

# FISH LINES



NEWSLETTER

## Neighbor Network Strengthens Local Workforce Support

We continue to grow our Neighbor Network, a business partnership program that supports local employees while strengthening connections between businesses and essential community resources.

Rooted in a community-based approach, the Neighbor Network provides a simple, accessible way for businesses to support their teams while reinforcing a shared commitment to the well-being of the island workforce. The program is designed to ensure employees are aware of available resources; quietly, respectfully, and without assumptions; helping to normalize support and reduce barriers before challenges escalate.

We developed the Network as a clear, direct way for employers to connect their teams to support when it is needed. The program offers one point of access to food assistance, financial help, referrals, and educational workshops through FISH services, helping employees address challenges early and maintain stability.

For many businesses, the Neighbor Network strengthens existing employee support efforts in a way that is simple, low-burden, and cost free. Rising costs for groceries, housing, and transportation continue to impact the local workforce. Through FISH, employees have access to resources that help them stay focused on work and maintain stability at home.

Participation reflects a commitment to the community — not an indication that employees rely on services. By sharing resources universally, businesses help create a workplace culture where seeking support, if needed, feels natural and accepted.

## neighboring businesses provide a network of help

FISH has launched a new initiative called the **Neighbor Network**, a community-centered program designed to make it easier for neighbors to access support when they need it. Wherever you see this window decal, you'll find a participating business or organization that offers easy-to-share information about FISH programs and services by simply posting FISH materials in common areas, break rooms, onboarding packets, and anywhere it may be of help to neighbors. If you're a business who wants to join our growing network, contact FISH today—because helping others has never been easier!



# proudly HELPING

our neighbors with



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visit [fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org) for the latest—and growing—list of amazing Neighbor Network partners

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food programs • island based education • senior services • helping hands & financial assistance

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## Neighbor Network continued

“The Neighbor Network builds a stronger bridge between businesses and the people they rely on every day,” said Simon Robson, Community Outreach and Resiliency Director at FISH. “It’s about making sure people know where to turn and reinforcing the idea that support is part of a strong, connected community.”

The program also supports advocacy by raising awareness about what people in the community are facing and sharing those needs with partners, funders and community leaders. All information is kept confidential, and no names are ever shared. By working closely with local businesses, FISH learns what employees are facing and responds to real needs.

“We have a hardworking team, but the current economy is making it harder for many to keep up with basic expenses,” said a participating Neighbor Network business. “We are grateful to have FISH as a resource, knowing our employees can access support if they meet the program requirements. It gives us peace of mind that help is there when it’s needed.”



FISH proudly recognizes the businesses already participating in the Neighbor Network, including The Magic Bus, Wickie’s Lighthouse Restaurant, A Little Adventure, AIP Outfitters, Rachel Pierce Art Gallery, Wilford and Lee, The Sanibel Café, Shiny Objects, Home by Rachel Pierce, On Island, Sanibel Sole, Synergy, Sanibel Pilates & Spa, Pierce’s Paw Paradise, and Sanibel Carts. Their involvement reflects a shared commitment to supporting the local workforce and strengthening the community.

Participating businesses receive recognition for their involvement, including a storefront sticker reading “Proudly Helping Our Neighbors”. Businesses are also featured on the FISH website, increasing visibility and reinforcing their role as trusted partners.

FISH is expanding volunteer opportunities connected to the Neighbor Network to increase awareness and encourage more businesses to participate. These efforts create additional ways for teams to engage and support the community through hands-on involvement.

FISH remains focused on building partnerships that support both employees and employers, ensuring that those who live and work on Sanibel and Captiva have access to the resources they need to move forward.

Follow FISH on Facebook and Instagram for updates and program information. For more information on the Neighbor Network, contact Simon Robson at [simon@fishofsancap.org](mailto:simon@fishofsancap.org).



## We Attended The “Reimagine” Volunteer Event at Shell Point



We recently attended the “Reimagine” volunteer event at Shell Point Retirement Community during National Volunteer Week. Kathy Samson, FISH Foundation board member and marketing consultant, and Kim Baker, executive assistant, represented FISH at the event.

As noted by Shell Point, “The event, ‘Reimagine’, reflects a growing vision for volunteerism at Shell Point, and our residents are continuing to expand their impact beyond campus and create new ways to serve our neighbors through local nonprofits, including FISH of Sanibel-Captiva, The Salvation Army USA of Lee, Hendry, and Glades counties, Dr. Piper Center, and ECHO.”

