

DECEMBER 2020

# FISH LINES

NEWSLETTER

## UNPRECEDENTED REQUESTS FOR THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS



The Thanksgiving Holiday has come and gone, but not without a flurry of excitement at the Walk-In Center. As in years past, we distributed bags of stuffing, rolls, vegetables, pies and a gift card to purchase a holiday protein for the Thanksgiving holiday. We planned for increased participation mainly due to COVID lost work hours and job loss, but didn't expect the last-minute burst of requests.

"When the week of Thanksgiving rolled around, we realized additional supplies would be necessary," says Maria Espinoza, Director of Food Programs. "Many clients with holiday plans outside their own

homes changed their minds, leaving them without meal supplies. Others, who serve at local restaurants on the holiday, learned they wouldn't be needed due to lower than usual reservations. And some learned that their family would not be visiting, leaving them alone and searching for a meal for one or two." Our staff and volunteers worked around the clock Nov. 23-26 to make sure everyone would enjoy a meal for the holiday. In all, we provided meals for 634 neighbors in need this Thanksgiving through food baskets, gift cards, and prepared meals in their Meals-by-FISH program prepared by Bailey's General Store. Using COVID-19 precautionary measures such as facemasks, hand sanitizing and social distancing, volunteers and staff assembled baskets at the Walk-in Center. Our volunteers delivered meals by car, bike, and on foot through Thanksgiving morning.

"Our community came together to help hundreds of families have a happy Thanksgiving with full tables. We're so grateful to our community and their generous spirits for making sure every request for a holiday meal was met this year," said Alicia Tighe Orgera, Executive Director, FISH. Partners for the Thanksgiving Food Basket program included Bailey's General Store, who generously donated the bags for the program; Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, who donated pies to the baskets; The Great White Grill, who donated turkeys; Friends Who Care, who donated gift cards; community members who donated resources and FISH volunteers, who donated time, energy and effort. With the Christmas holiday right around the corner, we anticipate another surge in requests for food baskets. If you or a family you know needs a Christmas Holiday Food Basket, please contact Maria Espinoza at 239-472-4775.



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*All workshops and offerings are virtual until further notice due to COVID-19.*

## BIG THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- *Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church for providing pies for our Thanksgiving Food Basket program! We cannot thank you enough for your support.*

2430-B Periwinkle Way

Sanibel FL 33957

239.472.4775

[fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org)

email: [info@fishofsancap.org](mailto:info@fishofsancap.org)

neighbors helping neighbors

**FISH**  
OF SANCAP



# FOOD NEWS

FISH LINES

## FOOD PANTRY INCREASE



While we anticipated increased pantry usage around the holiday, the amount of visits just before Thanksgiving were unexpected. With the Pantry shelves low on essentials, our volunteers made two 'emergency' grocery pick-ups at local markets just before the holiday. Our Food Pantry provides supplemental food to our island residents, employees, and visitors in need five days a week, year round.

To date, we have distributed 219,459 pounds of food, equating to 182,883 meals, to those that live or work on the islands.

## FARM 2 FISH PROGRAM



The 'Farm 2 FISH' program is a partnership with the Sanibel Farmer's Market and Aurora's Produce to supply fresh produce to our Food Pantry. Shoppers donate to the cause with the hopes of reaching a weekly goal of \$200. In return, Aurora's sells cases of fresh produce to us at market cost. "This is such a welcome gift to those who use our pantry as a supplemental grocery service," says Maria Espinoza, Director of Food Programs, FISH. "Reduced work hours along with grocery store shortages due to COVID make it difficult to purchase certain items. Thanks to the Farmer's Market, we can help bridge the gap." Betsy Ventura and Jean Baer, owners of Local Roots, LLC which operates eight Lee County Farmers' Markets,

organize the market throughout season and suggest vendors pack boxes of unsold fruits, vegetables and goodies for the food pantry. Many other farm stands, including European Bakery, operated by the Foerschner Family; Straight From NY York Bagels, operated by the Sexton Family and Gallego's Farm, operated by the Gallego Family continue to donate produce, baked goods and other items to the Food Pantry as they have done for many years. FISH volunteers pick up, sort and stock the pantry on weekend off-hours following strict COVID-19 safety precautions.

