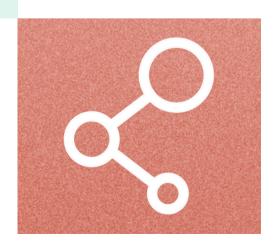
Social Connection

Impact Report

2024

Table of Contents

- 01 From Our Team
- 02 Aiming Higher
- 04 Research and Practice
- 12 Network and Partnerships
- 15 Storytelling and Communications
- 16 Capacity Building
- 17 Take Action



From Our Team

As we reflect on 2024, we are deeply moved by the resilience and strength that connection brings. This year has challenged our relationships, communities, and society in meaningful ways, testing our resolve while also offering moments of celebration that renewed our spirit and commitment to our mission. Through it all, we have seen the extraordinary power of connection to uplift, heal, and transform.

We experienced milestones that illuminated the impact of the Foundation's work and embraced exciting new opportunities that expanded our reach. From launching innovative initiatives and a new strategic plan to forging partnerships that amplify our mission, this year has been one of profound growth. These achievements have positioned us stronger than ever to advance social connection nation-wide rooted in evidence for our collective well-being.

In the pages that follow, you will see how your support has driven meaningful change—bridging divides, building stronger communities, and prioritizing connection as a national value.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are creating a vibrant society where social connection is at the heart of how we live.































A special thanks to:

Hannah Berkel

Communications Fellow (Sep '23 - Sep '24)

Deborah Shoola

Social Connection Fellow (Jan - Oct '24)

Ashley Krombach

Research Assistant Consultant

Aiming Higher

A Refocused Plan for Growth and Impact

Since our founding in 2020, the <u>Foundation</u> for Social Connection (F4SC) has been committed to educating the public, raising awareness, and contributing to the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies for fostering connection. Over the last four years, we have published a number of reports and toolkits translating evidence into action, expanded our network of partners to more than 200 high-impact institutions, and increased our staff and budget by more than 500%. With this growth, we recognized an opportunity to refocus our efforts and impact.

After months of thoughtful planning and invaluable input from our Board, team, funders, and partners, we were proud to announce the launch of our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan in September. This plan represents our collective aspirations and sets a clear path forward for the next three years.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community. If you would like to learn more about our strategic plan, please visit our **website**.

To explore opportunities to take action and partner with us, please reach out to us **here**.

Our Mission

Advance social connection nation-wide rooted in evidence for our collective well-being.

Our Vision

A vibrant society where social connection is at the heart of how we live.



Our strategic plan for the next three years is **not only a roadmap** for this work.

It is a bold declaration of **our commitment** to making a **profound difference**.



1

Research and Practice

- Build the evidence base for effective strategies and policies to positively impact social connection.
- Create tools and written supports tailored for our audiences (public, scientific, etc.) to contribute to the greater good of advancing social connection work.

 Build the translation from evidence to practice through advisory consulting. 2

Network and Partnerships

- Grow the Foundation's networking and convening power to support and coordinate efforts within the ecosystem to advance social connection across diverse sectors and disciplines, grounded in the elements of the SOCIAL Framework.
- Create and foster long-term partnerships to achieve the Foundation's goals.

Our Strategic Pillars

3

Storytelling and Communications

- Enhance the Foundation's communications strategy to advance brand awareness and name recognition.
- Shift the national narrative around social isolation, loneliness, and connection to one that acknowledges evidenced-based messages and prioritizes social connection as essential to broad scale well-being.

4

Operations and Capacity Building

- Expand our team of passionate change makers and multidisciplinary experts with diverse lived experiences and perspectives.
- Inspire new partners to fuel our momentum and sustainability.
- Nurture equitable global collaborations to enable knowledge sharing and support for the broader ecosystem.
- Diversify our Board of Directors whose dedication and talents drive us closer to achieving our mission and vision.

