

OCTOBER 2023

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

onward and upward

FISH Announces Sound+Waves Music Festival



We are so excited to announce the Sound+Waves Music Festival, held in conjunction with the 2023 10K/5K race, scheduled for Sat., Dec. 2, 2023.

“Our community has endured a lot since Ian, and FISH has been here every step of the way offering recovery assistance to survivors. We’re excited to plan this festival as a way to demonstrate our commitment to our community,” says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director.

The music festival, combined with the 10K/5K race, will honor the resiliency of the islands. Hosted by community partner Tween Waters, the festival will begin at 5pm on Sat., Dec. 2. The concert will be performed on the beach followed by fireworks, and food and beverage will be offered for purchase. Featured artists include Jessica Jones of the Jessica Jones Project; Joe Marcinek of George Porter Jr.; Will Montgomery of Arrested Development; Marcus White of Marcus King Band; Shane Platten of Melody Trucks Band; Will Neal of Fantasia Barrino; Rick Benedetto of KC and the Sunshine Band and Chris Sgammato of Displace. These artists will come together to offer a variety of acoustic performances for this unique event, featuring songs from their respective bands, familiar favorites and festive tunes.

“We hope our community will join us to have fun, dance, and acknowledge the many different achievements and milestones we’ve accomplished in the past year,” continues Espinoza.

The Sound+Waves Music Festival is a fundraiser for FISH to support our mission ‘to enrich the lives of all people in Sanibel and Captiva Islands by neighbors helping neighbors with social services, education and assistance’. The event is ticketed with advance ticket sales only; no on-site tickets will be available. Tickets are on sale now at <https://FISHmusicfestival.rsvpify.com>.



Other FISH activities planned for Dec. 2 include the FISH 10K/5K beginning at 7:30am at the Sanibel Community House and a family fun day and youth reindeer run hosted at the Sanibel Recreation Center from 10:00am-2:00pm.

Support for our festival day is critical as we continue to serve the residents and workforce of the islands. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various levels and can be found on our website, fishofsancap.org. For information on 10K/5K Race and Music Festival sponsorships, please contact Diane Cortese at Dianerc10@gmail.com or Leah Winkler at leahwinkler12@gmail.com.

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





FISH
PRESENTS

SOUND+WAVES

MUSIC FESTIVAL

at Tween Waters



tickets at FISHmusicfestival.rsvpify.com
\$125 ADMIT ONE

SAT, DEC 2
@ 5P

- concert on the beach followed by fireworks
- food for purchase
- band includes—
 - JESSICA JONES (Jessica Jones Project)
 - JOE MARCINEK (George Porter Jr.)
 - WILL MONTGOMERY (Arrested Development)
 - MARCUS WHITE (Marcus King Band)
 - SHANE PLATTEN (Melody Trucks Band)
 - WILL NEAL (Fantasia Barrino)
 - RICK BENNETTO (KC and the Sunshine Band)
 - CHRIS SGAMMATO (Displace)

sponsorships available—proceeds support FISH—for info, visit fishofsancap.org



FISH Mental Health & Senior Programs

“Disruption in the life of a senior can be devastating to their mental health wellness,” says Erika Broyles, Senior Services Director. FISH OF SANCAP provides hands-on services to the community’s most vulnerable, including long-term disaster assistance and temporary financial assistance for medical, housing and utility expenses. What some may not realize is our response to social and cognitive health concerns that affect seniors, particularly in a crisis environment like the recent COVID health crisis and the current Hurricane Ian disaster

Tom Wilding and Susan Marsh, whose names have been changed for privacy, are two seniors that Broyles visits weekly. Wilding lost a lot of household items during the hurricane, and we helped replace furnishings and kitchen tools through our POD distribution program, in partnership with United Way Gifts-in-Kind. “The loss of these items left Tom feeling overwhelmed and scattered,” continues Broyles. “He kept looking for things that just weren’t there anymore. Once we were able to replace them, Tom felt more at ease.”



