

FEBRUARY 2024

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

onward and upward

New Box Truck Provided by Sanctuary Foundation



FISH continues to grow to meet the demands of the community, including the survivors of Hurricane Ian through our long-term recovery program. Thanks to grant funding provided by The Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation (the Foundation), our job just got a little easier through the purchase of a box truck.



Maggi Feiner, President & CEO, FISH states, “We are so thankful to the Foundation for their support and funding for this purchase. The box truck -- 14' long with a hydraulic lift – will help us provide essential supplies like furnishings, rebuilding materials, food and personal hygiene products, to disaster survivors and those who live or work on the islands needing a hand up. This truck will allow us to move several thousand pounds of food and other items which we could not do before.”

Photo Caption: L to R

Jim Pouliot, Dan Stegmann, Lisa Schmidlin, Maggi Feiner, Kathy Weisemann, Steve Peltzman, Charlie Sheetz, Maria Espinoza

The truck, purchased through Sam Galloway Ford and wrapped by Sabal Signs, showcases the Foundation partnership with their logo prominently placed. In the first month the truck first took to the streets, it has filled a great need and has cut down on multiple off-island trips, due to its size and hauling capacity. “We’re already seeing how being more efficient will allow us to help more individuals over time,” continues Feiner.

“The Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation is pleased to partner with FISH in our combined efforts to serve the needs of those living and working in our communities,” says Lisa Schmidlin, The Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation President. “It gives us great pleasure to know that the Foundation grant will service those in need for years to come.” In addition to allocated funds for the box truck purchase, the Foundation provides grant funding to assist Hurricane Ian survivors and those needing assistance with rent or mortgage payments.



Thank You for your Support!

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 Sponsors Free Tax Return Preparation Assistance



We are hosting the United Way Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program which offers free tax preparation assistance for households with an income of \$66,000 or less. United Way IRS-certified volunteers will prepare your return and determine if you are eligible for certain tax credits. VITA prepares simple returns only, please call to see if you qualify.

Beginning Fri., Feb. 2 and continuing every other Friday through Apr. 12, VITA will offer tax preparation service at Sanibel Public Library, 770 Dunlop Road, from 10:00a-2:00p. Appointments

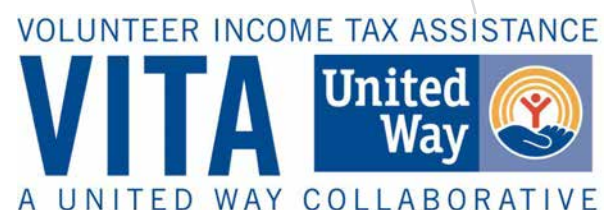
are required and can be made by scheduling online at <https://www.unitedwaylee.org/freetaxprep>. Interested individuals may also dial 2-1-1 or call 239-433-3900 to schedule an appointment.

Those wishing to have their tax return completed through the VITA Program must bring the following documentation, if applicable. Tax returns cannot be completed without all of the items listed below:

- Picture ID for individual and spouse.
- Original Social Security/Medicare card for all persons to be listed on tax return or an ITIN card for those without Social Security card.
- Birth dates of all persons listed on tax return.
- All wage and earnings statements, for example: W-2 Form, Social Security Income (SSI), Pensions, Annuities, Unemployment Compensation, etc. and any interest and dividend statements (any Form 1099s).
- Copy of last year's federal and state tax returns (if available).
- Documentation supporting a claim to a dependent exemption due to dependents receiving support from multiple taxpayers (divorced or separated parents), for example: Form 8332, Form 2120, or other valid documentation.
- Child care provider's Name, Federal ID or Social Security Number, and address. Also, provide the amount paid for child care.
- Forms 1095-A, B or C, Affordable Health Care Statements

Additionally, if residents paid real estate tax on their home, bring the paid receipt. For those itemizing deductions, please bring a summary listing of deductions and supporting details/receipts. For those taking college courses to further education for a job, and you paid the tuition, please bring the tuition receipt and any financial aid or student loan statements.

To have refunds deposited into a checking or savings account, bring account details (a check assigned to the specific account). To learn more about the VITA program, please contact Erika Broyles at FISH, 239-472-4775.





FISH Approves Long-Term Recovery Applicant



Shortly after we launched our Long-Term Recovery program for Hurricane Ian survivors, we've approved one of our first applicants!

Susan and Jim Long have been island residents for quite some time, and are deeply connected to the community since retiring there years ago. "Like so many, we never in our wildest dreams imagined something of this magnitude," says Susan. "Living in southwest Florida, hurricanes are a known risk. What I didn't know or expect was the length of time it could take to recover from something like this, the 'aftermath'. That's been the worst part for myself and Jim,

and the light at the end of the tunnel cannot be seen yet. This hurricane has taken everything we've worked so hard for." The names of the individuals in this narrative have been changed for privacy purposes.