Research and Practice

Our Scientific Leadership Council

Our <u>Scientific Leadership Council (SLC)</u>, formerly the Scientific Advisory Council, serves as a cornerstone of our work, offering consensus-driven recommendations on research, policy, and program development to advance social connection at every level of influence. The SLC began the year with its first in-person convening, marking a pivotal moment in strategizing for 2024. Since then, the SLC has been translating their pioneering research into practical solutions, helping us turn evidence into action. In 2025, we look forward to the release of the SLC's powerful position paper—A Call to Action—that underscores the critical role of scientific evidence in addressing the loneliness epidemic. Through this partnership, we continue to develop impactful strategies that address social isolation and loneliness, leveraging the SLC's expertise to drive meaningful change nation-wide

From left to right:

Row 1: **Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad** (Chair) Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Brigham Young University; **Dr. Carla Perissinotto** (Vice Chair), Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; **Dr. Thomas Cudjoe**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University

Row 2: **Dr. Louise Hawkley**, Senior Fellow, NORC at the University of Chicago; **Dr. Matthew Lee Smith**, Professor, Texas A&M University School of Public Health; **Dr. Mark Van Ryzin**, Research Associate Professor, University of Oregon College of Education

Row 3: Dr. Eden Litt, Director of Research, Meta; Dr. Nicole Ellison, Professor, University of Michigan School of Information; Dr. Matthew Pantell, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of California, San Francisco

Row 4: Juan Albertorio-Diaz, Statistician, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers For Disease Control; Dr. Ashwin Kotwal, Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; Dr. Dani Dumitriu, Associate Professor of Pediatrics in Psychiatry, Columbia University















Expanding the Council

This year, we welcomed two new members, **Dr. Ashwin Kotwal** and **Dr. Dani Dumitriu.**Dr. Kotwal's research interests involve the evaluation of community-based interventions to address loneliness and isolation, particularly among older adults with cognitive impairment or approaching the end of life. At the other end of the lifespan, Dr. Dumitriu works to identify early life predictors of risk and resilience and develop scalable interventions to guide developmental trajectories toward resilience.

Amplifying the Evidence

Our SLC members have been instrumental in enhancing public understanding of social connection through high-profile media appearances and thought leadership. Dr. Julianne Holt-Lunstad featured prominently on platforms such as Yox and The Trey
Gowdy Podcast, dissecting the effects of the loneliness epidemic. Dr. Louise Hawkley examined the ties between social connection and grief on What About Grief? with Larry Holm, and Dr. Carla Perissinotto highlighted challenges in accessing benefits necessary for connection in Modern Healthcare.

Advancing the Field

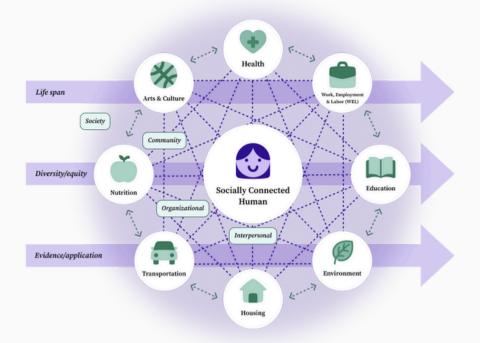
Our experts continue to drive the field forward with groundbreaking research and publications. Dr. Matthew Smith introduced the <u>U-SIRS-13 scale</u>, a validated tool for identifying multifaceted risks to social connectedness among older adults, which empowers researchers and practitioners to detect emerging risks early and deliver timely interventions. Additionally, Dr. Mark Van Ryzin has published a series of impactful articles this year, including a <u>study</u> on technology-supported cooperative learning and its effectiveness in improving students' social-emotional skills, peer relationships, and mental health. **Find more of the SLC's 2024 publications <u>here</u>.**

Influencing Change Nationally...

When San Mateo made history this year as the first county in the U.S. to declare loneliness a public health crisis, Drs. Perissinotto and Kotwal were tapped to lead discussions at the Peninsula Family Service Thought Leader Series about the significance of this declaration. Their work, featured in UCSF Magazine's "A Prescription for Loneliness," highlights the growing recognition of connection as a public health priority. Contributing to another timely policy discussion, Dr. Holt-Lunstad's co-authored <u>research</u> on generative AI examined its implications for socioeconomic inequalities and social connection policy, offering new insights into the evolving landscape of connection and technology.

... and Globally

Dr. Holt-Lunstad joined the World Health Organization's (WHO) <u>Technical Advisory Group on Social Connection</u>, where she contributes to developing scientifically grounded global strategies. In October, the group convened to provide feedback on the <u>WHO Commission on Social Connection</u>'s flagship report, slated for an early 2025 release. Additionally, as a member of the Executive Committee for the WHO and <u>Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection's</u> Grand Challenges in Social Connection, she is helping engage diverse stakeholders from around the world in a priority-setting exercise to identify and address key barriers faced in this work.



