

SEPTEMBER 2023

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

onward and upward

FISH Positions Team on Island for Hurricane Idalia



Exactly eleven months after Hurricane Ian made landfall, our team was positioned on Sanibel to aid with hurricane preparedness ahead of Hurricane Idalia.

Said Manuela Martinez, Disaster Administrative Director. "FISH is here to assist our community with supplies, food and information. We want everyone to be prepared and to stay safe. Our Food Pantry site on Sanibel will be our hub and we expect many neighbors to either visit or call with questions. Together, we will get through this."

The Food Pantry remained open from 9:00 a.m – 12:00 p.m. with no limitations on food and limits on water, toilet paper and paper towels. Working with our pantry partner, Midwest Food Bank, we were able to obtain 14 pallets of water delivered to our Sanibel location. "Midwest was extremely accommodating and eager to get help to our community," continues Martinez. "We are so grateful for our partnership and for their team who went above and beyond to assist."

Annually, we update and provide a Hurricane Preparedness Resource packet with detailed information on where to go, what to do, and how to prepare in the event of an approaching storm. "The packet provides critical information and helpful steps to stay safe before, during and after a storm," says Erika Broyles, Senior Services Director of FISH, who oversees the program and coordinates the efforts of the team to insure all information is correct.

"Our volunteer committee made calls to islanders informing them of the situation and projected impact of Idalia," continues Broyles. "As we learned with Ian, it is very important to have up-to-date contact information for family and friends in both electronic and paper form so we can connect with non-local contacts on behalf of our islanders, if needed."



FISH stresses the importance of listening to authorities if an evacuation order is issued. "Experts know that the best way to stay safe is to follow evacuation orders and get out of the path of the storm," says Broyles. Hurricane Resource packets can be downloaded from our [website](#).

2430-B Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
Temporary Mailing Address: 15550 McGregor Boulevard, Suite 204, Fort Myers, FL 33908

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





Partnerships Aid Hurricane Survivors

Partnering with the United Way Gifts-in-Kind Program, we continue to distribute furniture and rebuilding supplies through our Point of Distribution Program (POD). The program is available to Sanibel and Captiva Island residents and workforce. Tom and Sue Bridges, island residents for nearly 50 years, have used the POD program. Says Sue, "My husband and I would like to thank all of you, especially since nasty Ian took all our appliances and a lot of our furniture, destroying it beyond repair." The names of the individuals have been changed for privacy.



"Your Friday "give-away" days have really blessed us! We now have sturdy chairs upon which we can sit to take breaks. We also now have a dishwasher again and a sink inside the house as well," continues Sue. The Bridges have visited FISH distribution days on a few occasions as they continue to put their house back together. "Thanks to FISH, I once again have a lovely stand to display some of my decorations that miraculously survived surge waters. Seeing that beautiful stand makes me smile every day!"



"We especially want to thank you for connecting us with the person who had some extra drywall - whole sheets as well as cut off pieces," notes Sue. "FISH organized the pick-up date and time along with some really strong, young volunteers to help with the loading and unloading. Everything went very smoothly and efficiently - and my husband didn't have to lift a thing! The drywall materials will be a big help in restoring our bedroom and in stretching our budget. My husband already made quick use of a cut-off piece that was exactly the

size he needed to fill in that last ceiling spot of smaller room. He is doubly grateful for that!"

In addition to the POD furnishings and drywall, the Bridges have used the food pantry to help supplement their grocery needs. "My husband stopped by the food pantry a few times and discovered new foods he now just has to have - the bag of potato soup mix his absolute favorite!"





Aiding Hurricane Survivors, cont'd

Furnishings, generously donated through the United Way Gifts-in-Kind program, along with doors, windows, cabinetry, linens, microwaves and more are available to those in need on the islands. Recipients must either be residents of Sanibel or Captiva or show proof of island employment. Distribution days take place twice monthly on Fridays from 9:00a-11:00a at the FISH building located at 2430 Periwinkle Way. Please bring a vehicle large enough to fit desired item(s), and some extra hands to lift items. The dates for distribution in Sept. are the 15th and the 29th.



