

JUNE 2024

# FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

the journey home

Run for FISH, Celebrate with a Concert on the Beach



We are pleased to announce the date for our annual race and music concert event – JOG N JAM -- scheduled for **Sat., Dec. 7, 2024** to celebrate the resilience of the islands. The JOG N JAM starts with Sanibel's only 10K and 5K race event. The races will begin and end at the Sanibel Community House, 2173 Periwinkle and a kids' run will follow at the Sanibel Community Park. Later that afternoon, a music concert featuring the band Funk You will be held at 'Tween Waters, complete with fireworks on the beach.

Leading the event are co-chairs Diane Cortese, Sanibel resident and Leah Winkler, a FISH board member. "We're so excited to offer this event that supports the good works of FISH," says Winkler. "Last year we had phenomenal runner participation – 530 registered runners – and good attendance at the concert. There's plenty to do the day before and after our event to make your participation a weekend destination." On and off-island hotel partnerships, new this year, for those wishing to spend the weekend are available. For additional details, please visit our [website](#).

The JOG N JAM event is one of our fundraisers to support our programs, made through sponsorships and, also new this year, merchandise sales. "Support is vital as FISH continues to serve those living and working in our community," says Diane Cortese, "and we hope you'll consider becoming a sponsor of our JOG N JAM event and a part of the FISH family." Additional information on sponsorship is available on our [website](#) or by emailing [events@fishofsancap.org](mailto:events@fishofsancap.org).

Runner registration and concert ticket sales opened Jun. 1, 2024. To register as a runner, purchase concert tickets or both, visit [RunSignUp](#). Fees for runner registration are tiered, starting at \$45.00 through Sept. 30. The kids' fun run for ages 10 and under is free, however all participants must register. Both races will be timed by Cape Coral neighbors Lin-Mark Sports using the Chronotrack Timing System. The 10K will begin at 7:00 a.m. and the 5K starts at 7:15a.m. FISH anticipates the kids' fun run to start shortly after the races and just before the award presentation.

The cost of music concert tickets is tiered, starting at \$75.00 through Sept. 30. Concert goers are encouraged to ride-share or use the shuttle service provided by FISH. Food, drinks, and alcohol will be available for purchase. No outside alcohol and/or food will be permitted on the premises. See [Run Sign Up](#) for additional details.

2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957  
**Food Pantry Address:** 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957  
239.472.4775 ~ [fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org) ~ email: [info@fishofsancap.org](mailto:info@fishofsancap.org)





**530**  
RUNNERS  
IN 2023

SANIBEL'S  
**ONLY**  
RACE

BOTH  
**5K**  
AND  
**10K**

**COME**  
walk, run OR jog  
our 17th annual road race

**SATURDAY  
DECEMBER 7, 2024**

BEGINS & ENDS AT THE SANIBEL COMMUNITY HOUSE

**RACING BEGINS 7:00a—registration from 6:00-6:45a**

Visit [RunSignUp.com](https://RunSignUp.com) for details & to register. *The earlier you register, the less you pay—scan here!*

Sign up for the Kids Fun Run following the road race—FREE under age 10.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For additional information, email: [events@fishofsancap.org](mailto:events@fishofsancap.org)



2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957 • 239.472.4775 • [fishofsancap.org](https://fishofsancap.org)



CITY OF SANIBEL



## We are Dedicated to Supporting Seniors

As individuals advance into their later years, they often require additional assistance to manage their daily lives. FISH OF SANCAP Senior Services offers various forms of support to elderly residents of the island. Recognizing that the needs of aging neighbors change over time, FISH, devoted to addressing the essential requests of island seniors, offer programs that include assessments, reassurance calls and visits, loans of medical equipment, transportation both on and off the island, friendly gatherings, hurricane preparedness resources, access to home healthcare, meals and pantry items, as well as emergency financial aid.



Recently, Erika Broyles, the Director of FISH Senior Services, met a remarkable woman in her 80s named Betty Adler, who has been residing on Sanibel for several years. “She reached out inquiring about our services,” recalls Erika, “which was a significant step for her. She’s someone who values her independence but found it difficult to ask for assistance.” To protect her privacy, the individual’s name has been changed.

Betty’s connection to Sanibel traces back to the 1960s when she first visited the island. Initially, her visits were brief vacations, but she and her late husband later purchased a small vacation home for longer stays. They even bought land with plans to build a retirement home, but sadly, her husband passed away before they could realize this dream. “After his passing, I felt his presence with me particularly when walking the beach, which was one of our favorite outings,” recalls Betty. Despite facing cancer, Betty cherishes her peaceful years on Sanibel, enjoying the company of friends and neighbors and enjoying the island lifestyle.

