

AUGUST 2024

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

the journey home

Celebrating Our Elders on August 21



National Senior Citizens Day, observed on August 21, is a special day dedicated to showing older adults that they are cared for and appreciated, while also recognizing their many accomplishments. This holiday was proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to raise awareness about issues affecting senior citizens and their quality of life.

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, offers 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.



In the words of Ronald Reagan, "For all they have achieved throughout life and for all they continue to accomplish, we owe older citizens our thanks and a heartfelt salute. We can best demonstrate our gratitude and esteem by making sure that our communities are good places in which to mature and grow older—places in which older people can participate to the fullest and can find the encouragement, acceptance, assistance, and services they need to continue to lead lives of independence and dignity."



2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
Food Pantry Address: 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
239.472.4775 ~ fishofsancap.org ~ email: info@fishofsancap.org





Senior Services Director Achieves Certification



We proudly announce that Erika Arnowitz, the Senior Services Director, has successfully completed training with the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) and is now a Certified Dementia Practitioner. This achievement associates her with thousands of professionals dedicated to working with the elderly.

“Working with older adults, I value the stories, knowledge, wisdom, and unique personalities of our community’s senior members,” Arnowitz shared.

“Enhancing their quality of life so they can fully enjoy their later years is incredibly rewarding.” Arnowitz highlights that her CDP Certification enables her to offer improved care tailored to each individual’s needs. Knowing that I can empower seniors and their families to utilize services and support through FISH and other organizations drives me to excel as the Senior Services Director at FISH. By improving just one person’s situation, I can help them, and their family, build a better life.”

The CDP certification is available to U.S. residents who meet the required qualifications, including at least one year of paid experience in the field and compliance with state regulations for their position. Ongoing professional development and re-certification are mandatory. By achieving CDP certification, professionals demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of dementia care, including Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia. “We are very proud of Erika and her dedication and commitment to helping seniors navigate their older years,” stated Maria Espinoza, Executive Director. For more information on FISH Senior Services, contact Erika Arnowitz at FISH at 239-472-4775 or erika@fishofsancap.org.





Recovery During Hurricane Season Brings Fear, Anxiety FISH Provides Assistance & Support



With the recent news of the earliest Atlantic Category 5 hurricane on record and the offshore passing of Tropical Storm Debby, anxiety is heightened on the islands, even though its path spared the community.

Anxiety during hurricane season, particularly as recovery from Ian continues, is a reality for many.

For some, it's the darkening skies or the roar of the winds that triggers fear. For others, it's the anticipation and uncertainty about what might happen to them or their family, particularly if they are Ian disaster survivors still struggling nearly two years later.

Despite these fears, island residents and the workforce continue their attempts to move forward.

Individuals seeking long-term recovery assistance are identified through FISH's canvassing efforts, outreach phone calls, referrals, and those already known to FISH. Among them is Jennifer Powers, an island employee who is grateful for the support from FISH. "I just wanted to take a minute to express my absolute gratitude to the FISH organization, their volunteers, and contributors. I lost everything in the past hurricane except the car I escaped in and my dog," expressed Powers in a heartfelt letter to the organization, noting she spent over a year living in her car and moving from couch to couch while trying to find a job without an address. The name of the individual has been changed for privacy purposes.

After Hurricane Ian, Powers was left unhoused and jobless. She applied, re-applied, and worked with assistance programs, including homeless advocates and disaster program caseworkers, but still struggled to find appropriate assistance. "While these other programs tried to help, the timing and constant shifting of caseworkers made it quite challenging to get any results. FISH was able to help me quickly and responsively in the last few months," notes Powers.

Immediately following the hurricane, Powers picked up day jobs but nothing consistent. "It was hard," she recalls. "My self-esteem was low, I had no place to live, and little money to buy groceries or gas. I tried to stick it out as long as I could, but living in your car or rotating stays at friends' houses for over a year takes a toll on you." [Continue reading on our blog.](#)

The Long-Term Recovery program is available to island residents and full-time workers, offering limited financial assistance for repair costs directly related to Hurricane Ian. Applications can be obtained from FISH's website or its Sanibel location, and documentation with an initial intake session with Disaster Case Manager, Nitza Lopez, is required.



We Are Now Referring Furniture Donations to Noah's

As Noah's Ark Thrift Shop-St. Michael and All Angels has recently started accepting donations, we are redirecting furniture and household item donations to Noah's.

As we clear out our facility for upcoming repairs, we are no longer able to accept furniture and household donations. "We're absolutely thrilled that Noah's is back accepting donations," says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director of FISH. "FISH was happy to fill the gap by providing community members with furnishings while Noah's recovered from Hurricane Ian. Now that they are accepting donations, we encourage community members to bring their items to the Ark, located behind St. Michael and All Angels Church at 2304 Periwinkle." FISH notes that donors can call FISH regarding larger furniture and appliance donations.

According to Noah's social media pages, furniture donations should be small items that folks can bring to the Ark. They do not have pick-up service at this time. Some of the items needed include the following - clothes in good condition; décor items, artwork and lamps; books, DVDs, Puzzles, games, holiday decorations; small appliances (toasters, blenders, food processors); etc.

Larger items, such as light fixtures and ceiling fans, sleeper sofas, large exercise equipment, building equipment, appliances, etc. are better taken to another thrift store, or contact FISH at 239-472-4775 to see if we can accept. Community members with specific needs for larger items or rebuilding supplies can contact Merari Salinas at FISH at 239-472-4775 or merari@fishofsancap.org.





Back-to-School Supplies Distribution Begins!