Marsh struggled in a different way after Ian as she became reclusive and didn’t want to interact with anyone. “Susan was struggling with cleanliness, personal hygiene and food insecurities,” says Broyles. “With guidance from SalusCare and contact with out-of-town family members, we were able to get her to open up and discuss her needs.” We also secured a cleaning service to help Susan with chores and enrolled her in the Meals-by-FISH program. Marsh also receives a weekly visit from Erika where an array of grocery and hygiene products are offered.

In addition to their long-term recovery, mental health and visitation programs, we offer other services to seniors aging in place. “From our Friendly Faces luncheon to home healthcare referrals and more, we have other programs to help our seniors cope,” says Broyles.

According to the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry, “it is estimated that 20% of people age 55 years or older experience some type of mental health concern. The most common conditions include anxiety, severe cognitive impairment, and mood disorders such as depression. “Unfortunately,” continues Broyles, “we witness mood disorders and cognitive impairment among our seniors, particularly since the hurricane. The sense of loss, whether it’s a material loss, loss of a loved one or dramatic change in the community, can have a severe effect on mental wellness.”

We provide assistance to senior community members in various ways, including a monthly Friendly Faces luncheon, at-home visitation for socialization, smile boxes, food and disaster recovery. “Requests for visitation have increased over the last few months,” says Broyles. Our visitation program is available to island neighbors who are feeling lonely, who may not have any friends or family nearby, and/or who may no longer be able to leave their homes to socialize with others. Social contacts tend to decrease with age for a variety of reasons, including retirement, the death of friends and family, or lack of mobility. Even perceived social isolation – the feeling that you are lonely – is a struggle for many older people. We help relieve isolation and loneliness among older adults and ensures they are receiving needed social and emotional support to help celebrate and improve quality of life for island seniors.



FISH Named 2023 Top-Rated Nonprofit



FISH has been named a “2023 Top-Rated Nonprofit” by GreatNonprofits, the leading provider of user reviews of charities and nonprofits. The Top-Rated Nonprofit award is based on outstanding online reviews from those served, community members, volunteers and/or board members.

FISH enriches the lives of all people in Sanibel and Captiva Islands as neighbors helping neighbors with social services, education and assistance and is the only wrap-around social service agency provider. Our vision is to create island communities where all people have the support they need to thrive.

“My husband and I were about 2 months from our daughter being born and just my luck I was having her at the very end of August, which is our ‘off-season’ on the islands,” writes the Waters family, recently assisted by FISH. “This is the time of year when your income is literally cut anywhere from a half to a quarter of what you were making previously. Of course, the name of the game is to save during ‘season’, however with all the costs a new baby can bring, you can do everything right and still find yourself behind.” The name of the individuals has been changed for privacy reasons.

Sanibel and Captiva are known for their slower summer months, particularly for the hospitality industry. This year in particular the lack of open businesses and ongoing repair and rebuilding due to Hurricane Ian has left many of the islands’ workforce without consistent work.

“A local islander told me about the FISH organization,” Waters continues. “The help they provided turned two panicked and stressed out soon-to-be parents into people who actually were able to enjoy the beauty of their first child being born without constantly worrying about bills and rent! It was amazing to have that extent of help. Diapers, formula, and food were provided along with a month of rent! The island coming together to take care of each other is what makes it such a special place to live and work!”

“This award, granted by community recognition of the work we do for our neighbors, is such an honor,” says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director, FISH. “It’s humbling to receive such heartfelt testimonials from those we serve. The tremendous support we receive from our donors, partners and volunteers and the incredible professional FISH team are largely how we continue as a neighbors helping neighbors organization.”

Read additional reviews for the FISH organization on the [Great Nonprofit website](#). Although we have grown from the grassroots organization we started as, we remain a network of ‘neighbors helping neighbors’; a group of community members committed to the betterment of the islands and southwest Florida community by assisting one neighbor at a time.