Cancer has significantly impacted Betty’s energy and mobility, preventing her from taking her favorite beach walks. Some days, she finds it challenging to even get out of bed and manages to shop or eat only occasionally. Upon the recommendation of a neighbor and friend, Betty reluctantly reached out to FISH for assistance with groceries and meals on her low-energy days. Broyles arranged a home visit to assess Betty’s needs, leading to her enrollment in programs like the FISH Smile Box, food pantry, and meal services. “I’m grateful for meeting Erika and discovering the FISH organization,” says Betty. “It feels like a burden has been lifted off my shoulders. The Smile Box brightened my day, and I’m eager to connect with my new friends at FISH when I’m feeling up to it.”

According to the National Institute on Aging, older adults often seek help with everyday tasks, food provision, companionship, and transportation services as they age in place. With adequate resources and support, older adults can maintain their independence and dignity while aging in their own homes. FISH is dedicated to supporting seniors on the island. With a focus on meeting the evolving needs of aging residents, FISH offers a range of services aimed at enhancing the well-being and independence of island seniors.





## Long-Term Recovery Program Supports Survivors



Despite ongoing challenges in repairing homes since Hurricane Ian, the workforce and residents of the islands continue their attempts to move forward. Now that another hurricane season has begun and is predicted to be more active than usual, many find themselves overwhelmed by the possibility of further hardship.

FISH OF SANCAP continues to be a constant pillar of support for its community by remaining dedicated to assisting survivors of Hurricane Ian by identifying

ongoing needs, coordinating repairs, and alleviating financial burdens through its Long-Term Recovery program. Beyond this program, FISH extends its support to community members facing various challenges through programs representing their four major pillars -- Food, Island Based Education, Social and Senior Services, and Helping Hands -- demonstrating a commitment to their well-being now and in the future.

As the hurricane's aftermath lingers, the organization has processed over 90 applications for home repair financial assistance. Individuals seeking assistance are identified through FISH's canvassing efforts, outreach phone calls, referrals and known to FISH. Among them is Frank Lopato, a long-standing island resident, whose gratitude towards FISH confirms the sentiments of many. "I'm deeply thankful to FISH for their recent support. They truly understand the struggles I've faced over the past year," expressed Lopato in a heartfelt letter to the organization, citing assistance with roof repairs that insurance couldn't cover fully. The name of the individual has been changed for privacy purposes.

Lopato's introduction to the program came through his island employer and through FISH's proactive outreach to businesses to distribute information about their programs and specifically long-term recovery. Nitza Lopez, Disaster Case Manager, emphasizes the importance of overcoming misconceptions surrounding financial aid, often barriers to seeking help.

Navigating the application process may seem intimidating, but Lopato found ease with FISH's guidance. "Reaching out to strangers wasn't easy, but FISH made me feel less anxious," he recounted, highlighting the relief the organization provided during disaster recovery difficulties. Now, he's committed to sharing FISH's support with others facing similar challenges, praising the organization's comprehensive assistance spanning from financial aid to meal programs and more.

The Long-Term Recovery program is available to island residents and full-time workers, offering limited financial assistance for repair costs directly to service providers. Applications can be obtained from FISH's website or its Sanibel location, and mandatory documentation with an initial intake session with Disaster Case Manager, Nitza Lopez is required. Completed applications and documents can be submitted in person or via email, with contact details provided for assistance or inquiries.



## Our Youth Scholarship Program

School's out for summer, 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."

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](mailto:nitza@fishofsancap.org).

FISH invests in programs, community partnerships, and volunteer engagement to propel individuals and families to reach their fullest potential. We envision a vibrant community where all can thrive—including our youth. Other FISH youth programs include:

- **CHILDREN'S BACKPACK PROGRAM** - Providing nutritious weekend food and extra snacks for children throughout the year, including summer and other breaks.
- **BACK TO SCHOOL ESSENTIAL CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES** - Undergarments, socks and school supplies for children ages Pre-K through 12th grade.
- **SPECIALIZED SCHOOL SUPPLY ASSISTANCE** - Financial assistance for students who need specialized supplies for school or extracurricular activities.
- **CHILDREN'S TUTORING** - Offering financial assistance for families with children who can benefit from one-on-one or group tutoring.





## Help Us Obtain our 2024 Great Nonprofit Badge



Every year we receive a Great Nonprofit Badge, based on public reviews of our organization. To receive the 2024 badge, we need at least ten 4+ star ratings on the public Great Nonprofit website.

