



Leo McGilvery

Leo McGilvery is from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, a reservation located 150 km northeast of Edmonton, Alberta. He is a composer and singer of traditional Cree songs and music. He was raised in a traditional Cree family where he learned the teachings and ceremonies of his Cree culture. Being raised in the culture has been a guiding force for Leo in his abilities to connect with the spiritual components of healing and wellness.

From 2000 to 2010, Leo worked with students in Saddle Lake Kihew Asiniy (Eagle Rock) High School and Amiskwaciy (Beaver Hills) High School Edmonton, Alberta teaching culture and songs to his students. A major component of his work with students was assisting in the learning process through a holistic approach that helped students through emotional, physical, spiritual and mental blockages that inhibited growth and learning. Through the use of the drum, rattle and song, he has established a linkage in working with individuals who have experienced trauma. Leo includes the use of traditional songs, rituals and ceremony in every aspect of teaching, sharing circles, healing circles and workshop delivery and has experienced the powerful connection to the healing process.

The Gift of Song is a powerful tool that Leo utilizes when he is working and in his daily life as a father, grandfather and a community leader. Leo honors and respects these songs because he has seen how they have helped his family, individuals and youth to process their thoughts and feelings (a process many have difficulty connecting to due to inter-generational trauma) linked to colonization of the aboriginal people, historic trauma and residential school impacts. The songs Leo composes and sings come from the spiritual ancestors who come to him through dreams and various ways Spirit works. The first song that came to him was the Grandmother Song, a powerful and healing song that was selected for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Leo currently holds a leadership position within the Saddle Lake Cree Nation as a band Councilor. Leo has also worked at Blue Quills College as a facilitator where he continues to provide his knowledge, experience and teachings as a speaker, singer, and traditional ceremonial holder and helper.
