

MAY 2024

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

the journey home

Announcing our Hurricane Preparedness Program



With the start of hurricane season less than one month away, we are providing the community with our updated Hurricane Preparedness Packet, available to anyone who needs it. Packets may be downloaded from our website, www.fishofsancap.org, on the Hurricane Resources or Social & Senior Services page, picked up at 2422 Periwinkle Way or mailed by request. We are encouraging everyone to plan and prepare early for the hurricane season ahead.

Annually, FISH, the City of Sanibel, Lee County Emergency Management, and others work together to review changes for the upcoming hurricane season. We compile a Hurricane Preparedness Packet providing detailed information on where to go, what to do, and how to prepare in the event of an approaching storm. "The packet provides critical information and helpful steps to stay safe before, during and after a storm," says Erika Broyles, Senior Services Director of FISH, who oversees the program.

FISH team members and volunteers also work with vulnerable residents to review emergency evacuation plans and stays connected before, during, and after storms. To the extent possible, they provide status updates to out of state family members. "As we learned with Ian, it is very important to have up-to-date contact information for family and friends in both electronic and paper form," continues Broyles. "With Ian, power was out for an extended period, and the hard copy 'in case of emergency' contact sheets were crucial when trying to contact folks."

To receive a free Hurricane Resource Packet, contact FISH at 239-472-4775 or erika@fishofsancap.org. Appointments may be arranged for those who would like a more detailed discussion on how to prepare for the hurricane season. FISH encourages all to begin shopping for hurricane season supplies before items become scarce. As a reminder, the 2024 Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holidays according to the Florida Department of Revenue are June 1 – 14 and August 24 – September 6, 2024. For those who would like a more detailed discussion on how to prepare for hurricane season. FISH encourages all to begin shopping for hurricane season supplies before items become scarce. As a reminder, the 2024 Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holidays according to the Florida Department of Revenue are June 1 – 14 and August 24 – September 6, 2024. ***Below, the FISH team and partners in action post Ian.***



2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957

Food Pantry Address: 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957

239.472.4775 ~ fishofsancap.org ~ email: info@fishofsancap.org





neighbors helping neighbors

FISH is committed to the safety and well-being of our island community, and hurricane season is no exception. Hurricane hazards come in many forms, including storm surge, heavy rainfall, inland flooding, high winds, etc.

It is essential to be ready before a storm approaches and crucial to know what to do if a storm makes landfall.

FISH can help—

before & after THE STORM

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PACKETS

Our annual **FISH Hurricane Preparedness Packet** is a valuable resource available to anyone who requests one. The packet provides detailed information on where to go, what to do, and how/when to begin preparing for hurricane season, including:

- **Suggested Do's and Don'ts**
- **City of Sanibel Hurricane Pass Application**
- **Special Medical Needs Application**
- **Checklists**
- **List of Hotels**
- **List of Shelters**
- **Pet Information**
- **Hotline Numbers**

If you or someone you know could benefit from this vital program, packets may be obtained in the following ways:

- **PICKED UP** at FISH—2422 Periwinkle Way
- **DOWNLOADED** at fishofsancap.org
- **MAILED TO YOU** upon request by calling 239.472.4775 or email erika@fishofsancap.org

HURRICANE RECOVERY

In the event a storm makes landfall, please contact FISH after the storm for information and assistance at **239.472.0404 (24-hour hotline)** or email info@fishofsancap.org

In 2023, FISH helped neighbors through the storms with:



745

HURRICANE PACKETS
DISTRIBUTED &

4,018

HURRICANE RECOVERY
SERVICES & SUPPLIES PROVIDED

2422 Periwinkle Way
Sanibel FL 33957
239.472.4775
fishofsancap.org





Thank You Community Partner Bank of the Islands

FISH OF SANCAP, the islands ‘neighbors helping neighbors’ social service organization, contributes their success to the number of community partners involved with the organization. Partners are businesses and organizations both on and off island that assist FISH in delivering services and resources to the islands’ residents and workforce. “Partnerships are important to FISH because they expand our network in order to ensure that needs, big or small, are met,” says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director, FISH.