The SOCIAL Framework

Developed in partnership with our SLC, the <u>Systems Approach of Cross-sector Integration and Action across the Lifespan (SOCIAL) Framework facilitates and accelerates progress toward a society that values social connectedness across the lifespan and in all sectors of society.</u>

Reaching Milestones in Our Exploration

This year marked significant progress advancing through the sectors in our SOCIAL Framework, underscored by the release of a comprehensive report on the **built environment**. Co-chaired by Risa Wilkerson of **Healthy Places by Design** and Erin Peavey of **HKS Inc.**, this multidisciplinary report emphasizes the transformative power of well-designed, intentional, and inclusive spaces in addressing social isolation, loneliness, and connection. It highlights how prioritizing human-centric design can catalyze community engagement and social integration, offering actionable strategies at the intersection of transportation, housing, and environmental design. Through this work, we also identified untapped policy opportunities, key considerations, and critical research gaps, challenging leaders at every level to reimagine the places where we live, work, and play, and to empower communities to thrive together.

This report also introduced a refreshed format, designed to enhance practical usability. Featuring visually engaging icons and tables to clarify key themes, companion materials with key terms and resources, and community highlights showcasing real-world applications, the updated report is a valuable tool for practitioners and policymakers alike. Complementing the Built Environment report, we released three **supplemental briefs** delving into the Housing, Transportation, and Environmental Sectors and providing targeted strategies for advancing social connection.

To maximize the reach and impact of this work, we hosted two well-attended webinars: <u>Advancing</u> <u>Social Connection through the Built Environment</u> and <u>Diving Deeper: Advancing Social</u> <u>Connection through the Built Environment</u>. These events attracted hundreds of participants, equipping them with actionable strategies to implement in their communities.

As we look ahead, we are building on this momentum with the upcoming release of our Arts and Culture Sector and Nutrition Sector reports. Additionally, we will update our earlier sector reports on Health, Education, and Work to integrate the latest evidence and innovative practices, continuing our commitment to advancing social connection across diverse domains.

18k

Total Action
Guide Viewers

96

Pilot Community
Applications

5

Pilot Communities

128

Anniversary Webinar Attendees

20+

Community Presentations

The Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities

Throughout the year, we celebrated incredible milestones as well as exciting firsts with our <u>Action Guide for Building Socially Connected</u> <u>Communities</u>, an interactive website empowering local leaders with evidence-based strategies, resources, and data to collaboratively implement sustainable, scalable social connection initiatives.

Listening, Learning, and Evolving

Since it launched in September 2023, the guide has garnered over 18,000 visits and been the focus of numerous presentations and publications nation-wide. (See "<u>To Measure Loneliness, Start Here</u>," in POLITICO.) As a result of this wide reach, we have received invaluable feedback shared by users that has helped us iterate on the guide's features. **Key updates include:**

A **Robust Search Function**: Recognizing the need for easier navigation as we have built out the *Action Guide* and added new content, we introduced a powerful search capability. This feature allows users to quickly locate the resources they need, whether they are just starting out or deep into their social connection initiatives. It is all about making the guide more accessible and empowering communities to take their next steps with ease.

An **Enhanced Data Dashboard**: Leveraging newly available data from the 2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), we expanded the guide's **Data Dashboard** with additional social isolation and connection indicators. These updates provide deeper insights into the factors influencing social connection across communities, helping leaders make more informed, evidence-based decisions and track progress over time.

A **Communities of Practice Map**: To foster collaboration, we added our newly launched **Communities of Practice Map** that visualizes coalitions and networks actively promoting social connection. This tool enables users to explore opportunities for partnership, share ideas, and strengthen efforts across regions and sectors, driving collective progress.

A **Communities in Action Case Study Page**: One of the most inspiring additions is the **Communities in Action** page, which highlights real-world examples of how the guide is being used to address social connection

challenges and create meaningful change. These stories showcase innovative approaches and best practices, sparking inspiration for others to take action in their own communities.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that even more stories will soon be added to the page. These updates—and the ongoing refinement of the guide—reflect our unwavering dedication to creating the most informative, practical guide so community leaders can enact lasting change.

Bringing the Guide to Life

In May, we took this work a step further with the launch of our first pilot program. Out of 96 applications from 39 states and one territory, five communities (below) were selected to participate, each receiving hands-on support to design and implement their own unique initiatives. Since then, we have been collaborating closely with these communities, helping these passionate change makers turn their ideas into action.