Shell Point shared the scale of its volunteer impact. The event focused on how that effort can extend beyond campus to support local organizations, including FISH. FISH relies on volunteers to carry out daily services across the islands. In 2025, over 281 volunteers gave more than 5,400 hours of service, valued at nearly \$180,000. That support helps meet thousands of service requests each year.

The value of volunteerism extends beyond cost savings by building trust through consistent presence. FISH volunteers deliver meals and take time to check in with older residents. They greet neighbors at the food pantry and help them move through the intake process with ease. Volunteer actions help support stability and keep neighbors moving forward.

FISH offers many ways to get involved. Volunteers support programs, special events and more. Opportunities range from weekly commitments to single-day projects, allowing individuals to match their time and skills to community needs. “Volunteers are part of how we show up every day,” said MJ Hays, Volunteer and Office Manager. “Many of our volunteers build relationships with the people they serve. That connection helps us respond faster and support people in a way that feels personal and respectful.”

FISH continues to invest in its volunteer program. The organization is part of the 2025/2026 Service Enterprise cohort through Volunteer Florida, facilitated by Service Enterprise Coach and Trainer Beth Steinhorn. This research-based accreditation program trains nonprofits to engage volunteers in a structured way that expands capacity and improves service delivery. Through this work, FISH is strengthening systems, training, and alignment so volunteer efforts can support long-term impact.

“Participation in events like “Reimagine” builds stronger connections between volunteers and local organizations. It creates ways for individuals to give time and support neighbors consistently,” continues Hays.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities, contact MJ Hays, Volunteer and Office Manager, at [mj@fishofsancap.org](mailto:mj@fishofsancap.org).



# FISH volunteers are appreciated every day!

In recognition of *National Volunteer Month*, FISH extends our sincere THANKS to the dedicated volunteers who are at the heart of everything we do. From stocking shelves in the food pantry to assisting with programs and events, volunteers play a vital role in **neighbors helping neighbors**.



in 2025  
**281**  
Volunteers  
gave  
**5,460**  
hours

equaling  
**\$180,000**  
in donated  
time!



*"It's not just the hours our volunteers give—it's the way they give them. They show up, they are eager to help, they lend a hand, and they truly care! And that makes all the difference for the people we serve."*  
—MJ Hays, FISH Volunteer & Office Coordinator

With many seasonal residents going away for the summer months, the need for volunteers is always here. **Now is the perfect time to jump in, help fill the gap, and discover the rewards of being a FISH volunteer!**



**scan here** to find the volunteer opportunity for you!

**FISH**  
OF SANCAP

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- food programs
- island based education
- senior services
- helping hands & financial assistance



## Meals by FISH Program with Deliveries and Flexible Options

We continue to meet neighbors where they are through its Meals by FISH program, providing reliable, nutritious meals with a personal touch. For many in the community, access to healthy food has become more difficult. Grocery prices remain high and a standard trip to the store now costs more than it did even a year ago. For those living on fixed or limited income, that gap adds up quickly.

Transportation can also be a barrier. Not everyone can drive, and options for getting to and from the store are limited. For others, standing, lifting, or cooking is no longer safe or realistic due to mobility issues or recovery from illness.

Meals by FISH helps close that gap. Meals are prepared by Jerry's Foods using a set menu that follows a two-week rotating schedule. This method brings consistency while offering variety. The program is designed to be flexible. Participants can join or pause service based on their needs.



Payment is offered on a sliding scale, making the program accessible to those facing financial difficulties. Meals are available up to seven days a week, with additional meals delivered on Fridays to cover the weekend. Deliveries take place daily between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. and are carried out by dedicated volunteers who pick up meals and bring them directly to each home. For many, this visit offers more than a meal.

"Meals by FISH supports both nutrition and connection," said Erika Arnowitz, Senior Services Director at FISH. "We see neighbors who are trying to stretch their income, manage health needs, or recover from a setback. This program helps ease that pressure. It also gives us a chance to check in, even briefly, and make sure someone is doing okay."

The program serves older adults, individuals recovering from medical events, and others who may need short-term or ongoing support. Each delivery offers steady access to food, reduces the need for frequent grocery trips, and provides a moment of connection that can help reduce isolation.