If you love our work then tell the world! Stories about us from people like you will help us make an even bigger impact in our community. GreatNonprofits – the #1 source of nonprofit stories and feedback – is honoring highly regarded nonprofits with their 2024 Top-Rated List. Won't you help us raise visibility for our work by posting a brief story of your experience with

us? All content will be visible to potential donors and volunteers. It's easy and only takes 3 minutes!  
[Go here to get started!](#)

## Mental Health Wednesdays Continue Through Summer

**FISH OF SANCAP**  
neighbors helping neighbors

**MENTAL HEALTH WEDNESDAYS**

**AVAILABILITY**

30 minute sessions  
free of charge

with **Laura Guarino, MA, LMHC,**  
CBHCMS of community partner  
SalusCare

email [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org) or call 239-472-4775

Shortly after Ian's landfall, FISH realized many survivors struggling with emotional stress, trauma and anxiety. We formed an important partnership with SalusCare to offer counseling services on Sanibel to anyone who needs them.

In a recent study titled *Association Between Repeated Exposure to Hurricanes and Mental Health*, results highlight the need to address the mental health implications of repeated exposure to natural hazards, particularly in areas such as the Gulf Coast that are at high risk for repeated hurricane exposure. Additionally, the anniversary of a disaster event combined with the upcoming hurricane season may cause survivors to experience symptoms such as worry, fear, panic attacks and other. "Reactions can involve several days or weeks

of anxiety, anger, nightmares, flashbacks, or depression. And feelings of grief and sadness over the losses you've suffered, especially the loss of a loved one, are very common," notes Dr. Ronald Smallwood, a board-certified psychiatrist with Lee Health Behavioral Health.

To address ongoing storm related mental health, FISH and SalusCare offer services by appointment on Wednesdays. A trained SalusCare professional provides one-on-one therapy sessions focusing on hurricane related topics including PTSD, trauma and loss with discussion on post storm trauma, including mental exhaustion, decision making, financial fears, etc. Anyone who is coping with anxiety, depression and/or PTSD, regardless of the source, is welcome and encouraged to seek guidance.





## Sanibel Fire Rescue District Joins Camp Noah

Today, the Sanibel Fire Rescue District had a chance to spend some time with the kids of Camp Noah. 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. Captain Reitenbach, Firefighter Walter, and Firefighter Clement all got a chance to give the kids a tour of the ladder truck and demonstrated the use of many of the tools they may use. After the tour, the kids got a chance to flow some water through the fire hose! Thank you to Sanibel Fire for joining us at camp! [View our special video on Facebook!](#)







FISH LINES

## Coming in July - Friendly Faces with the City of Sanibel

# neighbors helping neighbors FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON TUESDAY, JULY 9, @11:00 a.m.

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



The City of Sanibel's Natural Resources Director Holly Milbrandt and Public Information Officer Eric Jackson will be discussing the monumental beach renourishment and recovery project that replenished 400,000 tons of sand to Sanibel's beaches.



The purpose of the project, the scope, and plans for the future will be explained, as well as the ongoing effort to build the island's coastal resiliency.

The restoration of Sanibel's most famous landmark, the Sanibel Lighthouse will also be highlighted in the presentation.

- 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, July 9

TIME:  
Beginning at 11:00 am

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

RSVP:  
To Erika Broyles, FISH  
**By July 5**  
239-472-4775  
erika@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](http://fishofsancap.org)
- **MAILED TO YOU** upon request by calling 239.472.4775 or email [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://fishofsancap.org)











## Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action

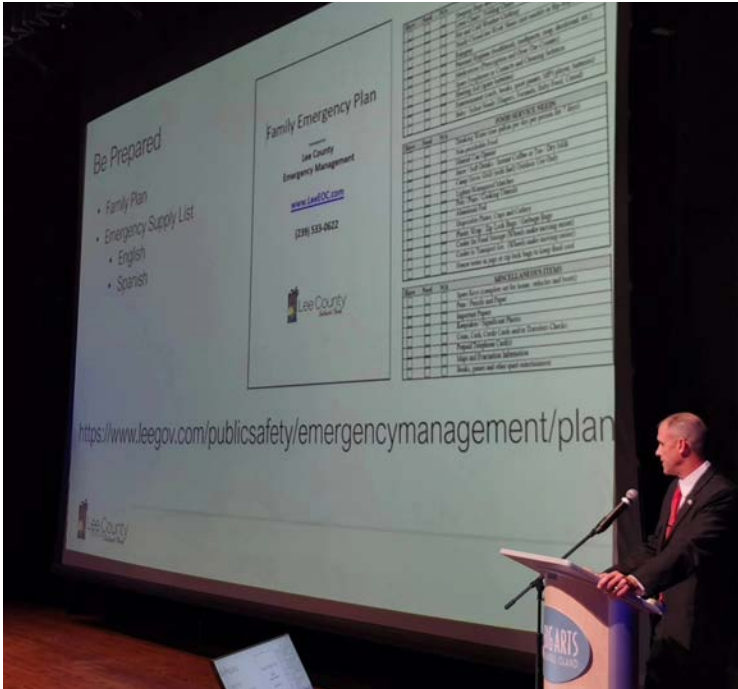


THANK YOU!





## Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!