

JULY 2025

# FISH LINES NEWSLETTER



## ENCOURAGING PREPAREDNESS DURING HURRICANE SEASON



As hurricane season continues, FISH gently reminds the island community: don't panic, but do prepare. Storms are unpredictable but with a solid plan and reliable resources in place, the community can face the season together.

FISH urges all residents and visitors to pick up or download the 2025 Hurricane Preparedness Packet. This year's updated version includes additional tips for securing homes, evacuation planning, and staying connected with friends, family, and of course — FISH. To request a Hurricane Preparedness Packet, contact FISH at (239) 472-4775 or visit [fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org).

"No one understands better than I do how unpredictable these storms can be," shares Maggi Feiner, President & CEO of FISH. "After Ian, then Milton — I'm still not back in

my home. It's been a long haul, but for such an amazing community, it's worth every step to get back. That's why I cannot stress enough: make your plan early. Don't wait. If a storm threatens, leave and go somewhere safe."

One often-overlooked recommendation, Feiner says, is to manage your food inventory wisely before a storm hits. "Before the storm hits, 'less is more' when it comes to food, Feiner says. "Clear the fridge and freezer early and hold off on buying lots of perishables that may not last if the power goes out," she advises, reflecting on lessons learned from past hurricanes. "Food and belongings can always be replaced — your health and safety cannot. Power outages can last for days, and spoiled food isn't worth the risk. When in doubt, throw it out."

Feiner also reminds the community that food support will be available after the storm. "Once it's safe, FISH will reopen our Food Pantry, which is fully stocked with safe, properly stored, and inspected items. We also work with emergency feeding partners to provide hot meals and supplies when needed," she adds. "We're here to help ensure no one goes without during recovery."

Maria Espinoza, Executive Director of FISH, is no stranger to storm recovery. Having joined FISH just before Hurricane Irma in 2017, Maria has been actively involved in disaster response and long-term recovery ever since. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Lee County Long Term Recovery Group, is a member of the Health and Social Service Branch of the Resilience Lee Task Force and the Lee County Unmet Needs Governing Board. Her commitment to community resiliency has also earned her the Rotary District Disaster Response Award.



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

239.472.4775 | [fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org) | email: [info@fishofsancap.org](mailto:info@fishofsancap.org)





“Storm season is something we think about all year long as we plan and prepare,” says Espinoza. Every storm — from Hurricane Charley in 2004 to Ian in 2022, Helene and Milton in 2024, and others along the way — has taught us something new. We use those lessons to strengthen how we respond and support our neighbors when they need us most. As a United Way Resiliency Hub, we continue to grow our partnerships, expand training for our team, and stay ready. And of course, we’re always hopeful for a quiet season with no storms at all.”

Erika Arnowitz, Senior Services Director, emphasizes the importance of communication before, during, and after a storm. “Please stay in touch with us. Let friends, family, and FISH know your evacuation plans. Don’t stay on the island if evacuation is advised — get somewhere safe. And don’t wait to stock up — water and emergency supplies should be gathered now.”



In addition to physical repairs, many are still working through emotional impacts from Ian, Helene, and Milton. These impacts can worsen during hurricane season. “If you’re struggling, you are not alone. There’s no shame in feeling anxious during this time of year,” says Arnowitz. FISH offers its Mental Health Wednesdays support program, providing a safe space for individuals managing anxiety, PTSD, and storm-related stress. Those interested can reach out directly to Erika Arnowitz at [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org) to learn more.

If a storm does approach the area, FISH will remain operational for as long as it is safe to do so. “We stay on the ground as long as possible and continue monitoring the situation closely,” says Espinoza. “We maintain a 24-hour line at (239) 472-0404 for urgent needs. Once it’s safe to return, our team will be back on the islands assessing damage and setting up recovery efforts to help our community rebuild, if necessary.”

For anyone still facing challenges from past storms or needing extra support, FISH encourages you to reach out. “We are here. We have resources, partners, and most importantly, a community that cares,” says Espinoza. “Preparedness may take a little time now — but it offers peace of mind all season long.”

As the first month of hurricane season closes — with five more months to go — FISH remains in close contact with local, county, and regional emergency management partners to stay fully informed and coordinated. Hurricane season officially runs from June 1 through November 30 each year, and while hoping for calm, FISH stands ready. Should a storm impact the area, residents can count on FISH to be here to assist with recovery, resources, and support every step of the way.