## BIG THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- *Bank of the Islands, an ongoing food collection site for non-perishable Food Pantry items.*
- *Sanibel Island Farmer's Market for spearheading the 'Farm 2 FISH' program.*

*We cannot thank you enough for your support.*





# SOCIAL SERVICES

FISH LINES

## VIRTUAL FRIENDLY FACES

FISH, with George & Wendy's, is bringing back the community-wide Friendly Faces Luncheon in a new format! We postponed the face-to-face luncheons in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are now offering the popular social gathering in a virtual format.

Please join us and community members on Tues., Dec.15 for our first ever virtual Friendly Faces Lunch. The lunch, which will be prepared by George & Wendy's and delivered by FISH volunteers, will include activities, games and lots of good 'ole conversation. Due to COVID restrictions on large gatherings and out of an abundance of caution for the community, this community event will take place via Zoom. "We hope community members won't let technology get in the way, as we want everyone to join us," says Susan Alexander, Senior Services & Community Engagement Director, FISH. "Our staff can help you with any technology concerns. We want everyone to join the fun, catch up with friends from the past and make new connections"

As a welcome back incentive, FISH is covering the cost for all participants that join the virtual lunch in December. Lunch will consist of cold sandwich options or a Chicken Caesar Salad, sides, water bottle and dessert. Details of meal choices will be provided upon sign-up. Reservations and meal choices are required by Dec. 9 to Susan Alexander or Anthony Morales at FISH 239-472-4775. Once registered, FISH will provide an emailed link and meeting ID number for access. For more information or for assistance with registration and/or Zoom instructions, please contact FISH.

*(pictures below from pre-COVID luncheons)*



## BIG THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- *George & Wendy's Seafood Grille, provider of delicious food choices for our monthly luncheon.*





# SOCIAL SERVICES

FISH LINES

## TOY DRIVE AND ADOPT A FAMILY

For those that have come upon challenging times, the holidays can be difficult. Add the current health crisis to the mix, and what is normally a joyous time of year becomes bleak for some. Many FISH clients are underemployed and/or have recently lost income due to the pandemic or other medical emergencies, low fixed incomes, or other circumstances. Supporting neighbors through our Adopt-A-Family Program and Toy Drive is a simple act of kindness that makes all the difference in the world to a neighbor. A huge thank you to the Sanibel-Captiva Assoc. of Realtors, shown below, and individuals who have donated to our Toy Drive and to all donors that have chosen a family to adopt.



## BIG THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- *Sanibel-Captiva Islands Association of Realtors*
- *Bailey's General Store*
- *Community Housing & Resources*
- *City of Sanibel*
- *Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva*
- *Toys Ahoy*
- *Sanibel and Captiva community members*

## COVID PPE DISTRIBUTION

The *City of Sanibel* received an allotment of COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from Lee County, and proudly partnered with *Community Housing & Resources (CHR)*, *The Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva*, *The Sanibel Community House*, *Bailey's General Store* and *FISH* to distribute items.

Volunteers packages items consisting of face coverings and hand sanitizer. We held one distribution date at the Sanibel Community House as a drive through pick up option and two distribution dates at Bailey's where over 3600 kits were distributed to community members. PPE is an important tool to help stop the spread of the COVID virus. Packets were free of charge to individuals and households living or working on the islands.