“We are pleased to partner with United Way to offer this valuable program to our community members,” says Manuela Martinez, Disaster Administrative Director. “So many residents and members of our workforce have benefited from this program and are thankful for the assistance.”

Since landfall, we have been assisting islanders and the workforce with disaster recovery. Now the agency is working toward reducing the burden and hardship caused by Hurricane Ian by ensuring support is available. FISH has coordinated resources with local and state organizations, and is providing assistance with emergency supply distribution, financial assistance, case management, and distribution of rebuild supplies.

In addition to Long Term Recovery Services, we continue with our programs representing their four major pillars – Food, Island Based Education, Social and Senior Services, and Helping Hands. We continue to roll out and expand our traditional programs while simultaneously offering Long Term Recovery Services to community members, many of which have never had to ask for assistance before.





FISH & Partners Address Post-Storm Mental Health

According to Lee Health, “mental health issues after a catastrophic event like Hurricane Ian don’t always appear right away. They can affect people for years. Studies show that survivors of life-changing natural disasters face increased risk of developing anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)”.

FISH, along with SalusCare and Project H.O.P.E., have partnered to bring mental health resources to Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

“We realize many storm survivors are struggling with emotional stress, trauma and anxiety since Ian, and formed important partnerships to address these issues,” says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director, FISH. “When Hurricane Idalia recently threatened our area, it became abundantly clear how necessary mental health resources are as they relate to hurricane survivors.”



If you or someone you know is contemplating suicide, call or text 988 to reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or chat with someone online at 988lifeline.org. Additionally, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration operates a free 24/7 crisis counseling helpline for people involved in disasters, including hurricanes and tropical storms.

Large-scale disasters disrupt **physical, social, and communication** infrastructures and diminish coping resources and social supports and pose both *temporary* and *long-term* threats to physical and psychological health

Sources:

[Lee Health Hubspot](#)

Graphic source: Dr. Sujita Kumar Kar



ST. MICHAEL'S & FISH OF SANCAP RESILIENCY HUB AT THE GATHERING PLACE

neighbors helping neighbors

As part of our Long Term Recovery Program FISH OF SANCAP, in partnership with St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church and others, is offering services at The Gathering Place, formerly Noah's Ark.



Day	Time	Organization	Topic
Monday	10:00a-4:00p	FISH, Nitza Lopez	disaster relief, financial assistance, disaster resources, etc.
Monday	10:00a-4:00p	SBA	Q&A and assistance
Wednesday	10:00a-4:00p	FISH, Erika Boyles	senior and mental health needs
Wednesday	10:00a-4:00p	SBA	Q&A and assistance
Wednesday	11:00a-12:30p	SalusCare	group therapy focusing on hurricane related topics including PTSD, trauma and loss
Wednesday	12:30p-2:00p	SalusCare, Laura Guarino	mini 1:1 sessions
Wednesday	1:00p-3:00p	Project H.O.P.E.	open discussions on post storm trauma, including mental exhaustion, decision making, financial fears, etc.
Friday	10:00a-4:00p	FISH	overview and assistance
Friday	10:00a-4:00p	SBA	Q&A and assistance

LOCATION:
St. Michael's
(formerly Noah's Ark)
2304 Periwinkle Way
*Enter off Dunlop Road

**If you or someone you know is in need, contact FISH
239-472-4775 info@fishofsancap.org**



FISH continues 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.**

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

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





JOIN FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS FISH OF SANCAP FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON!

neighbors helping neighbors
FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON
TUESDAY, OCT. 10

You're invited to our community-wide Friendly Faces Luncheon, offered at the Rec Center and virtually by Zoom. The cost of the luncheon, provided by community partner Sanibel Deli, is complimentary to guests. CROW Executive Director, Alison Charney Hussey, will be speaking about the impacts to CROW after Hurricane Ian.



As Executive Director, Alison Charney Hussey oversees the day-to-day operations of the CROW campus as well as involving herself in community outreach. A lifelong resident of Lee County, Alison brings enthusiasm to her role as a teambuilder, manager, fundraiser, and animal lover. She is proud to both lead and serve with the professionals at CROW to promote

and educate the local and global communities in order to protect, heal, and conserve wildlife.