FISH Volunteers Joan & Jim Bajek Win Award

The Annual ENPYs – Excellence in Nonprofit Performance Yearly awards ceremony, held Sept. 28, 2023, revealed FISH volunteers Jim and Joan Bajek as winners of the Nonprofit Volunteer of the Year Award. This award honors a volunteer(s) who goes above and beyond to support the objectives of an organization to enhance its ability to deliver on its mission for maximum impact on the community and the lives of those it serves.



Jim and Joan Bajek have volunteered in many capacities for FISH since 2017, but most notably their assistance in the food pantry and holiday programs have made a difference for the many individuals and families that use those services. Each week, Jim and Joan manage the coordination of providers for the food pantry program the volunteers and meal pick-ups—a program that runs 365 days a year, including ensuring clients who receive meals are prepared and fed during tropical weather. Beginning at FISH in the Food Pantry program, Jim and Joan have been steady volunteers instrumental in the operation of the food pantry. They have taken a particular interest in assisting our four-legged friends, ensuring that the pantry has supplies and food available for pets, and have even run drives and set up platforms for donors to order pet supplies to benefit the pantry and its island users. In addition to their FISH volunteerism, the Bajek team also volunteers at CROW and is deeply committed to the island community.

Said Team Bajek, “FISH caught our attention because of the number of different programs that help those in need. It becomes easy to get drawn into the action and meet the needs of so many people. It’s made a positive impact on those that need it the most and on us, since we have the time and resources to devote to the effort. We love seeing the smiling faces and hearing kind words from those receiving help. Knowing we have become a vital part of the Sanibel community spirit fuels our desire to continue giving.”

Late 2022 and early 2023 was particularly difficult for volunteerism with the FISH organization due to the impacts of Hurricane Ian. “Although their home was damaged, as soon as the causeway was repaired and vehicles allowed, Jim and Joan once again began volunteering by picking up critical items – often using their own vehicle -- and assisting in every way they could,” notes Maria Espinoza, Executive Director of FISH. “They volunteered for any program that needed it and helped problem solve the layout and structure of the very important food distribution and holiday gatherings, both of which were incredibly meaningful to our community. The Bajeks always step in where and when needed and coordinate with others to make every effort a success. We are honored to work with them in our efforts to assist our neighbors.”

To learn more about volunteering with FISH, contact their office at 239-472-4775 or visit their website to download a volunteer application



FISH Joins Community to Honor One-Year Post Ian

On the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Ian, FISH joins neighbors for a weekend of hope, resiliency, remembrance, and community. Executive Director Maria Espinoza receives Service Above Self medallion from John Henshaw, City of Sanibel.





FISH Friendly Faces Scheduled for November 14

Islanders, friends and family are invited to the community-wide FISH OF SANCAP Friendly Faces Luncheon, scheduled for Tues., Nov. 14 beginning at 11:00am. Lunch, prepared by The Sanibel Deli, is complimentary to participants.

The monthly luncheon will be held at the Sanibel Recreation Center located at 3880 Sanibel-Captiva Road, with a virtual option provided. Reservations and meal choices are required by Fri., Nov. 10 to Erika Broyles at FISH at 239-472-4775. Zoom instructions for those joining virtually will be provided with RSVP. There is no meal delivery available for virtual participants.

Guest speaker Patricia Gennity will discuss breath work and provide a demonstration on meditation and movement. Patricia originally from New York, has been living in Florida for the past 15 years, and teaching Yoga on Sanibel Island for the past 12 years. Patricia teaches all levels of Yoga and different styles. She teaches at different locations on Sanibel and Captiva, as well as private classes for individuals as well as group classes with specific needs, or goals. She loves to be out in Nature and enjoys the many activities the outdoors brings.

