



Dear Editor:

As Americans, we believe in justice for all. Yet we fail to live up to this promise when we allow older members of our society to be abused or neglected. Bayfield County Adult Protective Services Social Workers investigated a total of 74 reports of abuse and/or neglect in 2018. Older people are vital, contributing members of American society and their maltreatment diminishes all of us. Just as we have confronted and addressed the social issues of child abuse and domestic violence, so too can we find solutions to address issues like elder abuse, which also threatens the well-being of our community.

Saturday, June 15, 2019 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. On that day, communities in the USA and all over the world will sponsor events to highlight solutions to this systemic social challenge. The Bayfield County Department of Human Services and the Red Cliff Tribe is proud to host a brunch with entertainment and education to participate in this national conversation. The event will be held at Legendary Waters in Red Cliff from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Our policies and practices make it hard for older people to stay involved with and connected to our communities as they age. As a result, older people are more likely to experience social isolation, which increases the likelihood of abuse and neglect. We can design stronger societal supports to keep our older people connected and protect them from abuse, whether financial, emotional, physical or sexual. When we address a root cause, like social isolation, we also make it less likely that people will neglect themselves (self-neglect). Older adults who are socially connected and protected from harm are less likely to be hospitalized, less likely to go into nursing homes and less likely to die. We can and must create healthier and safer living environments for older adults, including their homes, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities.

There are many ways to get involved in strengthening our communities and preventing elder abuse:

- It is up to everyone to prevent and address elder abuse. Talk about it – to your leaders, and to your neighbors.
  - Advocate for elder abuse prevention and intervention programs.
  - Raise public awareness by conducting presentations and distributing materials about elder abuse at senior centers, places of worship, physician offices, etc.
  - Educate yourself and enable others to better recognize the warning signs
- Lend strength to existing social support structures
  - Be a friendly visitor to an older person living in the community
  - Provide support for someone who is a caregiver
  - Don't tolerate ageism – this begins with not making fun of older adults
- Contribute to building new social support structures:
  - Report concerns to your local Adult Protective Services (Bayfield County 715-373-6144) program or law enforcement (911)
  - Get involved with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program in your state, working to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare and rights of persons who live in long-term care facilities (e.g., nursing homes, assisted living).

Get more information about how to make a difference by visiting the National Center on Elder Abuse <https://ncea.acl.gov> or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center of the North at 1-866-663-3607. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Carrie Linder,  
Bayfield County Department of Human Services

In collaboration with:



# WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Building Strong Support for Elders

Red Cliff  
Violence  
Red Cliff Elderly Program

Family  
Program