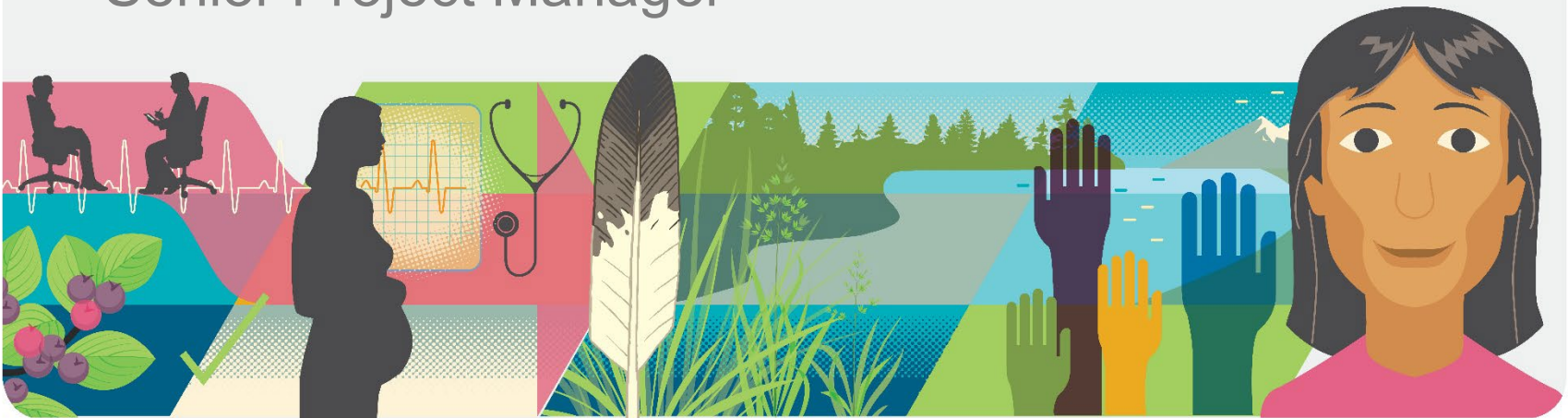


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# Alberta Merck for Mothers Final Report

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Senior Project Manager



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# Guiding principles

1. Deliver high quality, clinically and culturally safe/competent preconception, pre- and postnatal care that keeps cultural practices strong and engages women, families, and communities in care close to home;
2. Take a collaborative, multidisciplinary, action-focused, and flexible approach allowing for the ability to mobilize around issues and opportunities;
3. Exhibit a high level of social, emotional and intellectual engagement and motivation;
4. Build upon a foundation for shared voice, shared work and iterative progress; and
5. Engage in collaborative leadership and learning

# Maskwacis



- **Montana Community Garden**
- **Goal:** Improve nutrition and knowledge related to traditional teachings, as well as celebrate pregnancy and living well during pregnancy

# Maskwacis

8/11



- **Elders Wisdom Video / Photovoice**
- **Goal:** Promote the more accurate picture of a thriving and rich traditional culture and sense of community in Maskwacis

# Maskwacis



- **Prenatal Healthcare Staff Training**
- **Goal:** Provide more easily accessible and culturally sensitive prenatal care

# Inner city – Pregnancy Pathways

Annual Report - By the Heart

IMAGINE  
BEING  
HOMELESS,  
AND HUNGRY...  
FOR TWO.

Every year there are approximately 100 pregnant and homeless women in Edmonton. Marissa Nakoochee, at 21 years of age, was one of those women.

Marissa was never afforded the chance to experience the joy that every mother-to-be should at the moment she learns, "I'm pregnant".

Instead, Marissa's pregnancy was filled with worry for herself and the future for her child.

"I avoided telling people that I was in-between places, because I knew I would be judged, and I knew that people would assume that I couldn't parent – I was afraid someone was going to take my child. I was alone. I was vulnerable. Fear and anxiety were my daily companions," reflects Marissa.

This story, thankfully, has a happy ending. Marissa was one of the lucky ones; she found help through multiple local organizations that secured housing and income support before her baby arrived.

The Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation's 2016 Giving Tuesday campaign was held in support of a new initiative called Pregnancy Pathways. This innovative program aims to help women who find themselves in Marissa's situation. The objectives of the program are to meet affordable housing needs and to provide a full suite of wrap-around support services for homeless pregnant women in our city - with the goal of bringing the number of pregnant homeless women from 100 to none.

