

DECEMBER 2023

# FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

onward and upward

## Winter Holiday Meal Baskets, Breakfast with Santa



We are gearing up for the Winter holidays by offering meal baskets, family/child gifts, gifts for seniors and more as part of our Holiday Programming.

'Sponsor a Senior', specifically for the islands' senior population, is designed to bring merriment and cheer to island elders. Personalized holiday gifts specifically requested by the participant will be beautifully wrapped and delivered in time for the holiday. For those wishing to provide support or gifts for community seniors, please contact Erika at FISH to fulfil a specific senior gift request.



For others served by FISH, under-employment and lost income from the hurricane disaster continues and is largely why families will spend very little this holiday season. Assisting neighbors through our Adopt-A-Family Program is a simple act of kindness that can make all the difference in the world to a neighbor this holiday season.

Holiday Meal Baskets for island residents and workforce are offered to households who are known to us through participation in other programs or referred by community members. Thanks to donors, community partners and volunteers, baskets of food including vegetables, traditional holiday sides, holiday 'goodies' and a gift card to purchase a protein of choice will be assembled and distributed just in time for the holiday. Basket distribution for the Christmas holiday will take place from 10:00a-3:00p on December 20th-22nd at the organization's Sanibel location, 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel.

New this year is our Breakfast with Santa event in partnership with CHR and Kiwanis. The event will take place on **Sat., Dec. 16, 9:30-11:00 a.m. at Woodhaven, 800 Casa Ybel Road, Sanibel.** Hosted by CHR, Breakfast with Santa is open to the community. There is no charge for the event. FISH is providing a light breakfast, cookies and toys and Kiwanis has a special note into Santa requesting his appearance! Pictures with Santa will be available and festive attire is encouraged. Families wishing to receive toys during the breakfast event must register with FISH by calling or emailing Merari Salinas, Community Outreach Manager, 239-472-4775 x. 101 or [merari@fishofsancap.org](mailto:merari@fishofsancap.org).

If you or a family you know is in need of some holiday cheer, please contact Merari at FISH at 239-472-4775 or [merari@fishofsancap.org](mailto:merari@fishofsancap.org). If you would like to donate gifts, toys or food to the holiday programs, items are being accepted at FISH, 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel.

2430-B Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957

**Temporary Mailing Address:** 15550 McGregor Boulevard, Suite 204, Fort Myers, FL 33908

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





## Ribbon Cutting at FISH's Ancillary Location - 2422 Periwinkle

Thank you to everyone who attended our **Thurs., Nov. 16** ribbon cutting event. We are finishing up our move into our ancillary space and are looking forward to continuing to serve you on Sanibel!







## Community Thanksgiving & Butterfly Release A Success

In partnership with the Sanibel Community House, we were pleased to welcome over 500 community members to our Thanksgiving Celebration and Butterfly Release on Nov. 17. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to making this event such a success. We enjoyed serving you a traditional Thanksgiving meal, provided by Jerry's. Our release of Zebra Longwing butterflies was a testament to our community's transformation since Hurricane Ian.







FISH LINES







## 2023 FISH 10K/5K and Sound+Waves Music Festival



A record-breaking number of registered runners – 530 – signed up for the annual F.I.S.H. 10K/5K on Sanibel on December 2, 2023. Approximately 90 percent of the runners came from all over the state of Florida, but the race also drew participants from the UK and Germany, as well as 25 other states. The race began at 7:30am at the Sanibel Community House, this year with the addition of a 5K that started at 7:45am. Both courses followed a marked circuit around the island, returning to the Sanibel Community House for the finish line.

This year's race marked 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. Immediately following the race, community partner The Sanibel Recreation Center held a kids' 'Reindeer Run' and family fun day. Included was a hot cocoa bar, pizza/BBQ, pictures with Santa, a bounce house, and face painting.

The inaugural FISH Sound+Waves Music Festival at Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa began at 5pm that same evening. The concert was performed on the beach followed by fireworks making Dec. 2 a day full of activities centered around the neighbors helping neighbors organization.

The race and festival committee, co-chaired by Diane Cortese and Leah Winkler, were pleased with the outcome of the day and with the runner participation and sponsor support. "We weren't quite sure what to expect as many of us are still recovering from Hurricane Ian. The support from island businesses as sponsors was second-to-none, and we are so grateful for everyone's support," said Cortese. Cortese, a veteran committee member, notes many positive changes for the 2023 race including additional sponsor support and added activities to make the day a perfect island experience. Joining Cortese as co-chair was newcomer Leah Winkler. "Being new to the experience, I was overwhelmed by the generosity of FISH supporters and cooperation of the City, volunteers and community partners. It was a great learning experience, and I'm already looking forward to making 2024 bigger and better."