## 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

**NEW!**

### UPDATED HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS PACKETS

Our annual **FISH Hurricane Preparedness Packet** is full of essential information people truly need, and available **FREE** to anyone who requests one. This year's resource is more valuable than ever, with *updated content based on recent Ian/Helene/Milton experiences and recovery work* including:

- **How to prepare your home ahead of a storm**
- **Evacuation planning & routes**
- **Emergency supply checklists**
- **Local shelter info & pet-friendly options**
- **Hotel contacts with generator access**
- **Guidance for vulnerable populations & seniors**
- **Special Medical Needs Application**

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](https://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 2024, FISH helped neighbors through the storms with:



# 586

HURRICANE PACKETS DISTRIBUTED  
&

# 5,680

EMERGENCY MEALS DISTRIBUTED

2422 Periwinkle Way  
Sanibel FL 33957  
239.472.4775  
[fishofsancap.org](https://fishofsancap.org)







STAY PREPARED, VIGILANT & SAFE

# FLASH FLOOD SAFETY TIPS



## TURN AROUND DON'T DROWN

-  remain alert if you live in flood prone areas
-  never drive through a flooded street
-  flowing water may sweep you off your feet
-  use caution at night

**flood water can  
be dangerous.**





## SUMMER SLOWDOWN HITS HARD | FOOD INSECURITY

FISH reports that food pantry visits have remained high even as seasonal activity decreases. Staff and volunteers continue to see a steady stream of neighbors needing help, especially as the off-season brings fewer work hours for service industry workers and higher electricity and grocery bills from summer heat.

“Tourists and ‘snowbirds’ may be gone, but our community still needs to eat—and many just can’t make ends meet right now,” says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director of FISH. “Seniors on fixed incomes, families juggling summer childcare, storm-impacted residents still trying to rebuild, and workforce in the service and retail industries—these are the people walking through our doors.”

Our pantry offers shelf-stable goods, fresh produce, dairy, frozen meats, hygiene items, and heat-and-eat meals. In 2024, FISH provided over 7,000 pantry visits to individuals and families in need. With need at an all-time high, the pantry is struggling to keep pace. Shelves sit nearly empty week after week, and the current food pantry budget is stretched thin. Donations of food and funds are welcome, especially during the summer months when shelves can quickly run low.



To help encourage healthy eating and time together around the dinner table, FISH also offers Fresh Meal Boxes—available generally during the second week of each month. These boxes contain all the ingredients needed to prepare a full meal for a family, plus a simple recipe card. It’s a way to not only nourish bodies but also bring families together in the kitchen, even when times are tough.

“We hear from families that the Fresh Meal Boxes make a huge difference,” says Espinoza. “They get to try something new, cook together, and know they’ll have a well-rounded dinner that night.”

One local mom, who asked to remain anonymous, shared how she’s managing: “I always make sure the kids eat first. I’ll cook something with ground beef or chicken—usually with rice or pasta because it’s filling and not too expensive. I want them to have a real, home-cooked meal, even if money is tight. I don’t really care what I eat, as long as they’re fed. If there are leftovers, I’ll have those later. If not, cereal or oatmeal will do. Now that I have found out FISH has the Fresh Meal Boxes, we’re going to give those a try so we can all sit down and eat the same meal together. I’m sure it’ll be delicious—everything FISH does is done right.”

In addition to pantry services, FISH delivers meals to homebound residents and provides support for those managing health issues, job loss, or reduced hours. Many clients are still feeling the economic impact of Hurricanes Ian, Helene, and Milton—making basic needs harder to meet, even years after the first storm hit. FISH encourages anyone in need to reach out.

To learn more, donate, or seek assistance, visit [www.fishofsancap.org](http://www.fishofsancap.org) or call 239-472-4775.



FISH LINES

# the tourists are gone hunger is still here

Point to **seven homes** in our county.  
Chances are that **one of them**  
**houses a family that doesn't know**  
**where they'll get their next meal.\***



*"Everything FISH does is done right!"*

*—a Sanibel mom on FISH's Fresh Meal Kits*

As the tourist season slows, and seasonal residents have left, FISH of SANCAP is experiencing **higher demand than ever at our Food Pantry—with already more visits this year than in all of 2024.** Many are service workers our community relies on and families who may be facing a decrease in hours and wages, while struggling with increased summer costs such as child care. We're doing our best to meet the need, including offering **Fresh Meal Kits**—ingredients for a complete and healthy meal for a family to enjoy together.

**Still, we need your help.** Please consider donating food or funds to support our much-needed Food Pantry and meal programs. You can turn summer hunger into summer happiness! That's what *neighbors helping neighbors* is all about.