Pregnancy Pathways is a collaboration among 25 different organizations in Edmonton. Not only will these women be provided safe, affordable, judgement-free housing, they will also have access to addictions support, acute health care, mental health assistance, cultural guidance, and long-term income and housing opportunities – a truly holistic approach providing these women the hand-up each and every one of them deserves.

Over the past year, more than \$100,000 has been raised by donors to the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation in support of Pregnancy Pathways, and the mission to raise funds continues today.

"I was one of these women. Today, I am a mom who works and goes to university. I am building a wonderful life for my son and for myself. These donations will help others to do the same," stated Marissa.

Marissa made it through, but, the sad reality is many have not. However, the future looks bright thanks to the Royal Alexandra Hospital Foundation's donors and the Giving Tuesday campaign.

Thank you to all of those who have supported this important cause, and who are committed to reducing the number of pregnant homeless women in Edmonton from 100 to none.

FROM  
100 — TO  
NONE

"I was one of these women. Today, I am a mom who works and goes to university. I am building a wonderful life for my son and I. These donations will help others to do the same."

- Marissa Nakoochee,  
Proud Mother



# Inner city – Pregnancy Pathways



- **Goal:** Demonstrate that an integrated housing and support services model that is strength-based, culturally appropriate and follows harm reduction principles can result in healthier babies and more resilient women

# Little Red River

- **Goal:** Demonstrate that a community-based support model can improve maternal health within a rural Cree community
  - Building genuine and trusting relationships
  - Maternal/child home visitor to relieve some of the demand placed on the team and to work with evacuated pregnant women
  - Series of teepee teachings family wellness camps