	Lead Organization	Partners
Isabella County, MI	Community Works	Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, the Seventh Generation Elijah Elk Culture Center, the Ziibiwing Center, and the Chippewa River District Library
Cowley County, KS	<u>Legacy Regional</u> <u>Community</u> <u>Foundation</u>	Cowley County government, local libraries, public special educators, local business owners, frontline service providers, and successful community placemakers
West Sacramento, CA	Health Education Council	West Sacramento residents via Community Connectors, city government officials, and public health departments
Midwood & Gavesend Brooklyn, NY	Kings Highway Beautification Association	Parks Department, NYPD, Department of Sanitation, Department of Transportation, Department of Small Business Services, and others
Little Rock, AR	The Village Place	The Village Place's Youth Advisory Council, consisting of BIPOC youth

Additionally, we hosted a special <u>webinar</u> to celebrate the anniversary of launching the guide. It featured the inspiring work happening in Little Rock, Arkansas and West Sacramento, California, highlighting their progress and lessons learned. Our conversation underscored the guide's power to foster innovation, connection, and resilience across diverse communities.

Our Research and Practice Partners

Hinge

Fostering Connections Among Gen Z "IRL"

We were honored to work with Hinge's **One** More Hour initiative, aimed at mobilizing young adults to add more in-person connection to their lives. The program provided grants, totaling \$1 million, to social groups and organizations dedicated to addressing our Ioneliness epidemic and helping Gen Z find belonging and community in person. By supporting the grant development process, sharing evidence-based resources and practices with selected social groups, and uplifting this initiative, we helped organizations in Atlanta, New York City, and Los Angeles promote in-person connection. Through 2025, we will continue to work with Hinge to develop measurement tools and impact benchmarks around Hinge's social impact efforts.



Since its launch, *One More Hour* has been highlighted in prominent media outlets like **NPR** and recognized with multiple honors. In December, Hinge and the Foundation were awarded three bronze **Anthem Awards** in the Health and Community Engagement categories for the initiative's positive social impact.

Learn more about their awardees here.



During <u>Global Loneliness Awareness</u>
<u>Week</u> in June, Young Futures hosted an in-person retreat in Washington, D.C. to celebrate the launch of <u>YF Academy.</u>

Check out YF Academy highlights here.



Promoting Social Connection in a Tech Driven World

In partnership with <u>Young Futures (YF)</u>, we launched a \$1 million open funding call to support emerging nonprofits working to promote social connection, teen belonging, and well-being in a tech driven world. We worked with their team to support the identification of promising, evidence-informed organizations focused on building social connection for youth. The selected <u>YF Innovators</u> represent a range of school-based, media, and community-based organizations and serve communities with a rich diversity of genders, races, ages, and backgrounds.



Evaluating the Influence of Services on Social Connection

Alongside a team of our SLC members, the Foundation advised <u>Building H</u> on ways their <u>2024 Index</u> can evaluate the influence of products and services on the social connection of their customers and identified further opportunities for these products and services to foster connections. The 2024 Index marks the broadest examination of how consumer products and services shape America's social behaviors - spanning four industries and 12 product categories.



Preparing Students to Support Socially Isolated Veterans

In partnership with The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) <u>Center for Minority</u> <u>Veterans (CMV)</u>, we are evaluating the impact of a new social prescribing course for medical students. This Introduction to Social Connection course will inform students on the significance of social connection as a social determinant of health, and help students develop the skills to practice social prescribing with a focus on improving veteran well-being. **Watch an overview here.**

You are who you meet.



ranks 75+ consumer products & services on how they affect your social engagement



TAKEAWAY

Human contact is often a "friction" to be optimized away.

ARCHEWELL FOUNDATION

Building Connected Communities for Resettled Women

The Welcome Project, launched by The Archewell Foundation, supports women-led programming for recently resettled Afghan women to help build more inclusive and connected communities. Currently, there are 11 active Welcome Projects across the US designed to foster a sense of belonging through activities including sewing, art, hiking, swimming, photography, storytelling, and cooking. The Foundation for Social Connection partnered with Archewell to provide technical assistance to grantees as well as developed and conducted the evaluation methodology to measure the impact of the organizations to decrease social isolation through intentional community building.