**Donate today!**

\*Source: Feeding America, Map The Meal Gap, 2023 data

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## JOG N JAM SPONSORS | COMMUNITY, FUN & GREAT CAUSE

We are gearing up for one of the most exciting events of the year — the 2025 JOG N JAM, a two-part celebration blending community spirit, healthy fun, and live music, all while raising critical funds to support neighbors in need. The JOG N JAM kicks off with a community 10K/5K run on **November 1**, followed by a high-energy outdoor concert with fan-favorite **Ben Allen Band on December 6**.

“Sponsoring JOG N JAM is more than great exposure for your business — it’s a chance to stand with our community and make a real impact,” says Leah Winkler, event chair and FISH board member. “We welcome sponsors of all sizes and have packages that fit a variety of budgets, with great perks at every level.”

Sponsor logos are added right away to both the FISH website and the official race registration page, complete with direct links to your business website. It’s a great way to boost visibility while showing your support for a vital wraparound nonprofit providing much-needed services to island residents, workers, and the entire community. Several businesses have already stepped up to support this year’s event. Below are the Bronze sponsors to date. For a complete sponsor listing by level, visit <https://fishofsancap.org>:

- Alliant Association Management
- Bleu Rendez Vous
- Hale Design Build
- John Grey Painting
- Saint Michael & All Angels Church
- Rosier Insurance
- Stilwell Enterprises & Restaurant Group
- Superior Title



There’s still plenty of time (but not too much!) to get involved — sponsorship commitments close mid-to-late September to meet print and promo deadlines. Whether you’re a small local business or a regional leader, JOG N JAM offers a great way to give back and connect with a crowd that cares. Sponsorship levels range from Supporter to Presenting Sponsor, with options that include Supporter, Copper, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Premier, Sound & Lighting, Band/Stage, Celebration and Presenting tiers.

All sponsorship levels come with benefits depending on level such as logo placement, recognition at the event, and brand visibility both online and on-site.

Interested sponsors can find full details — including the sponsorship packet — by visiting our [website](https://fishofsancap.org). For questions, reach out to [events@fishofsancap.org](mailto:events@fishofsancap.org).

FISH hopes community businesses will come together to jog, jam, and uplift the islands.



FISH LINES

**FISH 2025**  
**jog N JAM**  
CELEBRATION  
5&10Ks • beach concert • fireworks • fun

**SANIBEL'S ONLY 5/10K RACE**

**570**  
RUNNERS  
IN 2024

**COME**  
walk, run OR jog  
our 18th annual road race  
**SATURDAY**  
**NOVEMBER 1, 2025**  
BEGINS & ENDS AT THE SANIBEL COMMUNITY HOUSE

**JAM**  
DECEMBER 6  
5:30p

**RACING BEGINS 7:30a—registration from 6:30-7:15a**  
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 awards ceremony—**FREE** under age 10.  
Sponsorship opportunities are available. For additional information, email: [events@fishofsancap.org](mailto:events@fishofsancap.org)

**FISH OF SANCAP**  
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FISH LINES

• FISH 2025  
**jog<sup>N</sup>JAM**  
CELEBRATION  
**CONCERT** ON THE *beach*



LIVE MUSIC featuring the

**BEN ALLEN BAND**

*a dynamic modern country rock act in Southwest Florida celebrated for its energetic performances, perfect mix of talent and personalism, and amazing blend of country dance songs and heartfelt country truth*

**FIREWORKS** after concert

**FOOD & DRINKS** for purchase

**GENERAL SEATING** bring a beach chair or blanket



**ADULTS** (ages 19+)—\$75 ea  
**STUDENTS** (ages 7-18)—\$50 ea  
**CHILDREN** (ages 0-6)—FREE!

OR take advantage of **LIMITED GROUP PRICING**  
**ADULT "4-PACK"—JUST \$200** (only 50 available)

AT  
**'Tween Waters**

**SATURDAY**  
**DEC 6**  
AT  
**5:30P**



## FISH PARTNERS WITH SANTIVA ISLANDERS

We are excited to announce a partnership with the Santiva Islanders to enhance community programs for older adults on Sanibel and Captiva. The collaboration focuses on enhancing opportunities for seniors to stay active, social, and connected — all made possible in part through generous funding from the Shady Rest Foundation.

Thanks to this partnership, FISH and the Santiva Islanders are teaming up to offer a variety of activities at a shared space on Palm Ridge Road. The site provides a convenient and welcoming location for exercise classes, socials, and fun group outings that help combat loneliness and support healthy aging.

“This partnership truly represents the spirit of community,” said Maria Espinoza, Executive Director of FISH. “We’re inspired by the Santiva Islanders and their dedication to bringing people together. Partnering with them means we can offer even more for our older residents — from movement classes to meaningful social time.”