*An island neighbor who uses the program notes, "I am deeply grateful for the meals provided to senior citizens in our community. This program has made a meaningful difference in my daily life. Knowing I have access to nutritious, well-prepared meals brings me comfort and peace of mind. It's more than just food—it's a reminder that we are cared for and not forgotten. If it were not for this program, I would be unable to stay in my apartment alone. The kindness and dedication of the staff and volunteers truly show in everything they do. Because of this program, seniors like me are better able to maintain our health, independence, and dignity. Thank you for the generosity and compassion you continue to share with older adults."*

To enroll or learn more about Meals by FISH, contact Erika at FISH at [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org).



## Helping A Local Family Move Forward with Stability and Hope

We continue to help neighbors move through crisis and toward stability, offering support that meets people where they are and helps them take the next step forward.

One local mother recently shared her experience after receiving assistance from FISH. Her full name remains confidential per her request. *"I find it hard to express just how deeply thankful my daughter and I are for the incredible support we've received from FISH and the generous families who donate. This past year has brought some extremely challenging situations as a single mother, and with limited resources, I often felt lost. The rent assistance from FISH has not only transformed my life but also protected my daughter and revealed the beautiful side of humanity. My hope is to one day offer support to families in the same way FISH has helped us. For now, I am deeply thankful for what has been provided."*

Her story shows a growing need. Families facing rising costs, housing instability, and limited income often reach a point where one setback can lead to crisis. FISH works to interrupt that cycle.

Through financial assistance, food programs, and case management, FISH helps clients stabilize quickly and build a path forward. Each plan focuses on clear steps customized to individual circumstances. Clients gain tools, structure, and support so progress continues after assistance ends.

"Every client comes to us with a different situation, but the goal is the same," said Nitza Lopez, Social Services Director at FISH. "We help people regain stability, build confidence, and move forward with a plan that supports long-term success."

We focus on more than short-term relief. Staff work with clients to identify needs, remove barriers, and create realistic next steps. This approach helps families avoid repeat crises and move toward independence.

For this mother and her daughter, that support created a turning point. "What once felt uncertain now feels possible," the individual stated.

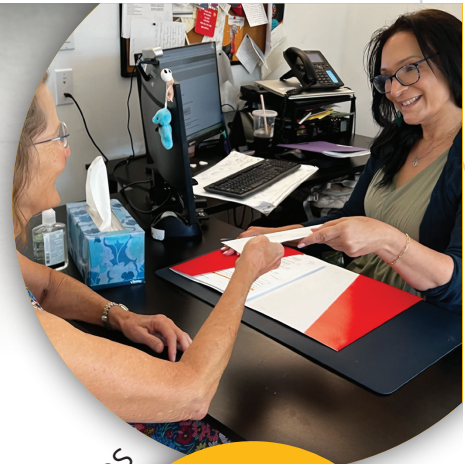
We remain committed to serving the Sanibel and Captiva communities through strong donor and grantor support, active partnerships, and ongoing advocacy, with a clear focus on helping neighbors move forward.

For information on the Helping Hands program, contact Nitza Lopez, [nitza@fishofsancap.org](mailto:nitza@fishofsancap.org).





- An urgent surgery leaves you **short on rent and facing eviction**
- A car repair shatters your savings and **keeps you from getting to work**
- A family member needs **at-home care that costs two weeks of much-needed wages** for food and housing



# turning impossible choices into possibilities



\*ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. Households below the ALICE Threshold are either below the Federal Poverty Level or above poverty but not able to afford basic needs. Source: 2025 ALICE Report (2023 data), United for ALICE.



People right here in our island communities face impossible choices like these every day.

**But there's good news—**

*FISH of SanCap turns impossible choices into possibilities.*

Whether it's **aiding 5,304 people in need...** or **feeding 6,824 food pantry visitors...** or **making 1,138 assurance calls** to the homebound... and so much more, FISH enriches lives by *neighbors helping neighbors*. We strive for a community where all people in Sanibel and Captiva have the support they need to thrive.

**You can help FISH make the impossible possible. Please consider a gift today. Scan here!**



*"My ultimate goal is to be financially stable so that I can spend more time with my children. I am truly thankful for FISH's generosity and assistance."*

—a FISH client

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## Seniors Facing Isolation During Summer Months



As seasonal residents return north and the island grows quieter, many older adults on Sanibel face increased isolation. We are working to ensure seniors stay connected, supported, and engaged year-round.

