

Cable Area Social Connections Annual Report

March 2026

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“Loneliness ends where community begins.”

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Our Mission: Increase awareness of the health risks associated with social isolation and create and support opportunities for engaging in positive social interactions.

Background and Introduction

In May 2023, the United States Surgeon General released a new advisory on the epidemic of loneliness and isolation and the healing effects of social connection and community. In response to that report, Carrie Linder from the Bayfield County Aging and Disabilities Section of the Human Services Department convened a meeting in June 2023 to discuss ways that Bayfield County might address this issue. Two months later in August, Suzanne Rooney of Cable Today brought together a small group of Cable residents who had attended the June meeting and others to consider what we could do locally. That group, which now operates as Cable Area Social Connections (CASC), is part of Cable Today and reports to the Cable Plan Commission and the Town of Cable.

Our work is supported by the Town of Cable, the Cable Area Chamber of Commerce, Forest Lodge Library, local businesses, and volunteers.

Current members of CASC are Nina Albanese-Kotar, Amanda Hamilton, Elizabeth Holland, Suzanne Rooney, Sue Rosa, and Kathy Zuelsdorff.

Values: From the first, the Cable Area Social Connections has adhered to the following values and ways of working together: (1) Everyone contributes by having a project (2) We listen to understand (3) There is a bias for action (4) We honor each other's time.

Cable Area Social Connections continuously reviews its effectiveness and ways of working together. With three new members (Nina Albanese-Kotar, Amanda Hamilton, and Kathy Zuelsdorff), we have adopted more structured, regularly scheduled in-person meetings and have designated a chair, treasurer, and secretary. We will continue to evaluate our processes and make changes as the team deems necessary without undue administrative burdens. Our new members collectively bring a strong interest in music events, recreation, and technical, computer and organizational skills.

Action Plan: The original action plan adopted by CASC early on continues to guide our work.

1. Educate ourselves, community leaders, and the public on the issue of social isolation including contributing factors and risks to the health and wellbeing of those in our community.
2. Identify those in our community at particular risk to the effects of social isolation.
3. Take steps to reduce the risk of social isolation.

Current Activities

CASC is currently engaged in the following activities:

Continuous learning. We continuously strive to learn about the health risks associated with social isolation and ways to mitigate them. We share reading material and ideas through email and at meetings.

Reaching those most at risk. Through our efforts to identify those most at risk we have learned that many people have local family members, neighbors and friends who provide them with various levels of social contact and support. A number of isolated individuals take advantage of the county's Senior Dining Program (see below) and Meals on Wheels, which offers valuable social connections with the volunteers who deliver meals. We have also learned that some people come to this area for seclusion and isolation and are happy with that choice. Lastly, in our public education efforts, we urge people to consider their neighbors who may be isolated and encourage and invite them to participate in one of the many social activities offered in our area.

The Senior Dining Program. CASC was instrumental in bringing the Bayfield County Senior Dining Program to Cable in February 2024. Meals are prepared by Lakewoods Resort and served at the Cable UCC church on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month. The program continues to offer communal meals to those 65 and over and are regularly attended by 20 to 40 seniors.

Social Isolation Survey. As a means of educating the public about health risks associated with social isolation, CASC continues to distribute a 3-question survey developed by the University of Wisconsin that helps people identify their own level of social isolation. Surveys can be found at local businesses and the local health clinics and on our website (cableareasocialconnections.org).

Area Activities List. CASC maintains an up-to-date comprehensive schedule of social activities throughout the Cable area. Activities include book groups, exercise classes, church groups, senior meals, etc. The schedule is updated seasonally. Paper copies are distributed throughout the area in local businesses, churches, and the senior meal site. An electronic version of the schedule is posted on our Facebook page and website (cableareasocialconnections.org). The schedule includes a link to the Cable Chamber's website Cable4fun.com. The Chamber's list of local activities, in turn, posts a link to CASC's activity list.

Make Music Day. Every year on June 21st, the Summer Solstice, and December 21st, the Winter Solstice, the world celebrates Make Music Day, a festival of music marked around the world. It is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to gather and make music together. Musicians and other performers of all stripes and skill levels are encouraged to participate, and all events are free and open to the public. CASC brought this international event to Cable for the first time in June 2024 for the Summer Solstice and expanded it to include the Winter Solstice in 2025.

The 2024 Summer Solstice event was held at various venues in the town of Cable per the model of the Make Music Day Alliance which tends to focus on larger communities. Attendance was not documented but was not large in number, especially for the Spoons for the People events (at the Forest Lodge Library during the day and at the Town Park in the evening). A big part of this was the oppressive heat that day, but also that venues were spread out and performances overlapping. New Make Music Day event signs were deployed to designate locations. The event was supported by The Cable Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Cable, Forest Lodge Library, and the Cable Natural History Museum.

New in 2025 was a Winter Solstice event for which we tried a new approach, consolidating the event at a singular time and location. It was modeled after local Open Mic events and announced monthly at that event. Other advertising included posters and the new Make Music Day Cable Facebook page which gained a sizeable number of followers with regular postings. The free event was hosted at The Hub at Mt Telemark Village. Backroads Coffee was open for refreshments. The event started outdoors with dancing and drumming and finished indoors with musical performances and singing. About 75 people attended. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Repair Café. As a result of Bayfield County getting a large grant in 2024 to address social isolation throughout the county, CASC received funds to start a Repair Café. At a Repair Café, people bring their broken items to get repaired by volunteers with the skills to fix them. The first Repair Café was held at the Cable Community Center in October 2024 and continues to be held at the community center the 3rd Saturday each month from 10 to 12:30 with occasional exceptions for conflicting holidays or community events.

