

JANUARY 2025

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER



Happy New Year



As we welcome the New Year, we reflect on the challenges and successes of 2024 with gratitude for our community's unwavering support. This past year was one of both resilience and growth, as we continued our recovery from Hurricane Ian while navigating the impacts of Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Through it all, your generosity and dedication have fueled our mission to serve those who live, work, and visit Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

Despite these obstacles, 2024 brought many moments of connection, hope, and progress. Our community gatherings, like the Thanksgiving meal and Easter and Christmas drives, brought joy and comfort to many during challenging times. Programs such as Friendly Faces Luncheons helped encourage connection and alleviate isolation, while workshops and guest speakers provided valuable learning opportunities that empowered and uplifted our neighbors. Together, we created spaces where our community could come together, support one another, and heal.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are excited for the expansion of programs, allowing us to serve even more individuals and families across the islands. As the only social services organization on Sanibel and Captiva, we are committed to meeting the changing needs of our community. From enhancing existing programs to introducing new ones, we look forward to sharing these developments with you in the coming months.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our donors, volunteers, and partners who make our work possible. Your contributions ensure that FISH can continue to provide vital programs and services that directly impact the lives of our neighbors. From food assistance and disaster recovery to senior services and educational workshops, your generosity fuels everything we do. In the coming months, we'll be sharing our 2024 Impact Report, which will highlight the difference FISH has made in the lives of our neighbors.

As we step into this New Year, we remain inspired by the strength and spirit of our community. Thank you for your steady belief in the mission of FISH and for being an integral part of the work we do. Together, we will make 2025 a year to remember.

With gratitude and best wishes for a wonderful New Year,

John

John Morse, Board Chair

Maggi Feiner

Maggi Feiner, President and CEO

M Espinoza

Maria Espinoza, Executive Director



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Mailing Address: PO Box 58, Sanibel FL 33957

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





2024

recap!





THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS.



FISH LINES



WE ACHIEVED SO MUCH THIS YEAR.



FISH LINES



WE RESPONDED

neighbors helping neighbors



FISH LINES



WE HELPED OUR NEIGHBORS



FISH LINES



WE WORKED TOGETHER



FISH LINES



WE CONNECTED

neighbors helping neighbors



FISH LINES



WE MADE MEMORIES

neighbors helping neighbors



Merry FISHmas and Happy New Year



As we reflect on this past holiday season, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the incredible support that made our Merry FISHmas program so special. Thanks to our amazing partners and volunteers, who worked tirelessly to gather toys, food, and cheer, and to the generous donors who contributed so generously, we were able to brighten the holidays for so many in our community. Together, we helped ensure that every family could enjoy a season filled with joy, warmth, and togetherness.

This year, the outpouring of support was nothing short of extraordinary. From toys that brought smiles to children's faces, gifts for seniors and holiday meals that filled tables with love, your contributions truly made the season merry and bright for those we serve.

To give our dedicated team a well-deserved rest, we took the week of Christmas off to recharge and spend time with our own loved ones. Now, we're back and energized, ready to begin the new year with a renewed focus on serving our island community.

Thank you for being an essential part of our mission and for helping us make a difference in the lives of our neighbors. Here's to a bright and hopeful new year together!

With heartfelt gratitude,
The FISH of SANCAP Team





Bringing Holiday Joy to 359 Children: Holiday Gift Program



The holidays can be an incredibly challenging time for families already struggling to make ends meet, and this year was no exception. Many are still dealing with the lasting effects of Hurricanes Ian, Helene, and Milton, including the loss of work hours, jobs, and the overwhelming financial strain of home repairs and inflation. For these families, providing holiday cheer for their children may feel out of reach.

Thanks to the incredible support from United Way Gifts In-Kind and other community donations, FISH of SANCAP's Holiday Gift Program brought joy to 359 children this year. Each child received four toys and a board game to share with their family, spreading the spirit of the season throughout their homes.

The smiles and gratitude from families were heartwarming. Parents shared how the program made a huge difference during challenging times. For some, this was the first time they felt hope in a long time – many are still recovering from the storms and ongoing financial challenges.

One parent expressed, "With everything we've been through this year, I didn't think I'd be able to give my kids any gifts. FISH and United Way made that possible, and it means the world to us."

