Report

Revenue



Source	Amount	%
GOA Children's Services	\$2,375,696	64%
United Way of Calgary and Area	\$434,920	12%
City of Calgary FCSS	\$343,984	9%
Mahmawi-atoskiwin	\$162,567	4%
City of Calgary CPIP	\$81,376	2%
Calgary Foundation	\$70,665	2%
Donations and Other	\$69,291	2%
GOA Community Initiatives Program	\$50,000	1%
Collaborative Funders' Table	\$49,681	1%
Casino	\$43,592	1%
Calgary Learns	\$23,215	1%
Burns Memorial Fund	\$11,368	<1%
TOTAL	\$3,716,355	100%

Expenses



Expense	Amount	%
Indigenous Mentor Homes	\$811,281	22%
Healthy Families	\$541,517	15%
Nehiyaw Kihokewin	\$500,000	13%
Miskanawah Approach	\$452,964	12%
Regional After-Hours Youth Support	\$433,098	12%
Nitsanak Mamawintowak	\$292,423	8%
Mahmawi-atoskiwin	\$152,567	4%
Truth and Reconciliation	\$112,732	3%
Administrative and Other	\$109,837	3%
Iksokapi	\$88,241	2%
Fee for Service	\$63,029	2%
Communications	\$50,000	1%
Nikamoh	\$49,681	1%
Languages & Literacy	\$23,215	1%
Travelling Camp	\$12,000	<1%
Fun for Families	\$11,368	<1%
TOTAL	\$3,703,954	100%

Surplus \$12,401

See www.pathwayscsa.org for annual audited financial statements.

Funders and Corporate Sponsors

Alberta Children's Services - Calgary and Area
Alberta Culture and Tourism - Community Initiatives Program
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission
Bears paw Benevolent Foundation
Benevity
Bowest Appliances Inc.
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The Calgary Foundation
Calgary Learns
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City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services
Clough Enercore
Collaborative Funders' Table
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International Association of Business Communicators, Calgary Chapter
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The Maja Foundation at the Calgary Foundation
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Service Canada - Canada Summer Jobs
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The United Way of Calgary and Area

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Calgary Board of Education
The Calgary Healthy Families Collaborative
Calgary Interfaith Foodbank
Calgary Police Service
City of Calgary Group Fee Assistance
Closer to Home Community Services
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Kids Up Front
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community partners!

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We welcome your feedback on this report.

Photos by Connall Lang Photography and MaskellDesign