

DECEMBER 2024

FISH LINES



NEWSLETTER

the journey home Merry FISHmas



To kick off the holiday season, members from SCBWA decorated trees with decorations donated by United Way for our toy drive. Trees were distributed throughout the community with ornaments containing wish list QR codes for our holiday drives. "We are incredibly grateful to SCBWA for their joyous gathering in decorating trees and to United Way for providing beautiful decorations that inspire the spirit of giving," says Maria Espinoza, FISH Executive Director. "A heartfelt thank you to all the businesses participating in our holiday drives—your support ensures that the holidays are brighter for so many in need. Together, we are spreading hope and joy throughout our community this season."

FISH aims to brighten the Dec. holidays for local children through a community toy drive. Donations of new toys can be dropped off at the following locations:

- St. Michael's Church – 2304 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
- The Magic Bus – 362 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel
- Bank of the Islands—1699 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel

Donations of food, toys, and holiday gifts are also accepted at FISH, 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. For more information about donating or volunteering, please contact FISH at (239) 472-4775.

In addition to toys, we are collecting food for our holiday meal baskets. Desired donations include Cranberry Sauce, Canned Beans, Canned Corn, Stuffing, Gravy, Canned Protein and Holiday Treats. All other non-perishable items are also welcomed.

Items may be dropped off at the Sanibel Library, 770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel; Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille, 2500 Island Inn Rd, Sanibel or the FISH location at 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. Jerry's Foods offers \$20 pre-packaged holiday food bags for those who prefer to contribute this way.



2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
Mailing Address: PO Box 58, Sanibel FL 33957

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





Merry FISHmas Cont'd

The Adopt-a-Family/Senior program ensures personalized support for families and seniors who might otherwise go without during the holiday season. Donors can help make the season special by adopting a family or senior. "Every holiday season, I am deeply moved by the generosity of our community and the joy it brings to families in need," says Merari Salinas, FISH Community Outreach Manager. "It's touching to see how the drives not only provide essential support but also create connections between neighbors who care about one another. Seeing the smiles and gratitude of those we serve is truly the highlight of the season."

Interested donors can contact Merari Salinas at FISH by email, merari@fishofsancap.org, or phone, 239-472-4775, x101. for details. For those interested in donating specifically toward the Adopt-a-Senior program, please contact Erika Arnowitz at FISH by email, erika@fishofsancap.org, or phone 239-472-4775, x107.

For those seeking support, eligibility includes those living or working on the islands. Interested parties must sign up by Dec. 13th and can do so online at <https://forms.gle/fww221PmA1vhjpQy9>. Paper forms are also available for those who prefer an alternative to online registration.

Meal baskets for the December holidays include vegetables, traditional holiday sides, and a gift card to purchase a protein of choice, will be distributed at FISH's Sanibel location (2422 Periwinkle Way) from Dec. 20th to 22nd, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. These baskets are available to island residents and workforce members known to FISH or referred by the community.

FISH remains committed to bringing cheer and support to the community, especially during the holiday season. To learn more about their work, visit their website or social media pages. If you, or a family you know, is in need of some holiday cheer, please contact Merari at FISH at 239-472-4775 or merari@fishofsancap.org.





FISH LINES



neighbors helping neighbors

this holiday season, adopt-a-family or senior

The Adopt-a-Family/Senior program ensures personalized support for families and seniors who might otherwise go without during the holiday season. Donors can help make the season special by 'adopting' a family or senior, and donating items they request on their wishlists.

Interested donors or recipients can contact Merari Salinas at FISH by email, merari@fishofsancap.org, or phone, 239-472-4775, x101. for details.

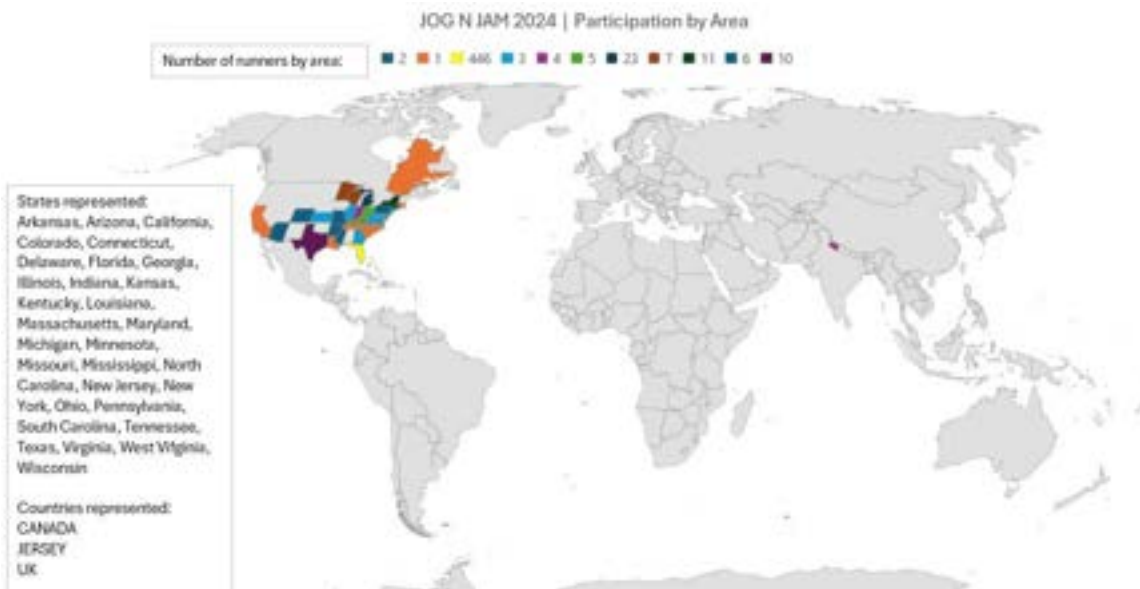
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JOG N JAM - A Day of Fun and Giving Back