Note: Meal selections will be provided upon RSVP. Zoom instructions for those joining virtually will be provided with RSVP. Unfortunately, there will be no meal delivery for virtual participants. Future Friendly Faces luncheons will be held on the second Tuesday of each month throughout 2023.



DATE:
Tuesday, Oct. 10

TIME:
Beginning at 11:00 am

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

RSVP:
To Erika Broyles, FISH
By Oct. 6
239-472-4775



SBA Community Resource Fair

Hosted at The Gathering Place on Aug. 22, the Community Resource Fair included:

- SBA
- United Way
- Reliable Permitting & BSS Inc.
- Project H.O.P.E.
- FISH





You won't want to miss this! Please Join Us for Community Reunited - Sat. Sept. 30th



**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 30th**
2-5p *at The Community House*

Join us as we come together, a year after Hurricane Ian, to socialize and support our neighbors and friends.

HERE'S THE SCOOP

- **FREE** ice cream social featuring: *Sanibel's Best Homemade Ice Cream & The Shack of Sanibel Fresh Frozen Custard*
- **COOKIE BAKING CONTEST**
- **LIVE MUSIC** by the Sanibel School Steel Drum Band
- **EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT** reveal by Ryan Powers
- **FUN** community art project

For more info, call 239.472.2155


The Community House
SANIBEL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel



239.472.2155

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/calendar/sept30



Pfeifer Realty Group Supports 2023 FISH 10K/5K



Pfeifer Realty Group, a former neighbor of FISH OF SANCAP, continues their support of the 2023 F.I.S.H. 10K/5K. The organization lends a helping hand to those who live, work or visit the islands – something Realtor and Broker Eric Pfeifer witnessed for nearly nine years.

“When we opened Pfeifer Realty Group in 2008 in the midst of a recession, we were fortunate to share our office parking lot with F.I.S.H. of Sanibel & Captiva. For several years we saw firsthand how important their services were to the many Islanders that found themselves needing a helping hand. We’re honored to continue supporting their mission and are fortunate to have such a wonderful, dedicated group of neighbors helping neighbors,” states Eric Pfeifer.

Pfeifer Realty Group’s Boutique Brokerage was created in response to clients seeking an alternative to large corporate structured real estate companies. As a 7-Time Recipient of the Sanibel Captiva Community Service Award and passionate about real estate, Broker-Owner and Team Lead, Eric Pfeifer has been a trusted advisor since 2001 helping families achieve their real estate goals on Sanibel, Captiva, Fort Myers & The Beaches, Bonita Springs and throughout Southwest Florida. He runs Pfeifer Realty with many Realtors who are experts in the field. His wife, Mary Ellen, is director of marketing.

The couple moved to Sanibel Island shortly after the birth of their children. They wanted to raise their family in a small community and were thrilled to be island residents. They became very involved in many aspects of the community including youth sports and education.

“It is an honor to have Pfeifer Realty Group as a Premier Sponsor,” Leah Winkler, Race committee co-chair, said. “They have been a treasure in our community for many years.”

Pfeifer Realty Group is a full-service real estate office staffed with knowledgeable professionals who are dedicated to helping clients achieve their real estate goals on Sanibel and Captiva. Visit www.SunnySanibel.com to discover more.

Race day is set for December 2nd with the start and finish line at the Sanibel Community House. Registration is now open on Run Sign-Up.

Sponsorship opportunities are available and can be found on the organization’s website, fishofsancap.org. For additional information on the 10K/5K Race including sponsorship, please contact Diane Cortese at Dianerc10@gmail.com or Leah Winkler at leahwinkler12@gmail.com



FISH LINES

REGISTER TODAY!



2023

FISH

10K/5K

Saturday, December 2

RACING BEGINS 7:30a *race day registration from 6:30-7:15a*

Come celebrate the islands at our 15th annual road race! Join us for a great day including a 10K & 5K run followed by a kids' fun run & family day hosted by—and in partnership with—the Sanibel Recreation Center.