While isolation can affect seniors at any time, FISH notes that summer months often bring a noticeable increase. With fewer neighbors, reduced activity, and changes in daily routines, many older adults experience a sharp drop in social interaction. Sanibel has a large senior population, with more than 60% of residents age 60 and older. For many, reduced connection can lead to loneliness, which is linked to higher risks of depression, cognitive decline, and other health concerns.

We offer programs designed to reduce isolation and keep seniors connected. Through Friendly Faces luncheons, home visits, reassurance calls, Smile Boxes, and workshops, seniors have consistent opportunities for social engagement and support.

“Connection matters at every stage of life, and we see how quickly isolation can impact someone’s well-being,” said Erika Arnowitz, Senior Services Director at FISH. “Our programs give seniors something to look forward to and help them stay engaged with their community in ways that feel meaningful and accessible.”

Friendly Faces brings seniors together each month for shared meals and conversation. Home visits and reassurance calls provide regular check-ins for those who are homebound. Smile Boxes offer small, thoughtful deliveries that brighten a senior’s day. Workshops and activities create space for learning, connection, and routine. These programs are made possible by a strong network of volunteers. From organizing events to making calls and delivering items, volunteers play a direct role in bringing connection and consistency into the lives of older adults.

We also find that volunteering can help reduce loneliness. Seniors who volunteer often build new relationships, stay active, and gain a sense of purpose. Support for these efforts is reinforced through grant funding from CAMEO of Lee County, which helps sustain and expand senior services across the island.

As the season shifts and routines change, we remain focused on ensuring that no senior feels alone, providing consistent support and opportunities for connection throughout the year.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates and program information. For more information on senior services, contact Erika Arnowitz at [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org).



## Thank You Community Members & Partners!

We are excited to announce the FISH Food Pantry now has FREE Birthday Cake Kits!

Thanks to local **Eagle Scout, Liam Nuckolls** for putting together what he calls "Birthday Blessings" a community initiative designed to help families and seniors served by FISH of SanCap celebrate birthdays that might otherwise go unnoticed. Each kit contains cake mix and frosting, candles, a disposable cake pan, and party decorations.



Thank you to the wonderful **Sanibel Fire Rescue District** for donating Carbon Monoxide Alarms to our clients! CO alarms are designed to warn you of any unusual build-up of CO in your home. These higher levels of CO may occur from improperly maintained, installed or used fuel-burning appliances, backdrafting appliances or fireplaces, or idling cars in garages.



Thank you, **CFI**, for inviting FISH Executive Director Maria Espinoza to speak to your leadership class today about resiliency and recovery. Throughout the day, the class will hear from local leaders and experts including **Dana Souza, Kevin Ruane, Dolly Farrell, Doug Congress, Eric Pfeifer, Maria Espinoza, Chief Barbot, and Peter Presland-Byrne**. From critical infrastructure and emergency response to policy, planning, and data-driven decision-making, the day highlighted how collaboration across sectors is shaping the future of Sanibel and Captiva.

Marketing and Grants Director Maggie Goldsmith, along with FISH Foundation Board Member Kathy Samson, had the privilege of attending the **Florida Public Relations Association's 2026 Media Breakfast** at Sundial Beach Resort and Spa. This event offered a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the journalists shaping Southwest Florida's news landscape, including representatives from Gulf Coast News, WINK News, The News-Press, and more.





## June Friendly Faces Focus on Alzheimer's, Caregiving

FISH of Sanibel-Captiva will host its next Friendly Faces Luncheon on **Tuesday, June 9, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sanibel & Captiva Islands Association of REALTORS®, located at 2353 Periwinkle Way #201 on Sanibel.** Sign up using the QR code below.

The monthly luncheon brings older adults, caregivers, neighbors, and friends together for conversation, connection, and support. June's event will feature special guest speaker Christine LoConte, Chief Executive Officer of the Dubin Center.