The annual JOG N JAM event on Dec. 7, 2024, brought together runners, music lovers, and the Sanibel-Captiva community for a day of fitness, fun, and community. This year’s event welcomed an impressive 570 registered runners, with participants from across Florida and as far as the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast, as well as international runners from Canada, the UK, and Jersey. “This is the largest runner registration in the history of our race, and we couldn’t be more excited!” exclaimed Leah Winkler, FISH board member and committee co-chair. “It’s incredible to see participants from across the globe coming together to support our mission—we are truly honored to be represented worldwide!”



The races began promptly at 7:00 AM, with greetings from Mayor Richard Johnson, FISH Executive Director Maria Espinoza and a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem performed by local 8th-grade student Teagan Clark. Both the 10K and 5K courses followed a scenic route on Sanibel, with the start and finish at the Sanibel Community House. The Kids Fun Run ended the morning activities, with nearly 30 participants who received a finisher ribbon and ice cream coupon.

The evening festivities kicked off at Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa, where the Funk You band delivered an unforgettable beach concert with a dazzling fireworks display. The event featured overflow parking and shuttle service, ensuring convenient access for all attendees. Food and beverages provided by Tween Waters ensured everyone was well-fed and satisfied throughout the evening.

FISH of SANCAP is grateful to the many individuals and organizations that made this event possible, including their dedicated sponsors, enthusiastic volunteers, engaged participants, and generous raffle donors. Without their support, the success of JOG N JAM would not have been possible.



FISH LINES



FISH jog N JAM CELEBRATION

5&10Ks • beach concert • fireworks • fun



sponsor thanks!

BAND SPONSOR Kay & John Morse

PREMIER

Anonymous

Fred & Susan Ryckeman



WATER TABLE



PLATINUM



Bruce & Jeanne Grossnickle



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



SUPPORTERS

ABC Liquors
Adventures in Paradise
Beach Daisy
Beachview Tennis
Captain Jeff's Flats Fishing
Costco
Custom Goods Unlimited
Diana's Beauty Center
Fleet Feet

Hampton Inn & Suites
J-Rods
KM Gems
Lakes Park Farmer's Market
Lin-Mark Sports
Macintosh Books
Maggi & Don Feiner
Minnesota Twins Baseball
Mission BBQ
Rogers Media Group

Rosalita's Cantina
Sandy Hibbs
Sanibel Community House
Sanibel Deli
Sanibel Island Farmer's Market
Sanibel Public Library
Sanibel Recreation Center
Sanibel Vibes
South Seas Island Resort
Swamp Cat Brewing Co.

The Dunes
The Run Shoppe
Tween Waters



2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957 • 239.472.4775 • fishofsancap.org



JOG N JAM Cont'd

The JOG N JAM committee, co-chaired by Diane Cortese and Leah Winkler, were overjoyed with the incredible support and participation that made the event such a success. "We are deeply grateful for the outstanding sponsorships from businesses both on and off the islands," said Cortese. "Their generosity and commitment were truly unmatched, particularly during disaster recovery, and we couldn't have done it without them." Cortese, a veteran committee member, also highlighted the many positive improvements for the 2024 event, including expanded sponsor involvement, exciting team competition, and a remarkable collection of raffle basket donations, all of which came together to create an unforgettable island experience.

This year's event was sponsored by 85 businesses, organizations and/or individuals at various levels. A large group of dedicated volunteers signed up to help make the event another huge success. Net proceeds from JOG N JAM directly benefit the programs and services of FISH. By participating in this event, attendees have helped FISH continue its vision to create communities where all people have the support they need to thrive. "We are extremely proud of everyone who has helped us with this year's JOG N JAM," said Maria Espinoza, Executive Director. "We would like to thank our committee members and Lin-Mark Sports for their superb technical direction and assistance for the race registration, timing and results as well as concertgoer sales."