## WE NEED GREAT PEOPLE LIKE YOU!

Although certain duties are limited during the COVID crisis, **we still need volunteers!** Please consider our volunteers opportunities, including phone duty, meal delivery, food pantry, and more. *Contact Maria Espinoza, 239-472-0404, for details. Click on the links below for a calendar download for the following services:*

[December Phone Duty](#)

[December Meal Delivery](#)

## RESOURCES

Below are online shopping links to make your generosity that much easier. An online account is required for ordering. For direct shipments to our Food Pantry, please send to: *FISH c/o Food Pantry, 2430-B Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957.* Please include a gift note so we know who it's from and can acknowledge accordingly! *As always, thank you for thinking of our neighbors in need.*

[Amazon Prime Pantry](#)

[Bailey's General Store](#)

[Jerry's Foods](#)

[Publix](#)

## FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS NEEDED

Food is one of our most basic survival needs, yet there is a significant portion of our community who struggle to put food on the table. We are working daily to reduce that number by providing assistance through our food programs thanks to our generous donors, volunteers, community partners, and staff. We are proud to offer supplemental groceries to our island neighbors five days a week by way of our 'Choice' Food Pantry. *We are open from 10:00am-3:45pm Monday—Friday, allowing our clients to shop according to their own life schedules that may otherwise prevent them from getting the resources they need.*

Our Food Pantry is always in need of the following items:

- Canned protein
- Canned fruits and vegetables
- Cereal
- Crackers
- Nut butters and jellies
- Pasta, rice, beans
- Ready-to-eat meals and soups
- Visit our [FOOD PANTRY PAGE](#) to learn more

*During the COVID-19 health crisis, please call for hours of operation. Food Pantry patrons will not be allowed to shop but instead will be handed bags of food.*

neighbors helping neighbors



stay connected to FISH by visiting us on or at our website: [fishofsancap.org](http://fishofsancap.org)

### ABOUT FISH

FISH of SanCap is a nonprofit, staffed by more than 170 volunteers. Professionals staff the Walk-in Center and are available Mon. through Fri. to assist islanders and visitors with an array of services and programs. FISH is Sanibel and Captiva's only *neighbors helping neighbors* organization offering a range of human services including:

- **Temporary Emergency Financial Assistance**
- **Food Pantry**
- **Transportation (NonEmergency)**
- **Medical Equipment Loan**
- **Hurricane Packets**
- **Hot Meals Program**
- **Kid's Food Backpack**
- **Community Seminars**
- **Youth Scholarships**
- **Referrals & Resources**
- **Monthly Luncheon and much more!**

### FOOD PANTRY DROP-OFF INFO

We accept donations to help stock our Food Pantry. Items must be unopened, unexpired non-perishables.

**Perishable items accepted Mon-Fri from 8am-3:30pm at the Walk-in Center**

Other drop off sites include:

- **Bailey's General Store**
- **Bank of the Islands**
- **Sanibel Fire Station**
- **South Seas Main Gate**



# CONGRATULATIONS F.I.S.H. OF SANIBEL-CAPTIVA

Has Been Voted

The *Best*

## SERVICE ORG. / CLUB

### of The Islands 2020

*Sanibel-Captiva*  
**islanders**



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# NAVIGATING UNCHARTED WATERS TOGETHER



## neighbors helping neighbors **THROUGH COVID-19**

In these times of uncertainty and growing needs, FISH remains steadfast in providing both **help and hope** to our island communities. Thanks to generous donors, volunteers and neighbors like you, **these FISH programs—our largest and most critical—have not missed a beat:**

- Food Pantry
- Meals-by-FISH meal delivery
- Food backpacks for children
- Emergency financial assistance

Whether feeding families, providing financial relief for rent and medical bills, or making daily phone calls and visits via FaceTime, Skype or Zoom, we continue to help our 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.**

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW needs assistance during these difficult times, please call us at **239.472.0404**. For more info about FISH services, visit **fishofsancap.org**.



neighbors helping neighbors

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

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

sponsored by:  
Jim & Mary Nelson



### FISH FACTS

*Even before COVID-19, the need for FISH emergency programs has grown significantly over the past year. Thank you for helping to meet these very important needs in all circumstances.*

**FOOD PANTRY**  
January - November  
**2020**

**219,459** lbs  
equating to  
**182,883** meals

**BACKPACKS DISTRIBUTED**  
January - November  
2019                      **2020**

1042                      **1710**

**MEALS-BY-FISH DELIVERY**  
January - November  
2019                      **2020**

2922                      **5936**

**EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
January - November

**430** Instances