The Long's residence was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ian. As soon as they returned to the island after Ian, they began remediation and damage assessment. While the home could be saved, they needed to replace floors, walls, appliances and furnishings. Plumbing and electrical issues are also a concern. Susan and Jim began the lengthy and expensive process of putting their home back together. They worked with their insurance company, received a settlement, and used it to make their home somewhat livable.

They received furnishings and household items from our POD program to 'help it feel more like home'. The couple has moved back in, but still do not have water. "We are bathing and using the facilities at friends' homes. I have to go to a laundromat for washings, and we use paper products and plastic utensils for dining. It's like a very long camping trip, and I dislike camping," notes Susan.

The couple quickly used their entire savings account to pay for repairs, and they're still not done. "We didn't expect our savings that was supposed to last us years would be completely drained," continues Susan. "Our only source of income is our social security, and we need to use that for living expenses."

"We've thankfully been accepted to the FISH food pantry program that provides a significant source of groceries, so we can afford other things like prescriptions, gas, utilities and outstanding repair expenses."





Long-Term Recovery continued



When we announced their Long-Term Recovery program, Susan and Jim were first in line to complete the application. "It's been a long road for this couple," says Nitza Lopez, Disaster Case Manager. "Through a review of their application, conversations and inspections, we determined financial assistance was needed for this case." FISH will assist the couple first the cost of plumbing repairs to get running water back into their home, and then see what additional repairs are needed.

Our Long-Term Recovery program is available to those that live – homeowners and/or tenants -- or work full-time on the islands. The amount of financial assistance is limited and may only cover partial payments toward the cost of repairs, up to a maximum of \$15,000, for primary homes only.

Susan and Jim Long are an example of those who continue to struggle since Hurricane Ian. We are available to assist if certain conditions are met according to our guidelines. If we cannot assist, we can refer to other organizations or programs that may.

To apply for the FISH Long-Term Recovery program, an application must be completed. Interested individuals can [download the application from the our website](#) or visit us at 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. Certain documentation is required as well as an initial intake session with Disaster Case Manager, Nitza Lopez.

For questions or services specific to Long-Term Recovery program and the application process, please contact Nitza Lopez, 239.472.4775 or nitza@fishofsancap.org.





JOIN FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS FISH OF SANCAP FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON

neighbors helping neighbors
FRIENDLY FACES LUNCHEON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13 @11:00am



The FISH OF SANCAP community-wide Friendly Faces Luncheon is offered at the Sanibel Recreation Center and virtually by Zoom. The cost of the luncheon, provided by community partner Sanibel Deli, is complimentary to guests.

Dr. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies & Environmental Education, Florida Gulf Coast University, is our guest speaker.

In this illustrated talk, Dr. Corcoran will share Frances Perkins' life story and her continuing legacy. Inspired by her Mount Holyoke College education and her Episcopal faith, Frances Perkins envisioned and fought for social justice, fair and safe conditions of labor, and the alleviation of poverty. She was the architect of the New Deal and was the force behind the minimum wage, the forty-hour work week, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, workplace safety regulation, child labor protection, and Social Security.



- Meal selections will be provided upon RSVP
- Zoom instructions for virtual guests will be provided with RSVP
- No meal delivery for virtual guests
- **Space is limited - please RSVP early!**
- Future Friendly Faces luncheons are on the 2nd Tuesday of each month throughout 2024

DATE:
Tuesday, Feb. 13

TIME:
Beginning at 11:00am

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

RSVP:
To Erika Broyles, FISH
By Feb. 9
239-472-4775
erika@fishofsancap.org

FISH continues to help 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 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957 239.472.4775 • fishofsancap.org





FISH Programs & Locations

Where can you find us?

2422 Periwinkle Way
The Food Pantry Hours
 Mon, Wed, Fri 10am - 3pm
 Tues, Thurs 10am - 7:30pm

Staff Office Hours
 Monday - Friday 8am - 4pm

Mental Health Wednesdays
 St. Michael Church,
 2304 Periwinkle Way

Mental Health Wednesdays with SalusCare,
 every week. Please schedule with
 erika@fishofsancap.org for individual sessions.

We are now meeting in the library of
 St. Michael Church, located in their main building.

Furniture Distributions
 2430 Periwinkle Way

Every other Friday from 9am-11am.

merari@fishofsancap.org

info@fishofsancap.org | 239-472-0404

Do you need assistance? Here's where you can find us and our new hours and locations for certain programs.

Our team members will be staffed at our ancillary location, 2422 Periwinkle Way, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. Those seeking assistance for long-term recovery or other services may visit with a team member during these hours. While appointments are not required, they are encouraged by calling 239.472.4775.

The food pantry, also located at 2422 Periwinkle Way, is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The food pantry will remain open later on Tuesdays and Thursdays to accommodate

those who may be working during their normal hours. Pantry hours on Tuesday and Thursday are 10:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

Mental Health Wednesdays are now located at Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, located at 2304 Periwinkle Way, on a weekly basis, with a few exceptions. Individual sessions must be scheduled in advance by emailing erika@fishofsancap.org. Sessions will take place in the library of Saint Michael's Church, located in their main building. Please contact FISH or visit the organization's social media pages for updates on schedule changes.