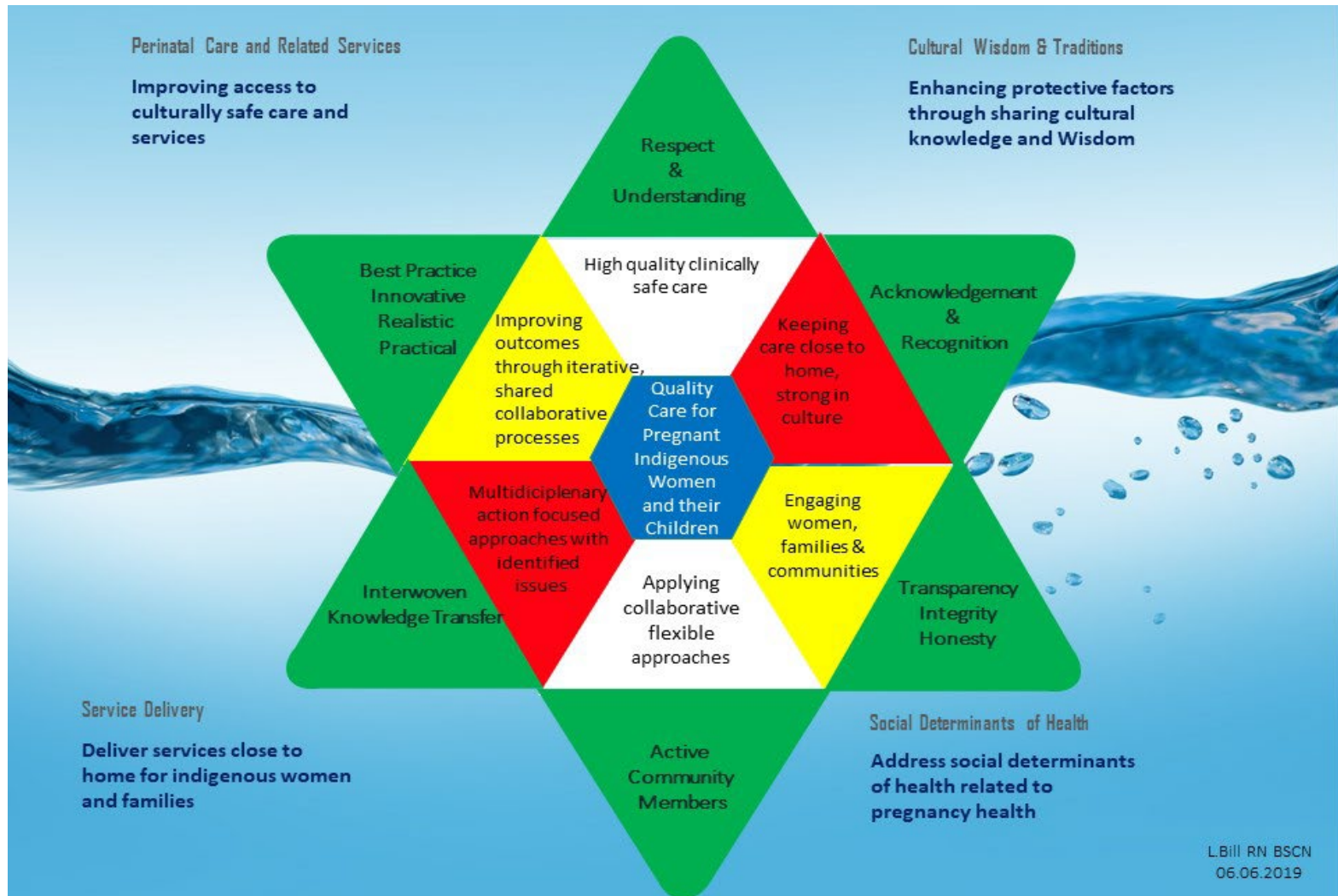


# Little Red River



- Cultural camps for pregnant moms and families
  - Teepee teachings (including STI knowledge, breastfeeding, traditional parenting, language, traditional food preparation, sewing/beading, etc.)
  - Evening tea dances, games, peer-to-peer support activities, skirt making, drum making, among other traditional activities

# Evaluation model



# Data collection

**Table 1: Stakeholder Assessment and Engagement Plan**

Stake holder Category	Interest or perspective	Role in Evaluation	How and when to engage
<b>Parents</b>	Experience during project, skills and knowledge gained, retained from participation in program activities, challenges experienced during participation in project activities	Participate in data gathering	Focus group sessions Key informant interviews Surveys
<b>Grandparents</b>	Participation in project activities, knowledge and skills gained, and any noted changes of/ with participating parents	Participate in data gathering	Focus group sessions Key informant interviews
<b>Health Care Providers</b>	Participation of targeted group, contributions to project activities, changes seen with targeted groups, success of strategies implements	Participate in data gathering	Focus group session and key informant interviews

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# Maskwacis main findings

- Montana garden project
  - Enhanced empowerment to grow food and eat healthier
  - Inclusion of youth and students, Elders; improved relationships
  - *Sustainable outputs*: food preparation/cooking classes, food preservation handbook, diagrams for crop rotation, fertilization and soil enhancement, food forest, meeting space for all, co-op and food/farming initiative
- MHS capacity and culturally informed care
  - 9 staff members were trained for phlebotomy, learning opportunities, experiential cultural training
  - Home visits were better received as traditional cultural knowledge was being shared
  - Enhanced staff culturally sensitivity
- Photovoice and video project
  - Permeant photo installment
  - Opened conversations and improved relationships with women in labor
  - Led to smudging opportunities in the hospital
  - Staff have become more aware of what more needs to be done to create a culturally safe environment
  - Preservation of knowledge; tool for cultural teachings
- \*\*New partnerships developed

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# Pregnancy Pathways main findings

- 27 clients have gone through the program thus far
- M4M funding was crucial for this program as it provided funding stability
- Enabled sharing/healing circles, smudging and praying, ceremony, women's teachings, moss bag and swing teachings
- New supportive family at Pregnancy Pathways
- Improved personal self-care for staff
- Successful and ongoing connections and partnerships
- Enhanced sense of worth and pride in their identity

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# Little Red River main findings

- Community worker/home visitor allowed for more prenatal women to be supported
- Over 1000 people attended family wellness camps
- Activities brought community members closer
- Improved working relationship with the other departments
- Both staff and participants found great value in combining cultural teachings and other teachings
- Opportunity for the community to meet healthcare providers and to see Elders working with service providers
- Increases in women accessing prenatal services and programs

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# Overall findings

- Objectives met
- Increased knowledge and awareness of traditional cultural understanding and positive impacts of including this knowledge in prenatal programming
- Increases in prenatal women accessing services
- Improving cultural knowledge of healthcare providers and participants
- Desire and need to continue with programs, however funding was consistently identified as a barrier
- Partnerships were developed and strengthened with a wide range of individuals, groups, providers, departments, organizations, and systems

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# Main challenges

- Logistics in transportation
- Building relationships and trust takes time
- Lack of trust in the healthcare system
- Competing priorities for community members and ongoing health and social issues



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# Conclusion

- Through engagement, genuine relationship building, and collaboration our partnerships led to the design and implementation unique community-based ways to improve healthcare services and programs for Indigenous women and their families

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# Thank you



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