Our Back-to-School supplies distribution began this week! Thank you to all who donated items and provided financial support toward the success of this program. Kids in Lee County are heading back to school on August 12th. Many parents noted concerns about the increased cost of school supplies and essential clothing. Thankfully, FISH is able to help Lee County families that have a connection to the islands through residence or employment with back-to-school supplies and clothing! Be on the lookout for additional announcements about the success of this program.





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!](#)



Thank You Elaine Parente, FISH Volunteer



"The reason I volunteer for FISH is we are so fortunate to live here, and I just want to give something back. Since I'm not near my mom, I like to think I'm helping somebody else's mom. I enjoy getting to know other volunteers, as well as clients. Shortly after Ian, when FISH was without power and outside distributing necessities in a tent, the people who came were truly overwhelmed with all that FISH could provide. The hugs, tears and stories will stay with me a long time."

Thank You Comcast! We are grateful for Comcast Business, who generously provided us with a check donation and 20 new laptops to benefit our island seniors!





2024 FISH OF SANCAP Race Attracts Global Participants



Sanibel will welcome runners from across the globe on Saturday, December 7th for our 10K/5K race, a highlight of the JOG N JAM fundraising event. Last year, the race drew 530 participants, with a majority from Florida and others from various U.S. states, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Louise Rushmer, a recent registrant, will join the 10K runners in her first U.S. race. "I'm excited to participate in the 10K event. Sanibel is my favorite place—I honeymooned there when my uncle had a place on the island," says Louise, who visits when she can to see her cousin who also has a home on Sanibel.

A dedicated runner for 20 years, Louise adds, "Supporting the rebuilding of our paradise island while doing something I love is wonderful. I've never raced in the U.S., so I'm very excited! I recently ran our village 10K in Horndon on the Hill, east of London, in 52 minutes, the same time as 20 years ago. Now at 58, I'm quite pleased with that time." Horndon on the Hill is a quaint village in Thurrock, Essex, England, known for its blend of charm and history.

As a major fundraiser for FISH, the event's sponsorships, race and concert registrations, and merchandise sales contribute to enriching the lives of Sanibel and Captiva Islands' residents through social services, education, and assistance. "We are thrilled that our race receives both national and international attention. We excitedly anticipate this year's turnout and look forward to welcoming runners of all ages and backgrounds to our annual event," says Leah Winkler, Race Committee Co-Chair.

The FISH event begins with the 10K and 5K races at the Sanibel Community House and concludes with an early evening concert and fireworks at Captiva's Tween Waters Resort. Proceeds support the 'neighbors helping neighbors' organization. Registration is available on [RunSignUp](#).

A concert featuring the band Funk You will take place at Tween Waters on Captiva, with fireworks on the beach. Transportation shuttles will run from Sanibel starting at 5:00 PM on December 7th. The concert begins at 5:30 PM, with food and drinks available for purchase. More details will be announced soon. For the latest updates, visit [fishofsancap.org](#). [Ticket sales](#) are open now.

FISH encourages early race registration and ticket purchases, as prices are tiered and will rise closer to the event date. [Merchandise is currently on sale](#) and available for shipping. On-island merchandise sales are planned for the future.

Support for the race is vital as FISH continues to serve the island communities. Various sponsorship opportunities are available and detailed on the organization's website, [fishofsancap.org](#). For more information about JOG N JAM or sponsorship opportunities, email [events@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 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



2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957 • 239.472.4775 • fishofsancap.org



CITY OF SANIBEL



Coming in Sept. - Friendly Faces with Lee County Mosquito Control Presenting

neighbors helping neighbors FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON TUESDAY, SEPT. 10, @11:00 a.m.

Islanders, friends and family are invited to the community-wide FISH OF SANCAP Friendly Faces Luncheon! Jenifer McBride, Communications Director of Lee County Mosquito Control District, is our guest speaker.



Lee County Mosquito Control District is the largest mosquito control in the state of Florida due to Lee County being one of the most prolific breeding habitats in the country.

Learn about the complex integrated pest management operations, research, and education that help protect Lee County citizens from mosquito-borne diseases and allows us to live more comfortably year-round in our little slice of Florida paradise.

- 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.



DATE:
Tuesday, Sept. 10

TIME:
Beginning at 11:00 am

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

RSVP:
To Erika Arnowitz, FISH
By Sept. 6
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
- **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





FACING IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES



"No one should go to bed hungry. Not one child. Not one parent. Not one senior. At FISH, we're working hard to make sure every person has enough to eat and never faces an impossible choice."

—Maria Espinoza, FISH Executive Director



food is life—

no one should go without

Food is life. But the cost of feeding a family can lead to immense consequences. Financial hardship and hunger are closely linked. Hunger leads to poor health, poor performance at work and poor performance at school. *Yet, in our community, a single parent with a school-age child and working full-time can spend nearly a quarter of their paycheck on food alone.* One unexpected expense can lead to impossible choices.

FISH continues to fight food insecurity with programs including Meals-by-FISH, which delivers hot meals to shut-ins, and the Backpack Program which helps feed kids during weekends and school breaks. **During 2023, the Food Pantry also hosted 5,486 visits. Holiday Food Baskets went to 896 families.**

These programs depend on the generosity of food banks, local grocers, food drives and financial support.

Please consider a gift today.

DONATE TODAY!



FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR REGION

	% of population	# of people
all groups	11.6%	85,350
children (under 18)	16.9%	22,260

*sources—Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, Lee County, 2019, tinyurl.com/mr3ejvzw; 2023 ALICE Report, Lee County, United For ALICE, tinyurl.com/2hy22tpr

NOTE: 26% of food-insecure children live in homes that are ineligible for federal nutrition programs.

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Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!



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