Bank of the Islands, a long-time supporter of FISH, is a valued community partner that assists the organization with critical programs. Throughout the year, the Bank serves as a drop off location for non-perishable food items. During the holidays, they hold drives for both food and gifts so that no need goes unmet. Bank of the Islands graciously allows the FISH team use of their boardroom until the organization’s building is repaired. Greg Blurton, Vice President, Senior Commercial Loan Officer is a FISH board member and representatives from the Bank often volunteer at FISH events to provide support and manpower to the FISH team. The Bank also provides support in the form of event sponsorships and underwriting of the FISH Impact Report.

In addition to FISH program support, Bank of the Islands offers a ‘we love our islands’ program. The program encourages community awareness of nonprofit island organizations and randomly selects vehicles bearing their decal to choose an island nonprofit to receive a donation from the Bank. “We’re so grateful to have been chosen for donations through the Bank’s program,” says Espinoza. “Bank of the Islands is a true neighbors helping neighbors business.”



FISH partners are small and large businesses or nonprofits in various fields. “Partners allow us to be part of our community and maximize our impact through collaboration. Because of our community partners, we can offer a variety of programs to more individuals by increasing product availability, providing expertise, and offering alternate locations to hold our in-person programs,” continues Espinoza. Some partners provide food drives while others provide professional services in a reduced or no cost arrangement. All partners help build awareness and advocacy for the FISH organization.

“Our island community is truly blessed to have FISH,” said Bank of the Islands V. P. David Lowden. “Beyond its essential food pantry, the broad scope of programs and services FISH offers our neighbors in need is just exemplary. We are big FISH fans at Bank of the Islands!” If your organization is interested in becoming a FISH community partner, please contact Maria Espinoza, Executive Director at 239-472-4775.

*Shown above, L to R: Robbie Roepstorff, Maria Espinoza, Greg Blurton, Maggi Feiner, David Lowden.
Photo by Shant Antalick*



Welcome Camp Noah & Our Youth Scholarship Program

The Lee County School District's last day of school is May 30, and we are busy working with families to ensure kids safe and active. For those who qualify, we offer scholarships for families to send their children to summer camps throughout the county. The program offers limited financial assistance for families who cannot afford the rising cost of summer childcare and camps. Households that can receive a youth scholarship must have an island connection through residency or employment.

"Many households struggle to find balance between work and childcare particularly during the summer months. Some facilities that closed due to Hurricane Ian have not re-opened, while others are open with less staff meaning fewer children can attend," says Nitza Lopez, Social Services Director, FISH. "Summer months for island employees can often bring about a reduction in hours at work for our neighbors, and with rising costs it's becoming difficult to afford childcare."

New this year, we have partnered with Camp Noah and St. Michaels to provide a free camp beginning June 3-7, when other camps are not available. Camp Noah is a nationally acclaimed program where children in communities impacted by disaster can experience the power of hope and healing through a proven resiliency curriculum that includes creative activities and play. Lunch is included with this complimentary camp, and we'll offer before and after care hours. The family sign-up link for Camp Noah is <http://app.campdoc.com/register/campnoah>

Notes a Sanibel resident and employee, "Last year FISH helped with a portion of the costs associated with camp for granddaughter, Avery. Her mom [my daughter] has been living with us since Hurricane Ian while her home gets rebuilt," says Anne, an island employee and resident. "My daughter and granddaughter have really been struggling financially since the storm, and the cost of rebuilding their home is taking every dollar they have saved. We are all grateful that FISH can help this year to keep Avery safe and let her have a little fun. Their new offering, Camp Noah, sounds amazing and so important after everything Avery has been through with the storm disaster. We're excited to learn more and give it a try and hope it will help with Avery's anxiety as we near hurricane season." The names of the individuals have been changed for privacy purposes.

Scholarship assistance is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Our Social Services Director determines eligibility for need-based financial assistance through a review of a family's income and expense documentation. Scholarship amounts vary depending upon the length and cost of the program and the family's financial status. Available funding is limited, and scholarships may cover only a portion of the cost. To learn more and to determine eligibility, please contact Nitza Lopez, Social Services Director, at 239-472-4775 or nitza@fishofsancap.org.