The concept of a Repair Café originated in The Netherlands as a way of keeping things out of landfills. An unexpected added benefit has been the sense of community that exists at each event and the social connections that take place. In addition to getting things fixed, those who come to Cable's Repair Café socialize and connect with friends old and new. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come whether they have something that needs repair or not. We think of it as fixing *things* and tending to *body and soul*. Each month new people stop by either to check it out or offer to help. In addition to the initial support from Bayfield County for this project, the Town of Cable has been a source of considerable support.

On a typical Saturday, we have 8-15 volunteers who make repairs, provide hospitality, offer massages, check blood pressures, and host the game and craft tables. Between 10-20 patrons come seeking repairs and other services including as many as three new patrons each month

and about the same number showing up solely for the social interaction and lunch. We maintain a list of 45 volunteers.

In 2025, “repairs” involved sewing, mending and knit garments, small appliances, lamps, etc., furniture, jewelry and art items, knife sharpening, tech support, massages, arts & crafts, and journaling. We introduced a game table and blood pressure screening in 2025. In May, Cable Community Farm and Bayfield County offered soil analysis & garden consultation and in December we offered sustainable gift wrapping. Starting in March, we will host a special guest of the four-legged kind. In partnership with the Northwoods Humane Society, we will showcase an adoptable dog.

Snacks and a complementary lunch are served at each Repair Café including sloppy joes, fruit, coffee, tea and other refreshments. Baked goods are compliments of Harvey’s Bakery and volunteers. Coffee is provided by Castle Gardens Coffee.

Publicity for Repair Café includes Cable Chamber listings, WOJB Community Calendar, posters around Cable, the CASC email list (130), Facebook page (86 followers) and website, Gary Crandall's Chequama Mamas of the World Unite Substack subscriber list (hundreds), and increasingly, word of mouth.

Cable Connections Meet-Up. Completely new in 2025, CASC sponsored the first semi-annual Cable Connections Meet-up, a gathering of community and social service organizations for the purpose of fostering partnerships. About 30 organizations took part in this 2-hour meeting at the Cable Community Center on November 6, 2025. Each attending organization introduced itself and described the services it provides. Refreshments were served and time was reserved for networking. Based on the positive feedback from this initial effort, two more Meet-Ups are planned for May and November 2026 with focused breakout sessions, pitching of projects, and more time for networking.

Social Media

Cable Area Social Connections Facebook (CASC FB) page was initiated on October 13, 2024. To date we have 86 dedicated followers. On average we have 500 views and 50 interactions on our page, as recorded and indicated by Facebook analytics. Mostly we utilize FB to introduce each month’s CASC Repair Café, share event photos, and reply to any comments or shares from followers or viewers. Posing interactive questions, such as “How did you spend your time over the recent deep cold spell?” encourage engagement from followers. In addition, provocative challenges have also been asked within our administrator’s posts such as asking the questions:

“How often do you feel like you lack companionship?”

“How often do you feel left out?”

“How often do you feel isolated from others?”

These three questions seem to get to the heart of the matter.

CASC launched its website in March 2025. The URL is cableareasocialconnections.org.

Member Recruitment.

We are very fortunate to have recruited Nina, who has strong computer skills and agreed to keep our Facebook page up to date. Amanda, another new recruit, has been especially helpful in taking over the activities calendar updates and formatting and communication tasks for the group. While we have also had wonderful success in recruiting volunteers to help with the Repair Café who possess a wide variety of skills and who love helping others, we are always happy to welcome new talent. We have begun receiving inquiries from our website from people interested in our work.

Looking Ahead

CASC is continuously considering new ways to promote social interaction of all kinds. Preliminary discussions have been held with Helen Zasada about organizing a community festival choir. Other ideas include participating in Cable's July 4th parade, developing more connections with the SMART (See My Art) program, and fostering instrumental music jam sessions. We are exploring the idea of a community living room or "hut." As a group we are reevaluating how we can more effectively reach and support our neighbors who are lonely, isolated, and shuttered at home. We hold great hopes for 2026 to reach more members of our community who are in need of social connection.

2025 Financial Report

The Bayfield County grant supporting the Repair Café ended March 31st, 2025. CASC began keeping financial records 4/1/2025. Prior to that, Bayfield County maintained all financial records.

Expenses

Repair Café	
Food	304.00
Supplies	14.00
Make Music Day	200.00
Cable Meet-up	124.00
Printing	2.00
<u>Make Music Alliance</u>	<u>350.00</u>
Total	994.00

Income

Repair Café donations	1,173.00
Other cash contributions	
Tamarack	250.00
Cable Chamber	350.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,773.00</u>

Balance at end of 2025	779.00
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Summary

Cable Area Social Connections has established a presence in the Cable area. Through the variety of programs and activities that we have undertaken, we are fulfilling our mission to

increase public awareness of the health risks associated with social isolation and helping to create a rich variety of opportunities for positive social interaction. With the continued support from our local community, we hope to continue and expand our current programs, initiate new ones, and support others in their efforts to meet the social needs of all those living in and visiting our area.

Special Note: We respectfully request that this report be attached to the minutes of the Plan Commission and the Town of Cable Annual Meeting in order to reach people who may be interested in joining us. We are happy to answer questions. You can contact us at admin@cableareasocialconnections.org.

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