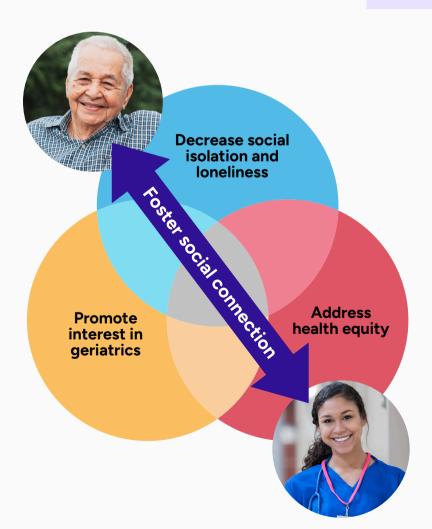
Healing Through Connection

The Archewell Foundation is also supporting a <u>network for parents</u> whose children and families have been impacted by online harm. This community is a place for parents to convene, to heal, and to help prevent future loss and harm from occurring to other families around the world by sharing their stories. The Foundation for Social Connection supports this initiative by developing measurement and evaluation frameworks to track the impact of this network.



In August, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex appeared on <u>CBS</u> to discuss The Parents' Network and its efforts to help families affected by online harm.

Explore the powerful stories of parents in the network here.





Cultivating Connection Between Students and Older Adults

With a grant from the <u>Centers for</u>
<u>Medicare and Medicaid Services</u>, the
Foundation designed and implemented
the <u>Community Providers and Local</u>
<u>Students (PALS)</u> pilot program in
Houston, Texas. This program aims to
advance equity and meaningful
connections by pairing older adults in
nursing homes with medical professional
students through focused learning, social
prescribing, and in-person visits to
enhance the well-being of residents.

Network and Partnerships

Convenings

Call for Connection

During June's <u>Global Loneliness Awareness Week</u>, the Foundation and its partner, <u>Healthy Places</u> <u>by Design</u>, hosted their second Call for Connection Convening in Washington, D.C. This annual workshop brought together 22 representatives from philanthropic, governmental, and research organizations dedicated to strengthening social connectedness across diverse communities and all stages of life.



Building on the inaugural convening in 2023, this year's event focused on expanding a growing network of peers and potential collaborators to identify opportunities for collective action. Participants shared accomplishments and discussed how to amplify impact in priority areas identified in the previous convening.

These annual workshops are a cornerstone of our efforts to foster cross-sector collaboration, uniting leaders to advance social connectedness at the community, state, and national levels. By leveraging collective expertise and partnerships, the convening continues to drive innovative solutions for a connected society.

Organizations
By Sector

14

2

6

Government

Research

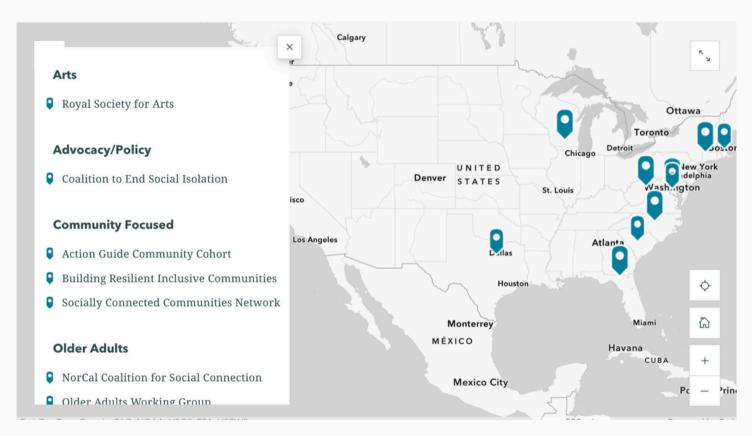
Philanthropy

2025 Social Connection Conference

After much anticipation, we are excited to announce our next <u>Social Connection Conference</u> will convene in Atlanta, Georgia on October 28-30th. Together with researchers, social innovators, and leaders from corporate, nonprofit, government, and civic sectors, we aim to build the field and catalyze a movement across scales and sectors. We look forward to releasing more updates, including a call for conference proposals, in the new year!

Communities of Practice Map

The <u>Social Connection Communities of Practice Network Map</u> we launched this year is composed of organizations and coalitions working to address social isolation, loneliness, and connection in the United States. This resource connects people around the country passionate about social connection research, practice, and policy, and brings together existing networks into one coordinated social connection umbrella. Through exchanging best practices, sharing ideas, and creating partnerships, we aim to strengthen the collective efforts of those dedicated to enhancing social connectivity.



Users can explore this network map and directory to learn where and how communities are advancing social connection in their communities, and how they can get in touch with them.

We look forward to continuing to expand this map nation-wide and invite interested coalitions to join below.