Espinoza continues, "We also owe a huge thank you to everyone who helped us raise the funds that will allow us to continue to provide a full range of social services and disaster recovery assistance to our neighbors. We couldn't ask for better support from the City of Sanibel, police department, service organizations, our sponsors and, notably, our great staff and volunteers who helped bring all of this together."

Espinoza made special mention of the amazing finisher medals featuring the Sanibel lighthouse and noting the City's 50th anniversary. The handcrafted age group awards are a crowd favorite designed as a way to honor the community and what the islands stand for. For more race results, please [click here](#). For event day photos, please visit our [website](#).





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neighbors helping neighbors



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Announcing Friendly Faces Luncheon with Guest Speaker Mary Bondurant, SanCap Pink Project

Join us for the first Friendly Faces Luncheon of 2025! Enjoy a delicious lunch, make connections, and hear from speakers who bring learning opportunities to every event. Islanders, friends, and family are invited to the upcoming Friendly Faces Luncheon on Tues., Jan. 14 beginning at 11:00 am. This community event offers a complimentary lunch, prepared by The Sanibel Deli, and an opportunity to reconnect with neighbors and friends.

The luncheon is held at the Sanibel Recreation Center, located at 3880 Sanibel-Captiva Road, and a virtual option is available. Reservations and meal choices are required by Fri., Jan. 10 by contacting Erika Arnowitz at FISH at 239-472-4775 or erika@fishofsancap.org. Zoom instructions will be provided upon registration for virtual guests. Please note that meals are only provided for in-person guests.



This month, FISH is pleased to welcome Mary Bondurant, founder of the San Cap Pink Project Inc., also known as 'Let's Pinkout Sanibel & Captiva Islands. The Pinkout Project began in 2012 as a small initiative to provide free mammograms to uninsured Islanders. Over the years, they've grown into a multifaceted organization, raising substantial funds to assist both uninsured and underinsured individuals.

"Today, we proudly support our community by addressing not just breast cancer screenings, but also a wide range of cancer-related needs. Our mission continues to thrive, ensuring that no one faces their journey alone," said Mary Bondurant, survivor, Founder. Mary Bondurant is a longtime resident of the island community for nearly 30 years.

Sanibel has been her cherished home, and she has made a significant impact here as an inspiring community leader and volunteer, generously dedicating her time and talents to numerous organizations and serving on many boards within our Sanibel community.

Mary is also a breast cancer survivor whose journey has fueled her passion for giving back. She is the founder of the San Cap Pink Project, Inc., widely recognized as 'Let's Pink Out Sanibel and Captiva Islands,' a remarkable initiative bringing hope, awareness, and support to those affected by breast cancer.

"We are deeply grateful to Mary for agreeing to share her story and insights that exemplify resilience, compassion, and community spirit," said Arnowitz. "We hope everyone will join us this month to kick-off our 2025 Friendly Faces season. Seating is limited, so reserve your spot today," notes Arnowitz. For more information on the Friendly Faces Luncheon or to RSVP, please contact Erika Arnowitz at 239-472-4775 or erika@fishofsancap.org. To learn more about FISH and the services they provide, reach out to Maria Espinoza, Executive Director, at 239-472-4775 or visit www.fishofsancap.org.



FACING IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES

"FISH provides crucial supports that seniors need in the face of rising costs and fixed income. We're proud to serve them and grateful for our donors who make it possible."

—Maria Espinoza, FISH Executive Director



fixed income senior struggles

Not everyone gets to spend retirement playing golf or traveling. In fact, some retirees right here in our island communities are struggling to make ends meet. In Florida, the average senior citizen has \$2,513 in monthly income. **Yet the monthly minimum wage for household essentials for a single senior is \$3,056 — a shortfall of 18%. No wonder 11% of seniors in our region live in poverty, and 32% are above poverty but not financially stable** — a population known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).

FISH's Senior Services provide relief through numerous programs including: Food Pantry, Meals-by-FISH, Friendly Faces Luncheons, Smile Boxes, free medical equipment loans, hurricane preparedness resources, and daily reassurance calls. The FISH transportation program makes sure seniors get to their doctor and other appointments.

Your support makes sure our seniors don't have to face impossible choices. Please consider a gift today.

DONATE TODAY!



SENIOR SURVIVAL BUDGET	
costs of basic essentials	
housing	\$976
food	\$465
transportation	\$362
health care	\$541
technology	\$86
miscellaneous	\$243
taxes	\$383
MONTHLY	\$3,056
YEARLY	\$36,672

*sources—2023 ALICE Report, Lee County, United For ALICE, tinyurl.com/2hy22tpr; SmartAsset.com, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2023, tinyurl.com/366736f7

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





Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!



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