SAINT MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS CHURCH



Our 2023 Impact Report

We are pleased to introduce our [2023 Impact Report - The Journey Home](#) - graciously underwritten by Bank of the Islands. We're proud of the work we do, made possible through the generous support of our donors, partners, volunteers and others. As we continue to navigate obstacles, endure bumps in the road, and search for new ways to keep moving forward, we've found the road to recovery is also paved with good things— hope, renewal, and resilience. FISH remains committed to helping all of our neighbors in making their way back to the islands we love and call home. View our [2023 Impact Report - The Journey Home](#)



2023 impact report



neighbors helping neighbors



Volunteers - The Backbone of FISH



Brad Thompson's family first came to the islands in 1984. Since then, he and his wife, Linda, have enjoyed time shares, before purchasing their own condo on Captiva. When they retired at the end of 2016, they moved to their condo on Captiva for 2 1/2 years, then relocated just off-island to the Iona area. They both come to Sanibel 4 or 5 days a week for church, golf, and to volunteer at FISH.

When Brad and Linda retired in 2016, they both wanted to do something to help in the community. One of their neighbors told them about FISH, the only social services agency on the islands. They really hadn't understood the need for help on the islands, but soon learned of the services FISH offered to residents, the island workforce, and the older adult population.

"It seemed like a great way to help our new neighbors," says Brad. Linda was soon volunteering at the Walk-In Center and helping with Hurricane preparedness, and Brad soon started volunteering in the food pantry. Brad reflects, "while I enjoyed organizing the pantry and driving to Costco, it was especially fun to get to know clients who you then might see working around the island." Brad has also helped with the 5K/10K Race, delivering groceries to home-bound seniors, and doing whatever was needed, especially during the summer when there are fewer volunteers.

"Working at FISH just after Hurricane Ian was especially interesting and helpful as we met many longtime islanders who were thankful to get cleaning supplies, furniture, and sometimes just friendly conversation and encouragement. This is truly a neighbors helping neighbors organization," says Brad.

Interested in volunteering? We have transitioned to the POINT platform! Please [create a profile here](#), and follow us to sign up for volunteer shifts. Please ensure you are signed up for your shifts and checking in. [Click here for our POINT page](#).





FISH LINES

Coming in June - Friendly Faces with Naples Compost

neighbors helping neighbors

FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON TUESDAY, JUNE 11, @11:00 a.m.

Islanders, friends and family are invited to the community-wide FISH OF SANCAP Friendly Faces Luncheon!



Naples Compost, will join us to discuss the importance of composting and provide an overview of the services they provide in our area.

Food waste is rampant, and the statistics are staggering. 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted totaling a loss of \$1,000,000,000,000. Instead of wasting the scraps in land-fills and throwing away trillions of dollars, Naples Compost can take your

food scraps and turn it back into nutrient rich/fertile soil that can be used by yourself or farmers to improve crop growth.

- Friendly Faces is offered **in-person at the Sanibel Recreation Center** and virtually by Zoom
- The cost of the luncheon, provided by community partner Sanibel Deli, is complimentary to guests -- meal selections for in-person guests will be provided upon RSVP
- **Space is limited, please RSVP early!**
- Future Friendly Faces luncheons are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month throughout 2024

FISH continues to help neighbors in meeting their physical, mental and emotional needs. As always, we are committed to being a safety net for all. At the end of the day, our message is simple -- FISH is for everyone.

SANIBEL FIT 4 LIFE



DATE:
Tuesday, June 11

TIME:
Beginning at 11:00 am

LOCATION:
Sanibel Rec Center
3880 SanCap Road
also
Virtual Zoom Call

RSVP:
To Erika Broyles, FISH
By June 7
239-472-4775
erika@fishofsancap.org



Tool Shed Program Relocated



Our Tool Shed program, launched last year in a partnership between FISH and the Rotary Club of Sanibel Captiva, has been relocated to an off-island site in preparation for hurricane season and has now come to its completion.