“We’re excited to learn about the important practice of breath work and meditation,” continues Broyles. According to Healthline, breath work meditation may deepen relaxation, improve your mood, and soothe physical illness. It’s a simple action that can be used as a tool to improve mental and physical health and something that can be incorporated as a daily routine.

For more information on the FISH Friendly Faces Luncheon or to RSVP, contact Erika Broyles at FISH at 239-472-4775.





FISH Holiday Season Begins!



Fall has arrived and with it comes the FISH Holiday programs! Beginning Oct. 10, visit us at our Food Pantry location for some fun Fall activities! We'll have a photo booth, pumpkins and treats for all, including our four-legged friends!

Keep an eye out for us around the islands as we get closer to Halloween -- we'll be teaming up with community partners CHR and the Community House for 'spooktacular' events!

Thanksgiving is coming quickly, and FISH is gearing up for our annual holiday basket program. We will distribute bags of stuffing, rolls, fresh and canned vegetables, pies and a gift card to purchase a turkey or other holiday protein. Food drives to help fill the baskets begin this week, thanks to Doc Ford's and Sanibel Captiva Community Bank and donations are also accepted at our Food Pantry. If you or anyone you know is in need, please contact Merari at 239.472.4775 or merari@fishofsancap.org



THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

Drop-off: October 12th-31st, 2023 at Sanibel Captiva COMMUNITY BANK

FISH of SANCAP is putting together 160 baskets for our Thanksgiving event, which will benefit anyone who lives or works on Sanibel or Captiva. The basket will consist of a portion of fresh produce and a portion of nonperishable goods, as well as a gift card (for a choice of fresh protein).

FISH needs assistance with these items:



- rice
- canned corn
- canned green beans
- canned or packaged beans (black, pinto, etc.)
- canned protein (tuna, chicken)
- canned/jarred gravy
- cranberry sauce
- any kind of stuffing
- canned fruit



Any other nonperishables will can be accepted and added to our Food Pantry.



Thanksgiving



Food Drive Drop-Off Site:



November 1st-15th, 2023





Cielo Supports 2023 FISH 10K/5K



The FISH OF SANCAP 10K/5K Race & Festival Committee announces Cielo as a premier sponsor of the Dec. 2 annual fundraising event in support of FISH.

Cielo, winners of countless awards for their carefully curated and expertly executed cuisine, focuses on farm to table dining of the highest caliber. They are proud to locally source their products that offer a fresh, dynamic and hand-crafted dining experience for all of their guests.

“Year after year, the Boler Family, Marcus Preece, and the entire Cielo team graciously support FISH as a Premier Sponsor of our annual race,” says Executive Director Maria Espinoza. “Their generosity and commitment to our community is incredible and we’re thankful for their support.”

Marcus Preece, General Manager of Cielo notes how important it is for Cielo to support FISH. “FISH is an amazing organization helping both residents and businesses on island. The efforts put forward by FISH during and after hurricane Ian with assistance of food, household materials and electronics have helped build Sanibel and Captiva to where it is one year later.” says Preece. To learn more about Cielo, visit <https://cielo-sanibel.com/>.

Funds raised through the race and festival benefit FISH as we continue meeting the needs of islanders daily. As the islands’ only wrap-around social services organization, FISH has grown exponentially through the years, particularly now since Ian and the launch of their long-term recovery program.

The FISH 10K/5K event will begin and end at the Sanibel Community House as an in-person race, and a virtual option is also offered. To register, visit RunSignUp. The FISH Sound+Waves music festival hosted by community partner Tween Waters, will begin at 5pm on Sat., Dec. 2. The concert will be performed on the beach followed by fireworks, and food and beverage will be offered for purchase. Featured artists will come together to offer a variety of acoustic performances for this unique event, featuring songs from their respective bands, familiar favorites and festive tunes. Tickets and details are on sale now at <https://FISHmusicfestival.rsvpify.com>.

Sponsorship opportunities 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 OR *Leah Winkler, leahwinkler12@gmail.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!



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!