Visit RunSignUp.com for details and to register, or simply scan this code!

The earlier you register, the less you pay! Registration pricing is as follows:

- In-person 10K/5K—through Sept 25th—\$45
- In-person 10K/5K—Sept 26th through Dec 1st—\$50
- In-person 10K/5K—on race day, Dec 2nd—\$55
- Virtual 10K/5K—\$50
- 18 and under in-person 10K/5K—through Dec 1st—\$35

Sponsorship opportunities are available. For additional information, contact:
[Diane Cortese, dianerc10@gmail.com](mailto:Diane.Cortese@sanibelrecreation.com) OR [Leah Winkler, leahwinkler12@gmail.com](mailto:Leah.Winkler@sanibelrecreation.com)



SCAN HERE!



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

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



SANIBEL REC HOLIDAY Event

- ACTIVITIES**
 HOT COCOA BAR (SPONSORED BY BAILEYS)
 PIZZA/BBQ (SPONSORED BY ISLAND PIZZA)
 PICTURES WITH SANTA
 YOUTH REINDEER RUN
 BOUNCE HOUSE
 FACE PAINTING
 CRAFTS

FREE

HOLIDAY EVENT & YOUTH REINDEER RUN

DECEMBER 2ND | 10 A.M.-2 P.M.

**SANIBEL RECREATION CENTER
3880 SANIBEL CAPTIVA RD.**

FOLLOWING THE FISH 10K/5K
RACE JOIN US FOR A YOUTH
REINDEER RUN! CLICK HERE OR
SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP



MacaroniKID
Cape Coral, Florida

THANK YOU SPONSORS/PARTNERS





YOUTH REINDEER RUN



DECEMBER 2ND, 2023



11:00 A.M.



AT THE SANIBEL RECREATION CENTER
3880 SANIBEL CAPTIVA RD.



AGE BRACKETS

- 3-5 YEAR OLDS (5 MIN RUN)
- 6-7 YEAR OLDS (5 MIN RUN)
- 8-10 YEAR OLDS (10 MIN RUN)
- 11-13 YEAR OLDS (10 MIN RUN)

THE REINDEER RUN WILL TAKE PLACE INSIDE THE RECREATION CENTER GYMNASIUM. THE RUNNER THAT COMPLETES THE MOST LAPS WITHIN THE TIMEFRAME WILL WIN A PRIZE!



REGISTER TODAY!



Runner Looking Forward to 240th Race!



Mr. Tom Kelly, a long-time race participant, recently registered for the FISH 10K/5K fundraising race, making this year's race his 240th entry since he began competing in 2012. "The hurricane threw me a little off track," says Tom. "I, along with 500 other ground floor condo owners in Fort Myers, had to leave for 4 months following the storm because of all the inside damage. I am thinking about moving to be closer to my children and grandchildren but I should still be here on December 2nd for the race." Tom notes that the race has always had a very special place in his heart.

We celebrated Tom and his accomplishments over the years, and helped him celebrate his 100th race back in 2018. Last year was to be in celebration of Tom's 80th birthday, but unfortunately the 2022 race was canceled due to Ian. "We are so happy Tom is returning for this year's race," says Diane Cortese, Race Committee Co-Chair. "It's been an absolute pleasure to follow his progress over the years and connect with his infectious energy."

Says Tom, "I'm looking forward to a fun morning and getting back on the island with all the other runners and good folks," continues Tom. "I've been receiving the FISH newsletter and what you, your staff, and your volunteers have accomplished is beyond

describing in words. What a blessing FISH has been to so many people in desperate need of help."

Tom began training and racing after the loss of his 50-year partner Barbara. For the last several years, Tom began powerwalking all of his races 'to save his knees for tennis'. Says Tom, "I have been proudly participating in the FISH 10K since 2012, and look forward to this year in support of FISH and their hurricane recovery efforts in particular."