“This program was a great way to show the Island community that FISH and Rotary are here to help,” says Manuela Martinez, Disaster Administrative Director. “It’s always important to let folks know that we care about their needs during critical times.” The Tool Shed program allowed islanders to borrow tools they needed temporarily and at no cost. Tools offered included electric drills, hammers, tool sets; shovels, mops, utility buckets; wheelbarrows, hoses, leaf blowers; chainsaws, saws, crowbars, and more. “This program was well-received by community members, and we can’t thank the

Rotary Club of Sanibel Captiva and Rotary District 6960 enough for their assistance in helping our neighbors,” continues Martinez.

If anyone is still in need of tools, please contact [Manuela Martinez](#). As a reminder, the 2024 Florida Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holidays are June 1 – 14 and Aug. 24 –Sept. 6, 2024. We encourages everyone to begin shopping for hurricane season supplies before items become scarce. Additionally, our free Hurricane Resource Packet is now available to anyone who needs it. The packet can be [downloaded](#) or picked up at 2422 Periwinkle Way. To receive a packet by mail, please contact FISH at 239-472-4775 or email erika@fishofsancap.org.

FISH & American Red Cross Offer Emergency & CPR Training

In partnership with the American Red Cross, we’re offering an Emergency Preparedness and CPR Training event at the Sanibel Community House on **Mon., May 20 from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.** The event is open to the entire community, up to 90 people.



“It’s so important to know what to do in the event of an emergency or disaster, and we’re thankful that the American Red Cross will be educating our community,” says Manuela Martinez, Disaster Administrative Director. The American Red Cross will discuss precautions, procedures, and measures to take to prevent emergencies and ensure the safety of individuals and property in the event of such occurrences. Caregiver training will be facilitated by Ethan Ticehurst of the American Red Cross. He will introduce strategies and resources for caregivers during disasters with an emphasis on Hurricanes. A hands-on CPR training will be provided by Kim Berghs of the American Red Cross.

Lunch and beverages will be provided. Additionally, FISH will be distributing their Hurricane Preparedness Packets to anyone who requests it. **Registration is required to [Manuela Martinez](#).**



Assistance for Older Adults and their Caregivers



Providing support to thrive is what we are all about. Recently Stephanie Norton, a Sanibel resident and employee, visited FISH to inquire about furniture distribution. FISH, in partnership with United Way Gifts In-Kind, provides furnishings and household items needed for repairs to those that live or work on the islands. The name of the individual has been changed for privacy purposes. “When talking with Stephanie about her needs and disaster recovery progress, I learned she has become a temporary caregiver for her parents while they navigate some medical issues,” says Erika Broyles, Senior Services Director.

Over the last decade, more adults find themselves becoming a caregiver for a family member. According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, 85% of caregivers look after a relative or other loved one, and 42% to them care for a parent.

Broyles continues, “I explained the programs FISH has to offer for aging in place, and soon Stephanie’s parents were enrolled in the Meals-by-FISH program, Smile Box program and Medical Equipment loan program.”

We understand as community members’ age, their needs change, and we are committed to providing help for the essential needs of older adults. The **Meals-by FISH** program, widely used by older adults, is a daily hot meal delivery service. Subsidized by FISH, in part or in whole as need dictates, the program ensures islanders have access to at least one hot meal per day. Whether for island older adults who no longer cook or drive, or residents who temporarily need assistance, this program is vital to our community. The FISH **Smile Box** program, which began at the onset of the COVID crisis, was inspired by the subscription box trend where participants receive boxes of products and goodies regularly. We quickly realized its positive impact on the community and incorporated the Smile Box program into a regular monthly offering. **Medical equipment for loan**, one of our oldest programs, provides necessary medical equipment to those in need, free of charge.

We are keenly focused on the unique issues and challenges pertaining to the everyday lives of older adults, including mobility, isolation and loneliness. It’s our goal to feed both the physical and emotional needs of older adults to help them remain healthy, independent, engaged, and age in place with dignity.

“Until now, I wasn’t fully aware of all the services FISH has to offer to the older community,” says Stephanie. “Using FISH services, including the Food Pantry, will really help me as I assist my parents with the activities of daily living and to attend to their medical needs. I had no idea where to go for resources, and am thrilled FISH is right here on the island.” To learn more about FISH Senior Services, contact Erika Broyles at (239) 472-4775.





Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!



Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!