Programs at the Palm Ridge space are already in motion, with seniors gathering regularly for everything from yoga and chair-based fitness to themed luncheons and game days. Future outings to local attractions and restaurants are being coordinated, helping participants stay engaged with the wider community.

The enhancement of senior services is part of FISH’s broader mission to ensure all residents — especially older adults — have the resources and relationships they need to age in place with dignity and joy. Support from the Shady Rest Foundation has played a critical role in making this possible.

“We’re grateful for the Shady Rest Foundation’s belief in our work,” added Espinoza. “Because of their support, we’re able to build partnerships and programs that bring people together and improve quality of life.”







## JULY FRIENDLY FACES: GATORS, GRINS & GREAT COMPANY!

What a wild success! Our July Friendly Faces luncheon was one for the books, thanks to a fantastic turnout and a visit from the one and only Ray the Trapper—plus a few unexpected (and scaly!) guests. Attendees had the chance to meet and even hold real live alligators—proving that our Friendly Faces are also fearless! A huge thank you to everyone who came out, shared a meal, and got up close and personal with Ray's 'gator' crew. Can't wait to see you at next month's gathering!





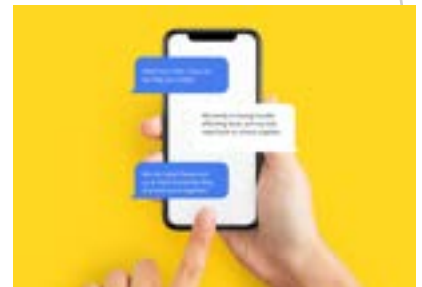


## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

F.I.S.H. of Sanibel-Captiva, Inc. Scheduled Meeting  
July 28, 2025, beginning at 11:00am  
Sanibel Pubic Library, 770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel, FL 33957  
Presentations and Evaluation Committee for  
Professional Architectural Firm for FISH buildings.

## SMS (TEXT) COMMUNICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

We're excited to share that we've officially been approved to use SMS (text) messaging as part of our communications strategy! This new capability will help us reach clients and community members more efficiently with timely, relevant updates—whether it's about food pantry hours, senior programming, wellness checks, or emergency alerts. In order to receive text messages from FISH, you must opt in. [Opt In to Text Messaging from FISH.](#)



## VOTE FOR MAGGI FEINER



We've nominated Maggi Feiner, President and CEO of FISH, for the Sunny 106.3 Outstanding Woman award. Nominees are those who are making a difference in the community who are inspiring leaders. They implement positive change, celebrate diversity, and represent all walks of life. Sunny 106.3 is celebrating and recognizing these Outstanding Women in the Southwest Florida community. Voting will begin on **July 21st** - check the Sunny 106.3 website for voting details.

## VOTE FOR FISH OF SANCAP

**The Best of the Islands is back for 2025!** As in years past, there will be both online and paper ballot voting. Voting will run from July 9th to July 23rd, the ballot book will be in the paper on July 9th and July 16th and the winners will be announced in the Winners Book on August 27th.

**Please vote for FISH**

☒ **BEST NONPROFIT**  
for *Best of the Islands 2025*

FISH has long been a leader in providing crucial day-to-day services through our 4 pillars—**food programs, island based education, senior services, and helping hands & financial assistance.** But in the aftermath of Hurricanes Ian, Helene and Milton, FISH has additionally emerged as a recognized **disaster recovery agent**—a **Limited Way Resiliency Hub**. When disasters strike, FISH can quickly pivot to provide emergency items including food, water, tarps and other vital resources while navigating and leading the ongoing and complex process of long term recovery. As a natural extension of our helping hands pillar, we continue to help neighbors face all the storms of life.

**FISH OF SANCAP**  
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neighbors helping neighbors

whether blue skies or gray, FISH helps neighbors in more ways than ever before

## VOLUNTEER FOR JOG N JAM!



It's not too early to secure your volunteer spot for our upcoming November JOG and December JAM event! There's plenty of opportunities to get involved, from registration to handing out medals at the JOG to greeting guests at the JAM.