This year's race and festival was sponsored by a total of 85 local businesses, organizations and individuals at various levels. More than 120 volunteers signed up to help make the race another huge success.



## 2023 FISH 10K/5K and Sound+Waves Music Festival (cont'd)

Money raised during the race and festival helps fund all of our services including disaster recovery, emergency financial assistance, food pantry, children's backpack food program, senior programs, temporary loan of health equipment and daily hot meals and more.



"We are extremely proud of everyone who has helped us with another successful event. We had a fantastic runner turnout and enormous support from sponsors," said Maria Espinoza, Executive Director. "We would like to thank our committee and TRC Race Management for their assistance both before and during the race. Thank you to everyone who helped us raise the funds that will allow us to continue to provide a full range of human services and disaster recovery assistance to our neighbors. We couldn't ask for better support from the City of Sanibel, police department, service organizations, and our sponsors and, notably, our great staff and volunteers who helped bring all of this together."

Amazing age group awards were offered to top finishers that are sure to become collector's items. Age group awards were designed and assembled by locals Rachel Pierce and Rachel Tritaik. A group of race volunteers, including runners from Platinum Sponsor Sanibel Spoonbills Run Crew, spent several days finalizing the age group awards.

Says Rachel Tritaik, "All the shells used for the age group awards medals were found on Sanibel beaches, and donated by the Sanibel Community House. They were then cleaned, painted, drilled, strung and decoupage with Rachel Pierce's exclusive lighthouse design by a dedicated group of volunteers! I am so thrilled with how they look, and happy to help with the FISH Race this year, as my clinic, Island Therapy Center, has sponsored every race since its inception in 2009."

Rachel Pierce, artist/owner of Rachel Pierce Art Gallery adores the awards and enjoyed the experience with fellow islanders. "I love everything FISH does for this island. I'm honored they asked me to help out in this small way by creating the Lighthouse image for the race age group 'medal'. I hope all the runners enjoy the race and award," says Pierce.



The FISH Race & Festival committee is looking forward to next year's race and will begin planning just after the first of the year. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact [FISH](#).





FISH LINES



neighbors helping neighbors





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# THANKS!

to our event sponsors

SOUND+WAVES  
MUSIC  
FESTIVAL  
*at Tween Waters*



## BAND—Anonymous

## SOUND/LIGHTING—Kay & John Morse

### PREMIER

Margie & Michael Bennett  
Kathy & Bob Wiesemann



### PLATINUM

Linda & Charles Adams  
Cindy & Jay Brown  
Pam & Bob Norton



### GOLD

Jeanne & Bruce Grossnickle  
Betsy & Taylor Hay  
Lautenbach Family  
Pat O'Daniel  
Diana & Ron Wessel



### SILVER

Anonymous  
Pamela & Stephen Elias  
Julie & Bill Hayles  
Parker Family  
Elizabeth Piersol & Josef Reum  
Nancy & Chip Roach



### BRONZE

Frank Bruni  
Priscilla & Doug Viets  
Nancy & Jeffrey Wickham



### FRIEND

Martha & David Applegate  
Laura & Tony Tatooles



### SUPPORTER

Sanibel ACE Hardware  
City of Sanibel  
John R. Wood Realty  
Race Volunteers  
Sanibel-Captiva American Legion Post #123

Billy's Rentals  
Costco  
Rachel Pierce  
Sanibel Community House

Castaways Beach & Bay Cottages  
Dolphin Transportation  
Rachel Tritaik  
Sanibel Recreation Center  
Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva



neighbors helping neighbors





# JOIN FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS FISH OF SANCAP FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON

*neighbors helping neighbors*

## FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 11:00



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.

Local resident Frances Tutt will share her experience and tips on how to create a thriving vegetable garden on the islands. She has learned that Southwest Florida is a unique and challenging ecosystem, and will provide resources to help gardeners of all levels. Frances will discuss how she is growing healthy and organic food on Sanibel and how you can too!

Frances was employed with McCormick for 30 years in the industrial flavor division and, before retiring as a principal scientist in 2018, worked with flavor chemists to develop beverages for huge manufacturing companies such as Anheuser-Busch.

*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 2024.*

DATE:  
Tuesday, Jan. 9

TIME:  
Beginning at 11:00 am

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

RSVP:  
To Erika Broyles, FISH  
By Jan. 5  
239-472-4775  
erika@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.

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





## 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 & Team in Action



THANK YOU