Join Here

Our Strategic Partnership

Entering a New Era with Our Action Network







Over the past six years, the Foundation's partnership with its sister organization, the <u>Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness (CESIL)</u>, has allowed both organizations to thrive. We are driven by our shared mission and strategic pillars—policy, advocacy, awareness, research translation, practice, and partnership development. Recognizing the strength and influence of each element, we see a real opportunity to further align these efforts, streamlining relationships, resources, operations, and governance for an even greater impact.

We are taking an exciting new step in realigning these sister organizations to maximize our impact nation-wide. Starting in the new year, the Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness will evolve into the **Foundation for Social Connection Action Network (F4SC-AN)**, serving as the advocacy arm of the Foundation. This change will streamline our operations and governance, ensuring our efforts are more aligned and effective in achieving our shared goals.

Some things that will remain the same in this transition:

- Foundation for Social Connection (F4SC) will remain a <u>C3 entity</u>, and the newly named Foundation for Social Connection Action Network (F4SC-AN) will remain a <u>C4 entity</u>.
- F4SC-AN will stay committed to advocacy. It will create a quarterly advocacy plan that includes grassroots, state, and federal efforts to achieve policy goals each year. This plan will also feature our signature events like Hill Day and Global Loneliness Awareness Week.
- F4SC-AN will continue to handle government affairs by coordinating all federal and state policymaker interactions and managing requests to connect with policy and practice experts within the F4SC-AN and F4SC networks.
- F4SC-AN's policy and advocacy experts will also continue to create detailed policy proposals
 that consider political feasibility, U.S. regulations, and other essential factors. These proposals
 will be generated from F4SC's evidence-informed policy framework and the missions of the
 501(c)4 members.

Some changes that will occur:

- F4SC-AN's Older Adults, Young Adults, and Intergenerational working groups will be reorganized under F4SC's Network and Partnerships Strategic Pillar.
- F4SC-AN will create committees to meet the needs of the policy and advocacy agenda.
- F4SC-AN will host monthly membership meetings focused exclusively on advocacy, Hill and Administration speakers, federal policy, and local coalition updates.
- While F4SC (C3) and F4SC-AN (C4) will have separate executive leadership, Jillian Racoosin Kornmeier (Executive Director, F4SC) and Andrew MacPherson (Executive Chair, F4SC-AN) will be working closely together to achieve the organization's mission and visions.

We are thrilled about these changes, and the Action Network looks forward to unveiling its new branding and mission in 2025.

Storytelling and Communications

Making Social Connection a National Priority

Throughout the year, the Foundation was called upon to provide its expertise and uplift stories of inspiring community efforts, helping shift the national narrative to one that acknowledges evidenced-based messages and prioritizes social connection as essential to broad scale well-being.

Check out the conversations our impressive team has sparked below!



Capacity Building

Scaling Our Impact

Our growth in 2024 has powered a movement that demands a commitment to operational excellence and capacity building. As a part of our new strategic plan, we have made some exciting changes to our Board leadership. We have also expanded the Board and welcomed new faces to our team. With these new additions, we have brought greater diversity in skills, lived experiences, and passion that will create lasting change in the years to come.



Linsey Morrison

Simone Heng

Cybele Bjorklund

Paolo Narciso



Prachir Pasricha Associate Program Manager

Frances Kraft
Program Director,
Research and Practice

Varnika Birla
Research and Practice
Fellow

Finley Blair Communications Fellow

Blake Waranch Social Connection Fellow

Sarah Nemetz Social Connection Fellow

Take Action

We are building a movement to address our crisis of disconnection, and we feel the urgency to address this crisis through a comprehensive cross-sectoral approach. We encourage you to join us in this critical time. Thank you for being an integral part of our community.

Join Our Scientific Network

Help us translate research into practice

Empower Your Community

Explore the Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities

Find Coalitions

Explore and join our Communities of Practice Map

Connect with Us

Request a presentation

Partner with Us on a Project

Collaborate for impact

Commit to Connect

Young Futures

Einhorn Collaborative &

Donate

Help support our mission

Follow Along

Find us on Linkedin

Stay in the Know

Subscribe to our Weekly Newsletter

We are grateful for the support of our close partners and funders

Archewell Foundation & Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation & Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation & Building H

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection Healthy Places by Design Hinge Office of the Surgeon General Pinterest & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Royal Society of the Arts

Department of Veterans Affairs

[∞] funder