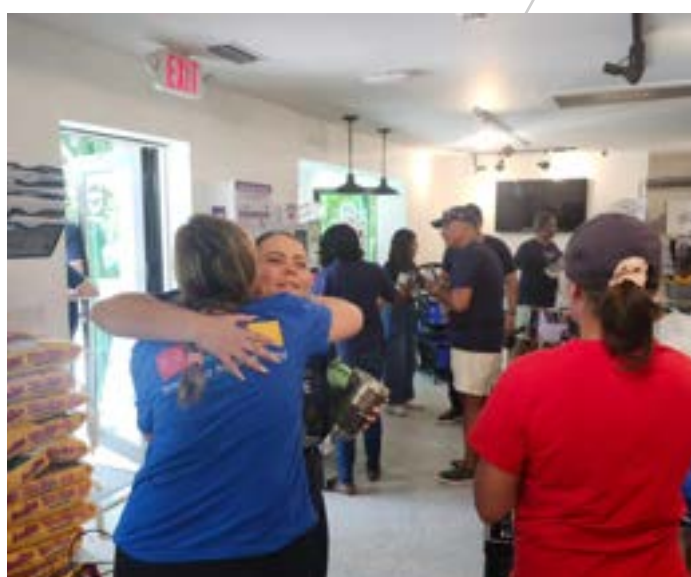
Please complete this [Google form](#) showing your interest, and a JOG N JAM committee member will reach out to you!



FISH LINES

## THANK YOU UNITED WAY!

United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades gathered a volunteer team of 20 people from Auro Hotels to volunteer at FISH in honor of United Way's #DayofCaring! They were able to tackle projects that ranged from sorting medical equipment, to packing backpacks, to building a new cart for the pantry. We're thankful for the energy and hard work they brought!



THANK YOU!



FISH LINES

## PLANNING AHEAD - AUGUST FRIENDLY FACES

# JOIN FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS FISH OF SANCAP FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON

*neighbors helping neighbors*

FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON

**Tuesday, Aug. 12th @11:00 a.m.**

FISH OF SANCAP is keeping community connections strong with its next Friendly Faces Luncheon on **Tues, August 12, 2025, at 11:00am at the Sanibel Community House, 2173 Periwinkle Way**. The luncheon is open to all ages and all members of the community—residents, visitors, and workers alike.



This month's guest, David Muench, will talk about Periwinkle Park and share their story of community, resilience and renewal.

Periwinkle Park, the beloved trailer park and campground, is a family-owned and operated establishment for over 6 decades. Since its beginning, Periwinkle Park has been a favorite destination for campers and residents, offering a unique and welcoming community on beautiful Sanibel Island.

David will share the Park's history, growth and renewal post Hurricane Ian.

Lunch, prepared by The Great White Grill, is provided by FISH at no cost to guests. **Space is limited, please RSVP early**

*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, August 12

**TIME:**

Beginning at 11:00 am

**LOCATION:**

Community House  
2173 Periwinkle Way

**RSVP:**

To Erika Arnowitz, FISH

**By August 8**

239-472-4775

[erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org)





FISH LINES



neighbors helping neighbors

## MENTAL HEALTH WEDNESDAYS

**Talk to a Mental  
Healthcare Clinician**

30 minute sessions

free of charge



with **Tiffannie Nalley**, Clinician III  
in partnership with SalusCare

At St. Michael's in the Library Room  
**2304 Periwinkle Way**

Book an appointment:

**[erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org) | 239-472-4775**



FISH LINES

# BACK TO SCHOOL drive



Amazon Wishlist



Black Pens  
Blue Pens  
Notebook (college)  
Loose Paper (college)  
Pencil Pouch  
Graph Paper  
Backpack  
Sticky Notes  
USB/Flash drives  
Scientific calculator  
Liquid White Glue  
Crayon Box  
Color Markers  
Watercolor Paint  
Scissors  
Pocket Folder  
Mechanical Pencils



Pencil Pack  
Colored Pencil  
Pencil Sharpener  
Crayons  
Glue Stick  
Color Markers  
Comp Book  
Highlighters  
Index Cards  
Erasers  
3 Ring Binder  
Subject Divers  
Protractors  
Ruler  
Notebook (wide)  
Loose Paper (Wide)

**FISH needs your help! Provide a child with all the necessary items for this upcoming school year! Drop-off at FISH, 2422 Periwinkle Way, or one of our partners' locations June 16-Aug 1:**

Sanibel Captiva Islands Assoc. of REALTORS®  
Sanibel Community Church  
Sanibel Public Library  
Chocolattes  
Jerry's

San Cap Community Bank  
Adventures in Paradise Outfitters/A Little Adventure  
Macintosh Books + Paper  
Sanibel Captiva Trust Company  
Bank of the Islands





FISH LINES

**VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS, COMMUNITY | THANK YOU!**



**THANK YOU!**





FISH LINES

VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS, COMMUNITY | THANK YOU!



THANK YOU!

neighbors helping neighbors





FISH LINES

**VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS, COMMUNITY | THANK YOU!**



**THANK YOU!**

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