Furniture and rebuilding supply distribution continues to take place every other Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m, with a few exceptions. The location for furniture distribution is 2430 Periwinkle Way. Those seeking assistance with furnishings or rebuilding supplies must live or work on the islands and provide documentation to FISH team members. Households are limited to three items and will be allowed to view the staging area once their number is called. There are no reservations and items are available on a first called basis. FISH does not provide volunteers to assist with heavy lifting and requests individuals bring assistance and a large vehicle for transportation. Once items are selected, individuals have approximately 10 minutes to load selected items. Please contact us or visit our social media pages for updates or schedule changes.

FISH offers something for everyone—if there is not a service in place for unmet needs of community members, they work to meet it through existing and new partnerships. If you or someone you know is in need of service, please contact FISH at (239) 472-4775.



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocated \$1.1B in Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funding to Lee County, Florida, to address the disaster recovery needs of residents impacted by Hurricane Ian in 2022.

Lee County has allocated \$241M of those funds to assist residents whose properties were damaged or who suffered losses. Assistance is available to low-to-moderate-income residents through one of three LeeCares Hurricane Ian Housing Recovery programs: Housing Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Elevation (HRRE) Program, Home Purchase Assistance (HPA) and Voluntary Residential Acquisition (VRA).

FISH will house CDBG case managers on Tuesdays starting Feb 6th from 9-6pm at 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. Visit leeflcares.com or call (239) 382-5453 to learn more.

NOW OPEN

Visit leeflcares.com to apply!





Hearts & Health for Valentine's Day



We will celebrate Valentine's Day with community members by offering a week focused on Hearts & Health.

During the week of Feb. 12, we will provide heart healthy products and additional fresh produce in our food pantry. The food pantry is located at 2422 Periwinkle Way and open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, pantry hours are 10:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

We are connecting with island youth from the Sanibel School and CECI to create Valentine's Day cards. Cards will be distributed to seniors living in CHR and throughout the islands. Special treats for

Valentine's Day, Wed., Feb. 14 will be provided at the food pantry.

"We're looking forward to working with Sanibel School students, club members and other young islanders who are excited to bring joy to our older population," says Maria Espinoza, Executive Director. "We want to remind seniors that they aren't forgotten and that they have a loving, caring community of all ages looking after them."

We encourage community members to stop by our food pantry, share the love and pick up heart healthy products for those in need in the community.

Spread the Love

We're spreading some love through our food pantry program! Protein sources are always in high demand and we could use some help stocking our shelves.

If you'd like to contribute to our Spread the Love campaign, we are gratefully accepting jars of peanut butter or other nut butters for our food pantry.

Items are accepted at the food pantry during our normal working hours. Donated products must be new, unexpired and unopened.

Thank you in advance for being a 'neighbors helping neighbors' donor!



Donate peanut butter or other nut butters to the Food Pantry! Protein sources are always in high demand.



Thank you Dave Scheiber!



This year, Dave is celebrating 50 years of living on Sanibel, 1 year older than the city was incorporated! He has been volunteering for FISH for 3 years, dedicating his retired years to giving back after 40 years in consumer marketing up North for Playtex, Colgate-Palmolive, Clorox, and Filippo Berio Olive Oil.

“Sanibel has given me so much,” Dave shared. “Sanibel is in my blood! Volunteering is my way of giving back to this special place.”

Dave has assisted with our food pantry operations, hurricane relief, holiday outreach programs (including events, food basket distributions, and toy drives), workshops, tabling for FISH at events, medical equipment delivery and pickup. Of all the ways he helps out, Dave’s favorite job is when he transforms into ‘Van Man’ and drives our van to pick up Costco deliveries and Sanibel Island Farmer’s Market donations for the Food Pantry. You may have seen him driving around the island in our brightly colored, FISH branded van. Thank you, Dave, for helping your neighbors!

Cheryl & Gary Biltgen, a Couple of Great Volunteers!

In honor of Valentine’s Day, we’d like to highlight one of our volunteer couples, Cheryl & Gary Biltgen. A dynamic team, Cheryl & Gary have been volunteering with FISH for several years. Unwavering in their commitment to the community, Cheryl and Gary continued to help when and where they could post Ian while picking up the pieces of their battered home and as occasional FISH clients who needed the help we provide. Thank you both for your dedication and assistance!



“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! FISH is all about helping people succeed and making their lives brighter - anyway you can. 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!

We volunteer 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.”



PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT 239-472-4775

SUPPORTING SENIORS

CREATING ACCESS TO FOOD

EAT BALANCED MEALS

2024 VISION BOARD

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MIND

ISLAND-BASED EDUCATION

RECOVERY AND REBUILDING

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

FISH OF SANCAP
neighbors helping neighbors

PHOTOS: People at a food bank, a man holding a box, a group of women, a man running, people at a community event, a woman with a certificate, and people at a presentation.



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. - 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
- Long-Term Recovery
- 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
Volunteers !

We couldn't do it without you.



Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU