



The Sîhtoskâtowin Program



BUILDING TOGETHER: A Support Program for Indigenous Communities in Rural and Remote Saskatchewan

'Saskatchewan' includes treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and is the traditional territory of Nēhiyawak, Nahkawiniwak Nakota, Dakota and Lakotka, and Denesuline, as well as the homelands of the Métis Nation.

We honor the many Indigenous languages spoken in rural and remote Saskatchewan. Elts'êts'edi is Dene and means 'helping each other'.

☑ **Title:** Visiting Sunflowers, 2018 **Artist:** Leah Marie Dorion

Artist's Statement: As families tend to their gardens and collect seeds for future use and planting, they bond and grow strong together. This painting celebrates Indigenous families enjoying the natural cycles of harvesting seeds from sunflowers. Families remain rooted and connected as they work with the gifts of the land as their ancestors have done for generations.

Sîhtoskâtowin (pronounced see-tos-ka-toe-win) is a nēhiyawēwin word that means 'to lift each other up'.



SÎHTOSKÂTOWIN PROGRAM PURPOSE

Together we bring more accessible philanthropic funding and supports to rural and remote Indigenous community-led work in Saskatchewan.



Northern Lifestyles Students in LaRonge participating in land-based education



ORIGIN STORY

Currently, philanthropic investment in Saskatchewan is low, particularly outside of urban centers or in Indigenous communities. For years Indigenous communities in Saskatchewan have been contacting the Northern Manitoba Food, Culture, and Community Collaborative (hosted at MakeWay) asking for support. Therefore, in 2021 MakeWay began a learning journey, supported by 42 Saskatchewan based knowledge keepers, and resulting in the 2021 report: Centering Indigenous Communities & Philanthropic Action in Saskatchewan put forward three interwoven priority areas of Indigenous-led work.

- **Indigenous food systems and food security**
- **Health and Healing**
- **Cultural Reclamation**

MakeWay continues to support the co-creation The Sîhtoskâtowin Program by engaging community members, funders, and governments to participate. We are humbled and encouraged by the program and support we have created together, and are committed to growing it.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Holistic:** Support mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical
- **Collectivity:** We live to support and encourage each other and create collective benefit
- **Diversity:** Plant lots of seeds (actions) to see what grows. Support communities to try, experiment, do, and learn together.
- **Connections:** Support relationship building between communities, and between funders and communities.
- **Indigenous-led:** We support many types of community-led work including grassroots, local agency, and Nation-led. Direct relationships with the Band are not required.
- **Non-interference in individual will**
- **Celebrate the good work together!**
- **Friendship**



Northern Lifestyles students sewing work in LaRonge



Oct 2023 Gathering in Muskoday First Nation

TIMELINE

2020 - 2021

Learning Journey - 42 knowledge keepers guided the creation of the Centering Indigenous Communities and Philanthropic action in Saskatchewan.

2021

Knowledge keepers gathered virtually to review and reflect on Learning Journey report.

OCT 2022

2 day gathering in Prince Albert and Muskoday. Community members, funders, and governments met to evolve the program and build relationships. Decision: Form SK-based Working Group to guide the program.

DEC 2022

McConnell Foundation contributes funds to build up the program.

JAN 2023

Community-based Working Group established, Meets bi-weekly for program support and development.









SASKATCHEWAN GIVING 2020-2024



Haskaps, photo by Richard Louis Lafferty

GIFTMAKING GUIDEPOSTS

-  Work addresses one or more priority areas
-  Projects support community, not just individuals
-  Projects are Indigenous-led
-  There are local people dedicated to the work
-  Project builds up community; not a 'one and done'
-  Projects support youth, Elders and families

GIFTMAKING APPROACH

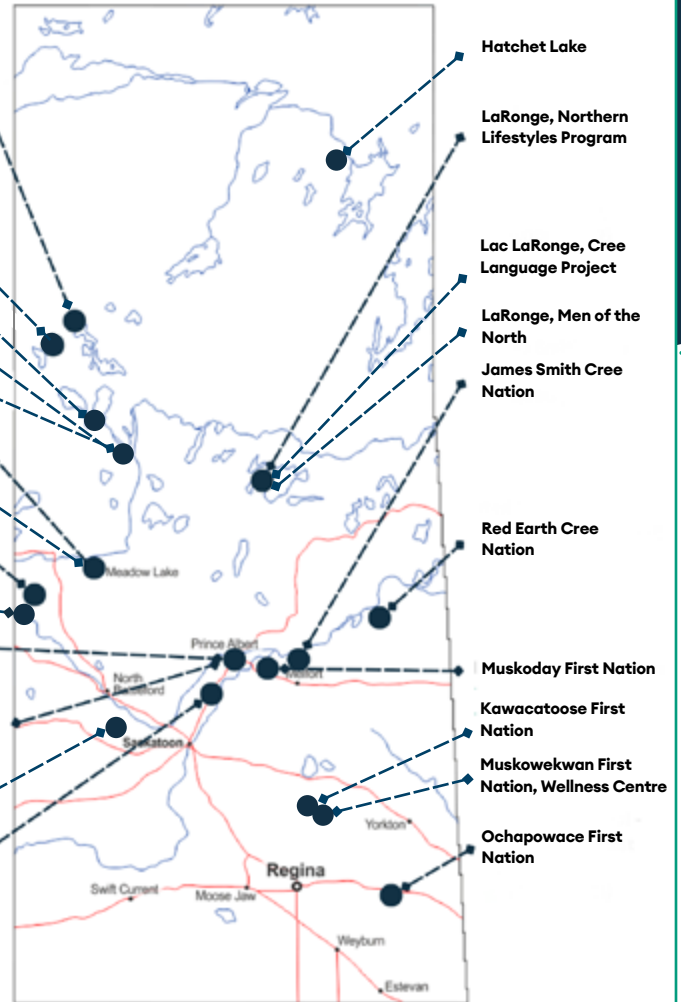
The Sīhtoskātowin Program works relationally and holds seasonal gifting cycles. Staff meet interested groups, take time to learn, and then share the proposal form if there is a strong fit. The Working Group meets, discusses potential gifts, and uses the Giftmaking Guideposts, Priority Areas, local knowledge and consensus to make new gifts.



Youth processing meat at Turnor Lake Birch Narrows Community Food Centre



Onion Lake Community Garden Land Ceremony



Over \$735,000 gifted to Indigenous-led initiatives since 2020

SHARING BACK

We value learning with community partners and support knowledge exchange between communities. Projects are encouraged to share photos, stories and learnings from their work. Standardized reporting is not required.

SPRING & SUMMER 2023

Working group retreat in Flying Dust First Nation. Gift-making guideposts established. New financial contributions from donors. To date \$145k to more than 20 Indigenous-led projects.

OCT 2023

Community-based gathering at Youth Haven Camp in LaRonge. Focus on sharing stories and building the program. 40 participants!

JAN 2024

Full time program staff, Taylor Belanger of Île-à-la-Crosse joins the program!

SPRING & SUMMER 2024

Seasonal Granting cycle established. Working Group refines focus and protocols for working with community partners.

FALL 2024

Working Group retreat. Since inception over \$735,000 gifted to over 40 community-led Indigenous initiatives in rural and remote Saskatchewan.

Working Group & Special Advisors

Back Row: Rebecca, Joe, Megan, Chuck
Front Row: Taylor, Julie



The Working Group is comprised of local, Saskatchewan based people who are involved in Indigenous-led community work in rural and remote areas of the province. Established in January of 2023, the Working Group meets regularly to support detailed planning and refinement of the SK Program. Meetings focus on developing trusting relationships, sharing community updates and stories, and establishing specifics of the program. Specifics include: guiding principles, giftmaking guideposts, Giftmaking approach, 'reporting' alternatives that empower communities and support learning. The Working Group is responsible for giftmaking, connecting with community partners, holding gatherings, supporting Program staff, and ensuring we follow protocols and work in a good way.



JOE MUNROE,
Food Security
Coordinator,
Muskoday First Nation



REBECCA SYLVESTRE,
Director, Turnor
Lake Birch Narrows
Community Food Centre



**CHARLES "CHUCK"
THOMAS,**
Beardy's and Okemasis
Cree Nation



MEGAN MILLER,
Registered Dietitian,
Prince Albert
Grand Council

HAL CAMERON,
Beardy's and Okemasis
Cree Nation

CHERYL MCCALLUM

MAKEWAY STAFF

Within the working group, staff humbly act as helpers. We organize group meetings, take notes, and follow up on action items identified by the working group.



TAYLAR BELANGER
Sih̓toskātowin
Program Lead



JULIE PRICE
Program Lead,
Manitoba and
Saskatchewan

Interested in being involved?

Email Taylor at taylor.belanger@makeway.org



makeway.org

MakeWay is a national charity and public foundation with a goal to enable nature and communities to thrive together. We do this by building partnerships, providing solutions, grants, and services for the charitable sector across the country.