### FISH events to catch

# friendly faces luncheon



*open to residents, visitors,  
& island workers of ALL AGES!*

- DATE **Tuesday, June 9**
- TIME **11a-1p**
- VENUE **Sanibel & Captiva Islands Association of REALTORS**  
2353 Periwinkle Way #201, Sanibel
- RSVP **by June 5**—Reserve with QR code or email [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org)
- TOPIC **Christine LoConte | Dubin Center**

Join us for good food, great company, and conversation at our Friendly Faces Luncheon, featuring a meal from **The Lighthouse Cafe!** Our Special Guest will be Christine LoConte, MA, Chief Executive Officer of the Dubin Center.

Christine, a Southwest Florida native and fellow Rotarian, began her career at 17 as a professional caregiver for individuals with Alzheimer's, sparking a lifelong passion for supporting the aging population. She has dedicated most of her career to nonprofit work and holds a master's degree in Social Impact. In July 2024, she became the CEO of The Dubin Center, where she continues to advocate for, and support individuals and families affected by dementia.

Enjoy a delicious meal, provided to you at no cost by FISH.

**Space is limited—RSVP early to save your spot!**

Reserve with QR code or email [erika@fishofsancap.org](mailto:erika@fishofsancap.org)



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## June Workshop on Social Media & Internet Safety

We are hosting a Social Media and Internet Safety workshop on **Thursday, June 4 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Fellowship Hall at The Community Church, located at 1740 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel.** Sign up using the QR code below.

Presented by Chelsea Long of the Lee County Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit, the workshop will focus on staying safe online in a world where scams, fake websites, and online fraud continue to grow.

FISH events to catch

# social media & internet safety



*open to all Island Employees and Island residents!*

DATE **Thursday, June 4**  
TIME **11:00a - 12:00p**  
VENUE **Sanibel Community Church, Fellowship Hall**  
1740 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel | *RSVPs are required by June 2*



FISH of SanCap will host a free, information workshop in collaboration with Lee County Sheriff's Office.

**Course Details:** No doubt, technology is a double-edged sword. Posting is power. Passwords can be pesky. Plus, who is really behind those messages? We explain the dark side of social media, along with ways you can surf and connect safely, while still having fun. In this workshop, you will learn

- How to safeguard your identity and personal information
- What to do if you become a victim
- Current trends and cons

We hope you will join us on June 4th! Ample parking and light refreshments provided.

Please use the QR Code to reserve a spot. For more information, contact Simon Robson at FISH at 239-472-4775 or [simon@fishofsancap.org](mailto:simon@fishofsancap.org).



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## Neighbors in Readiness

Your Monthly Guide to Staying Safe and Prepared



Neighbors in Readiness, a monthly preparedness series, is designed to help residents take practical, manageable steps to stay safe, informed, and resilient throughout the year. Each month, Neighbors in Readiness will share short, easy-to-follow tips, reminders, and resources.

From putting together a simple emergency kit to checking in with neighbors, every suggestion is meant to be practical, affordable, and doable—no matter your budget or experience level. Whether you live in a single-family home, condo, or rental, these small steps can make a big difference.

For more information, contact [Simon Robson](#).

### May — “Build Your Hurricane Supply Kit Before the Rush”

June marks the official start of hurricane season — but May is the smart time to get your supplies ready. Stocking up early means less stress and shorter lines when a storm heads our way.

#### Quick Actions:

1. Start with the basics. Water (1 gallon per person per day), non-perishable food, flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, and a manual can opener.
2. Don't forget the extras. Prescription medications, pet food, hygiene products, spare glasses, and copies of important documents.
3. Power up. Charge or buy battery banks and test your flashlights. Keep at least one corded phone or solar charger handy.
4. Cash counts. ATMs and card readers may be down after a storm — keep some small bills in your kit.
5. Rotate supplies. Check expiration dates and replace food, batteries, and meds each year. Repurpose coolers, empty containers, and bins to organize and protect supplies.

**Helpful Resource** | Printable checklist from FloridaDisaster.org here: [www.floridadisaster.org/kit](http://www.floridadisaster.org/kit)

**Island Insight** | Local stores often sell out quickly once a storm is named. Building your kit now — and helping a neighbor do the same — means you'll both be ready long before the winds pick up.

[Kids Monthly Readiness Activity](#)



This work is led by FISH of SanCap and made possible through grant funding from the American Red Cross. This support provides critical resources that allow the FISH team to research, collaborate, and deliver ongoing disaster preparedness information and monthly resources to the community.



## JOG N JAM Registration & Tickets Available Now!

We are thrilled to announce our 2026 JOG N JAM event, bringing back the energy of last year's event with even more in store for runners, concertgoers, and the businesses that help make it happen.