Another single mom notes she cried 'tears of joy' watching her kids open gifts on Christmas morning, and how happy everyone was while playing multiple rounds of Scrabble® together as a family. She also notes thanks to FISH for the holiday meal basket, and how 'normal' it felt to be cooking for her family, despite ongoing repairs to her home since Hurricane Ian and, more recently, Hurricane Milton.

The FISH holiday program is about more than gifts; it's about lifting spirits, raising connections, and ensuring that every family has the opportunity to experience the magic of the holidays. It's about reminding families that they are not alone, and that support is available.

"We are deeply grateful to United Way Gifts In-Kind and all our supporters for helping us deliver holiday joy," notes Merari Salinas, Community Outreach Manager, FISH. "Together, we continue to stand with our neighbors, ensuring brighter days ahead for those who live and work on Sanibel and Captiva Islands."





DECK THE HALLS





Helping Hands: A Lifeline for Neighbors in Crisis

For more than a decade, “Mr. B,” a long-time Sanibel resident, has worked hard to contribute to the island community he calls home. But recently, his life took an unexpected turn when a serious health crisis left him unable to work and struggling to stay afloat. *For privacy purposes, the individual's name is not released.*

What began as a persistent cough quickly escalated into a life-threatening situation. One morning, Mr. B woke up unable to breathe and was rushed to the hospital, where doctors discovered a collapsed lung requiring immediate treatment. With no clear timeline for recovery, the financial strain on Mr. B and his family became overwhelming. High medical co-pays and mounting bills threatened his ability to pay rent, raising a fear of losing his home during an already difficult time.

During this crisis, Mr. B's daughter reached out to FISH for assistance through their Helping Hands Emergency Financial Assistance Program. After submitting all the required intake documents, FISH acted quickly, covering one month's rent to ensure Mr. B could remain in his home while focusing on recovery.

“Our family was scared and overwhelmed, but FISH provided immediate relief and the reassurance that we weren't alone,” shared Mr. B's daughter. “Their support gave us hope during an incredibly difficult time.”

Thanks to the generosity of community partners like The Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation, which subsidizes the Helping Hands Rent/Mortgage Assistance Program, FISH was able to help Mr. B. We also provided a gift card to help cover daily expenses and ensured that his pantry was stocked with food for his return home. A FISH representative visited him at the hospital, offering encouragement and support as he began his journey to recovery.

Mr. B expressed his deep gratitude for FISH's assistance. “Thanks to their help, I was able to focus on getting better without the fear of losing my home. I hope to recover quickly and return to work soon.”

The Helping Hands Emergency Financial Assistance Program exemplifies FISH's mission of “Neighbors Helping Neighbors.” With the support of donors and partners like The Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation, FISH provides critical financial relief to island residents facing unforeseen challenges, ensuring they have the stability and resources they need to move forward.

For more information about FISH's Helping Hands Program please visit www.fishofsancap.org or contact Nitza Lopez, Social Services Director, nitza@fishofsancap.org or 239-472-4775.





JOIN FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS FISH OF SANCAP FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON

neighbors helping neighbors
FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON
TUESDAY, Jan. 14 @11:00 a.m.

Islanders, friends and family are invited to the community-wide FISH OF SANCAP Friendly Faces Luncheon! Mary Bondurant, founder of the San Cap Pink Project Inc., also known as 'Let's Pinkout Sanibel & Captiva Islands is the guest presenter.



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, they proudly support our community by addressing not just breast cancer screenings, but also a wide range of cancer-related needs.

Mary is a breast cancer survivor whose journey has fueled her passion for giving back through this remarkable initiative bringing hope, awareness, and support to those affected by breast cancer.

- The cost of the luncheon 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 2025

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, Jan. 14

TIME:
Beginning at 11:00 am

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

RSVP:
To Erika Arnowitz, FISH
By Jan. 10
239-472-4775
erika@fishofsancap.org



FREE TAX Preparation



neighbors helping neighbors

Sanibel Public Library
770 Dunlop Rd, Sanibel FL 33957

Every other Friday: Feb7, Feb21,
Mar7, Mar21, Apr4 and Apr18
10:00am - 2:00pm



IRS certified United Way volunteers prepare taxes for FREE for households earning \$66,000 or less per year.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE
VITA |  UNITED WAY
A UNITED WAY COLLABORATIVE

WHAT YOU NEED:

TAXES WILL NOT BE COMPLETED WITHOUT THESE ITEMS

- Valid Picture ID.
- Social Security Card or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITN) for EVERYONE on the tax return.
- Birth dates for EVERYONE on the tax return
- All earning statements (W-2, W-2G, 1099s)
- Total paid for daycare & the provider's business Employer Identification Number
- Did you buy insurance from the Marketplace? Bring Form 1095-A
- If married and filing jointly, the spouse must be present to sign the return

WHAT YOU MAY NEED:

- A copy of last year's federal and state return
- Routing and account numbers for direct deposit
- Are you a student or are you making payments on a student loan?
Tuition statement from school (1098-T)
Student loan interest statement (1098-E)
- Are you self-employed?
Written totaled mileage records
Totaled business income and expenses (less than \$35K)
- Identity Protection Pin (IPP) if applicable

APPOINTMENT REQUIRED

Visit

UnitedWayLee.org/FreeTaxPrep

Call 2-1-1 or (239)433-3900

Book your appointment today!



The Sanibel Captiva Business Women's Association in partnership with Lee Health and The Sanibel Recreation Center present:

New Year **NEW YOU** **HEALTH FAIR**



Educational Booths and Screenings Include But Are Not Limited To:

Barre Roots
 Humana
 United Way 211
 GenesisCare
 Sanibel Pilates & Spa
 F.I.S.H. of Sanibel-Captiva
 J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge
 Greg Walsh, D.C. with Sanibel Chiropractic
 Alice Jeromin, DVM, Veterinary Medicine
 Rachel Tritak, PT, CLT, LMT with Island Therapy
 Sanibel Police Department Medicine Disposal Drop Off

Fleet Feet Foot Screenings
 Sanibel Skin Spa Chair Massage
 Lee Health Lung Cancer Screening
 Lee Health Body Composition Screening
 On Spot Dermatology Mobile Screening
 3D Mobile Mammography Bus (Appt. Required)
 Lee Health Healthy Life Center/Find a Doctor
 Sanibel Fire District Blood Pressure Screening
 Lee Health Sanibel Primary and Walk In Care
 Medication Review with Island Wellness Pharmacy
 Financial Health with Jesi Crane of Northwestern Mutual
 Sanibel Wellness Energy Strength Testing and Chair Massage
 Fyzical Therapy & Balance Centers of Sanibel Balance Screening
 And more!

WHERE ?

**The Sanibel Recreation Center
3880 Sanibel Captiva Rd. Sanibel, FL 33957**

WHEN ?

**Saturday, January 4th
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

WHY?

Preventative measures such as early detection, screenings and education play a crucial role in maintaining optimal overall health.

Make Your Health a Top Priority!



Questions: 239-472-0345





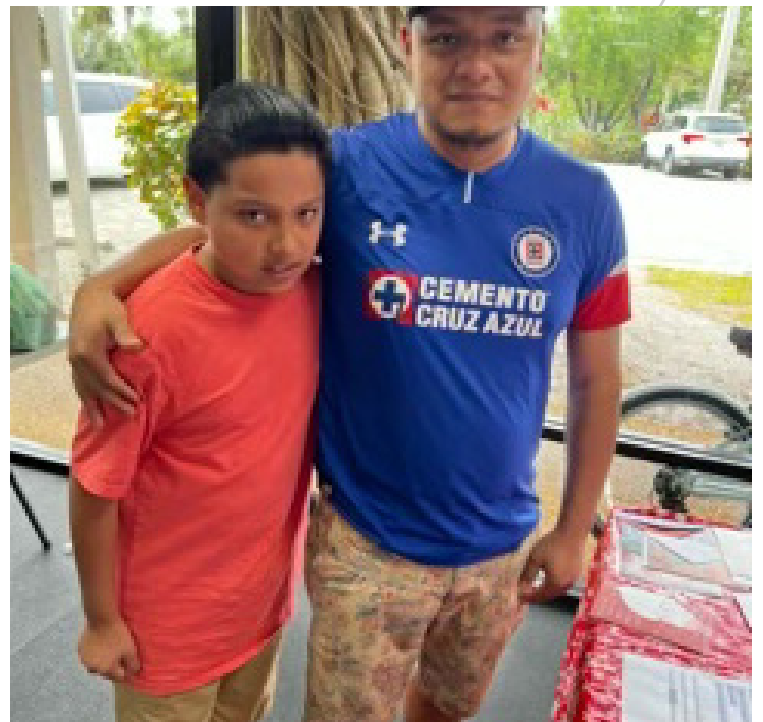
Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU!



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