The 15th annual road race is scheduled for Sat., Dec. 2, 2023 beginning at 7:30 a.m. The race is offered as an in-person event, with an option to participate virtually. Held as a major fundraising event for FISH, sponsorships and participant fees support the organization's mission of enriching the lives of all people in Sanibel and Captiva Islands as neighbors helping neighbors with social services, education and assistance.

This year we added a 5K to race day activities, followed by a kids' run and family day hosted by and in partnership with the Sanibel Recreation Center. Runner registration is currently open on the [RunSignUp platform](#).

This year's race marks the first in-person event in recent years. In 2020-2021 the organization offered a virtual only race due to COVID and canceled the 2022 event due to Hurricane Ian.



Community Support - Thank you Cheryl and Gary

We are so proud of all of our volunteers and enjoy hearing their stories! Many of our volunteers continue to help us even though they are personally affected by Ian, and that has not gone unnoticed. It's heartwarming to learn what it means to you to be a neighbor helping neighbors, particularly during the impact and aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Below is a testimonial from **Cheryl and Gary Biltgen** about what it means to them to be *neighbors helping neighbors*.



There are many people who live and/or work on the islands that need help with the basics: food, financial, socialization and social services. Seems counterintuitive for Sanibel - but many resort, landscaping, grocery store, restaurant, workers, their families and a large elderly population are some examples. FISH offers the opportunity to help our fellow islanders succeed! We volunteered as a couple and that's worked out fabulously! We get weekly face to face contact with hundreds of people - that we can help have a better day!

Since Hurricane Ian, our relationship with FISH has been "complicated". We've not only remained volunteers but now we're also clients who need the help FISH provides. The first day the causeway opened, October 19th, we continued to work on our battered house: demucked, cleaned, and moved ruined possessions to the curb. But a true highlight of our day and a lasting memory of normalcy and hope was when we saw our FISH staff/friends/family (FISH truly blend into one) distributing food and water at a local church. Maria and Manuela's big smiles and hugs brought tears to all of our eyes.

This is really what FISH is all about - helping people succeed and making their lives brighter - anyway you can. Since October 19th, as clients, we've picked up water, cleaning and sanitizing items, snacks and more - that were essential in getting our home fixed and keeping us going. Every time we visited FISH, there were friendly faces greeting us, whether they be FISH staff, local volunteers or volunteers traveling great distances just to help Sanibel citizens. FISH helped organize Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners that we enjoyed with our neighbors. We shared stories, got advice and just enjoyed socializing.

FISH has developed some incredibly insightful post hurricane programs to help a new group of clients - those rebuilding or displaced from the hurricane. All of this has been done by the same staff while maintaining core services! FISH has provided bedding, furniture, dry wall, emergency and cleaning supplies, shop vacs, grills, help with housing, social services and much more. Helping neighbors succeed!!!

Now that we've moved back to our Sanibel home, we volunteer every Tuesday afternoon at the Food Pantry. These days the clients are different from pre Ian: they are people with no home, people rebuilding, and some of those who've returned to work and have a home but still need lots of help. Different people but all in need of help, a friendly greeting, a conversation or smile. We are proud that FISH has had the flexibility and vision to serve these new clients. And we're glad to help them succeed as volunteers. All of the volunteers and staff with FISH are truly a dream to work with. They all have the same desire to help their fellow islanders. And we couldn't be more proud to be part of this organization. ." Cheryl & Gary



We Need Great People Like You!

We're always in need of additional volunteers to assist with our programs and events. Please contact us to sign-up as a FISH volunteer or to answer any volunteer questions you may have. It's a great way to connect and serve the community!



ABOUT FISH

FISH of SanCap is a nonprofit, staffed by more than 200 volunteers. Professionals staff our Sanibel site and our temporary Fort Myers location 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
- Disaster Assistance
- Limited Food Pantry
- Mental Health Services
- Medical Equipment Loan
- Hot Meals Program
- Friendly Faces Luncheon
- Kid's Food Backpack
- Youth Scholarships
- Referrals & Resources
- Furniture Distribution
- Tools For Loan Program
- VITA (Income Tax Preparation)



Our Volunteers & Partners in Action



THANKYOU!