After a record-breaking year, JOG N JAM returns and continues to grow. What began as a community race and beach concert has become one of the most anticipated events on the islands, bringing neighbors, visitors, and supporters together for two signature experiences:

**Saturday, November 7, 2026 – The 10K, 5K, and Kids Fun Run** return to the Sanibel Community House, 2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957, offering a scenic course for runners and walkers of all levels. Whether racing for a personal best, joining a team, or simply enjoying the morning with friends, participants can expect a well-organized event that reflects the spirit of the islands. The race will be timed by LinMark Sports, a full-service sports company.

**Saturday, December 5, 2026** – The celebration continues at Tween Waters Island Resort, 15951 Captiva Dr, Captiva, FL 33924, with the JOG N JAM beach concert, featuring the **Ben Allen Band**. The evening includes two sets, with a fireworks display at intermission before the band returns to close out the night. With food, drinks, and the beach atmosphere, it's a chance to relax, reconnect, and enjoy the season.

"Last year set the bar high," said Leah Winkler, FISH Board Member and JOG N JAM Committee Chair. "The turnout, the energy, the community support—it was something special. We're excited to bring that same feeling back this year, with a few additions that make the experience even better."

JOG N JAM is one of two annual fundraisers supporting FISH's work across the islands. Proceeds fund programs that help neighbors navigate everyday challenges—from food access and financial assistance to senior services, education, and ongoing recovery efforts.

Registration and concert tickets are now available. Race registration is offered at tiered pricing, with fees increasing as race day approaches. Concertgoers can take advantage of a limited-time 4-pack ticket offer—four tickets for \$200, a \$100 savings, **ending on May 25, 2026 at 11:59pm**.

- Race registration through [Run Sign Up](#)
- Concert tickets through [RSVPify](#)

sponsorship  
opportunities  
available!  
Inquire [here](#)

FISH 2026  
**jog N JAM**  
CELEBRATION  
5&10Ks • beach concert • fireworks • fun



FISH LINES

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THANK YOU!

neighbors helping neighbors



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VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS, COMMUNITY | THANK YOU!



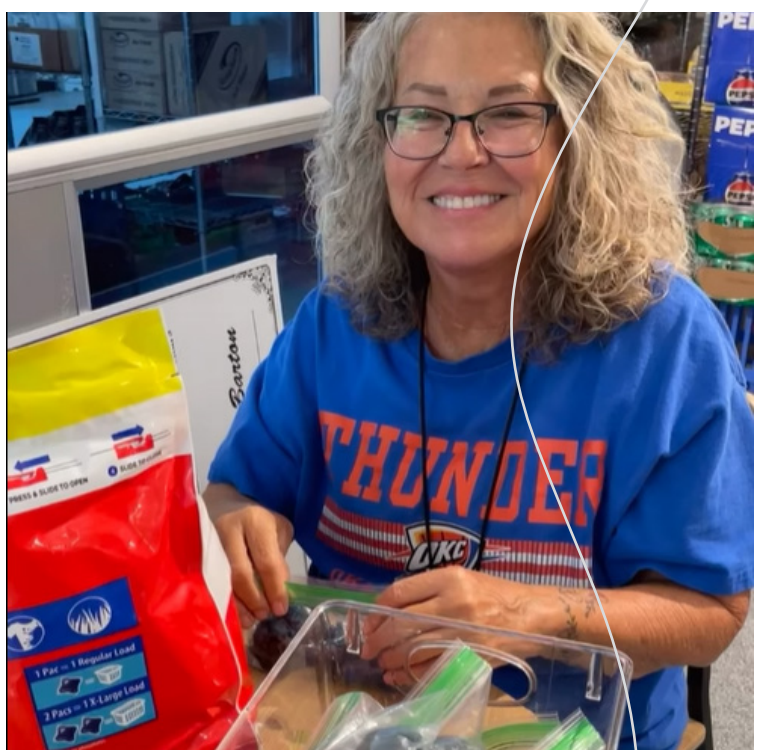
THANK YOU!

neighbors helping neighbors



FISH LINES

VOLUNTEERS, PARTNERS, COMMUNITY | THANK YOU!



THANK YOU!

neighbors helping neighbors



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



**THANK YOU!**

neighbors helping neighbors