



## THE PATHWAYS LOGO

The **Pathways** project logo is a symbolic representation of the overall mission of Pathways among the culturally diverse tribes who are participating in the program. These include the Navajo Nation, the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Gila River Indian Community, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, the San Carlos Apache Tribe, the Oglala Lakota Tribe, and the Sicangu Lakota Tribe. Each of the symbols and items in this logo are sacred to these seven tribes and have been depicted in a manner to illustrate unity among the tribes and the participating institutions to accomplish the mission of Pathways.

The logo incorporates four primary elements which are common to the cultures of almost all tribes: The cardinal number four, the circle, the arrows, and the concept of health or well-being. Four is a cardinal number and is often associated with objects or meanings that are sacred: the four directions, the four sacred mountains, and the four sacred colors. In addition, the story of creation among many tribes includes the evolution of people through four worlds. The logo, thus, represents four sacred circular objects, and between each item is an arrow pointing towards one of the four cardinal directions.

The importance of the circle is depicted by the overall shape of the logo, as well as by the shape of the four sacred symbols which are separated by arrows. The shape of many traditional homes is round, such as the Apache wickiup, the Navajo hogan, and the tipi of the Lakota. Religious ceremonies are performed in circular structures, such as in the hogan, the tipi, and the kiva. Traditional dances are also performed in a circle. The motion of the sun, moon, and stars across the sky is circular. The life paths of all creatures, including humans, are also circular.

The four arrows point outwardly into the four cardinal directions. The arrows represent protection from the ever-present forces of evil that may come near the sacred objects. The arrows also stand for the maintenance of peace. The concept of health and well-being is embodied within each of the four sacred objects, mainly through their use in religious ceremonies which, for most tribes, are conducted to restore or preserve well-being.

## **Navajo Basket**     Diné (Navajo Nation)

The shape of the basket and its designs are symbolic of the universe of the Diné (the People) and symbolic of the relationship between Mother Earth and Father Sky. The basket is used in almost all ceremonies, most of which are healing ceremonies.

The basket symbolizes one's realm of existence with the center opening representing one's birth into this world and the various designs representing the plains and sacred mountains among which one dwells.

In the Diné (Navajo) story of creation, the center opening also represents the opening through which the Diné people emerged from the lower third world to the present fourth world. The inner dark design shows the sacred mountains, the red line being the path of life while the outer dark design reflects the dark clouds and darkness of the universe, as compared to the light colors, which symbolize both water and dawn bringing beauty. The weave of the basket represents the various complexities of life arranged in an orderly manner to illustrate well-being.

## **Man In The Maze Basket:**     Tohono O'odham and Akimel O'odham

The Tohono O'odham refer to the Man in the Maze as the T'ittoi. The design depicts the story of each human being traveling through life as through a maze, taking many turns while growing stronger and wiser, but always approaching death, as represented by the dark center. In the Maze, the path of life begins at the periphery and progresses towards the center, but each major turn of the path is away from the center. Despite this seeming contradiction, the end of the path is the center of the maze which is death. As one approaches death, one is able to look back on the completed journey with its many turns and to find acceptance of the last step.

The Gila River Indian Community -- the Akimel O'odham -- refer to the Man in the Maze as the Se:he, or the Elder Brother, who is their Creator. The journey of life is a journey through a maze, beginning at birth and continuing through childhood, adolescence, adulthood and finally ending in old age. The four major turns in the path represent the four directions, and the center of the maze represents death. Death is the beginning of a new journey and, thus, the cycle repeats itself.

**Apache Hoop**      Dee´ (San Carlos Apache) and Ndee´ (White Mountain Apache)

The Apache hoop is used in traditional ceremonies and the type of ceremony determines whether a single hoop or four hoops are used. The hoop represents the cycle of life from birth to death. It possesses special powers which could be used, for example, to bless an individual when the hoop completely encircles the body. The hoop also has healing and protective powers.

The single Apache hoop has one of the four sacred colors to the tribe: black, green (blue), yellow and white. These colors represent the four directions, the four seasons, and the four major divisions of the day. An eagle feather is tied at four locations on the hoop. To the Apache, and almost all tribes, the eagle is a sacred bird and its feathers are believed to have special powers.

**Lakota Medicine Wheel**      Oglala Lakota and Sicangu Lakota

The Medicine Wheel and its symbolism are known among the Lakota, as well as other tribes through the process of sharing and adapting. While there may be descriptive variations by different tribes and/or individuals, many of the underlying meanings are similar. Although the symbol may be worn by individuals skilled in hunting and/or who display skill in a game designed to hone hunting abilities, today's use of the Medicine Wheel is widespread and varied. The Medicine Wheel is used in the traditional naming ceremonies as well as in modern school graduation ceremonies.

All of life's important lessons can be drawn from the Medicine Wheel and all that it represents. Among the Lakota, all that is sacred is embodied in the circle or hoop. The four sacred parts represent the four directions; four sacred colors; four parts of the spiritual world and the physical world; four values of the Lakota Oyate (respect, generosity, wisdom, and courage); four stages of life; and much more. The hoop represents, in totality, the circle of life.

The circle is also divided into halves by the red road and the black road. The red road represents life and all that is good. The black road represents the completion of the life circle -- only to begin anew. The eagle feather/plume is acknowledgment of the prayers carried to Tunkasila. The Medicine Wheel reminds the wearer of the connection between the earth and all that is living, the Ikce Wicasa (common man) and Tunkasila. Pilamaya (Thank You). Mitakuye Oyasin.