

APRIL 2024

FISH LINES NEWSLETTER

onward and upward
Celebrating Easter With Our Community



In preparation for the Easter holiday last week, FISH OF SANCAP assembled dinner baskets for families containing everything needed for a festive Easter dinner and children's bunny baskets filled with books, candy, small toys, school supplies and more. This year, the organization distributed an astounding 200 Easter dinner baskets and 200 bunny baskets to neighbors. Basket recipients are those known to FISH through usage of other FISH programs such as the Food Pantry and Emergency Financial Assistance. All baskets are assembled by FISH volunteers.

"The volunteers devoted to this program worked tirelessly to make sure everyone enjoyed the Easter holiday," said Maria Espinoza, Executive Director, FISH. "It's incredible how this program has grown over the years and in particular since Hurricane Ian which we attribute to disaster related loss of income and unexpected repair expenses. For families served by FISH, under-employment and lost income from Ian are the main reasons struggles continue. Due to ongoing repair and rebuilding expenses, these individuals have become 'house poor'. House poor, by definition, means individuals spend too much on housing expenses relative to income. As it relates to hurricane survivors, it means the cost of repairing or rebuilding homes leaves little money left for living expenses, paying bills, or savings, resulting in debt accumulation for the duration of their recovery."

We'd like to thank Bank of the Islands for accepting food and candy donations and the Sanibel Community House, Sanibel & Captiva Island Assoc. of Realtors and many generous donors who contributed to the cause, making this a joyous holiday for all. "Our volunteers put a lot of time, energy and effort into making this a great day of celebration," continues Espinoza. "Their dedication, down to the tiniest of details like creating beautifully decorated baskets, is second to none."



2430 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
Food Pantry Address: 2422 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
239.472.4775 ~ fishofsancap.org ~ email: info@fishofsancap.org





Disaster Assistance Continues with Furniture Distribution



FISH OF SANCAP, with the United Way Gifts-in-Kind Program, continues to distribute furniture and rebuilding supplies through their Hurricane Ian Point of Distribution Program (POD). The program is available to Sanibel and Captiva Island residents and workforce.

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. Upcoming dates of distribution include April 5th; May 3rd, 17th, 31st ; June 14th, 28th and July 12th, 26th . 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. We do 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 the our social media pages for updates on schedule changes. “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 we are working toward reducing the burden and hardship caused by Hurricane Ian by ensuring support is available. We’ve coordinated resources with local and state organizations, and are providing assistance with emergency supply distribution, financial assistance, case management, and distribution of rebuilding supplies.

In addition to Long Term Recovery Services, we continue with programs representing our four major pillars – Food, Island Based Education, Social and Senior Services, and Helping Hands. We also 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.





2023 impact FACTS




5,740
INSTANCES OF
CASE MANAGEMENT



1,408
MUCH NEEDED
MISCELLANEOUS
ITEMS
DISTRIBUTED

2,983
REASSURANCE
CALLS
TO ISLAND SENIORS

208 
SMILE BOXES
CHEERED SENIORS



10,603
VOLUNTEER HOURS



5,486
FOOD PANTRY
VISITS



896
HOLIDAY MEALS
DISTRIBUTED



1,060
FURNISHINGS DISTRIBUTED

295 
INSTANCES OF
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



24,000
VOLUNTEER MILES

285 INSTANCES OF
HOLIDAY TOY
ASSISTANCE 

745

HURRICANE PACKETS
DISTRIBUTED &

 **217** CHILDREN RECEIVED MUCH NEEDED
SCHOOL SUPPLIES

4,018
HURRICANE RECOVERY
SERVICES & SUPPLIES PROVIDED

Please consider FISH as your island nonprofit partner.

86% of every dollar spent goes directly to our over 30 programs and services. Together, we will continue to make an impact, remove obstacles, fill in the cracks, and help individuals recover from the storms of life—
[neighbors helping neighbors.](#)



Food Pantry Donations



For the month of April, we're asking for cleaning supplies donations! Cleaning supplies are popular in the food pantry, often times we cannot keep up with the demand. If you would like to contribute, please bring unopened, unexpired household products like disinfectant wipes, all-purpose sprays, gloves, laundry detergent pods, dish soap, sponges, floor cleaner, paper towels, toilet paper, etc.

Want to continue to keep our shelves stocked while you're up North for the summer? Want to donate to our pantry, but you're not sure which items are needed? You can now order items directly from our Amazon Wish List to our pantry (2422 Periwinkle Way)! Use this link: <https://a.co/dYw03by>

Spring into Spring with CHR Event

Our Spring Community Event with Community Housing and Resources was a great way to celebrate Spring and connect with our neighbors! Thank you Pinocchio's Original Italian Ice Cream and Island Pizza for the delicious food and dessert, and CHR for hosting!





Volunteers - The Backbone of FISH

Cathie Lewis of Pfeifer Realty Group has been volunteering for FISH for over 10 years, delivering for the Meals-by-FISH Program, providing medical equipment, helping out in the Food Pantry and with the Backpack Program, and assisting with admin tasks. She moved here 30+ years ago, initially living on Fort Myers Beach, to begin employment with the City Utility Dept. to develop and provide the wastewater system to the island.

Cathie says, "Volunteering gives me a sense of fulfillment and purpose, knowing I can help someone else." Her favorite part of volunteering for FISH is "knowing that [she is] helping to continue the tradition to provide support and growth of FISH, so that this valuable island resource can continue to provide the important services to Sanibel and Captiva."



To Cathie, "neighbors helping neighbors," means "The spirit of volunteerism – it is one of the many things that keeps Sanibel a strong and very special community of friends and neighbors."

We're so thankful for Cathie and her embodiment of 'neighbors helping neighbors.'

Going Above & Beyond for our Seniors

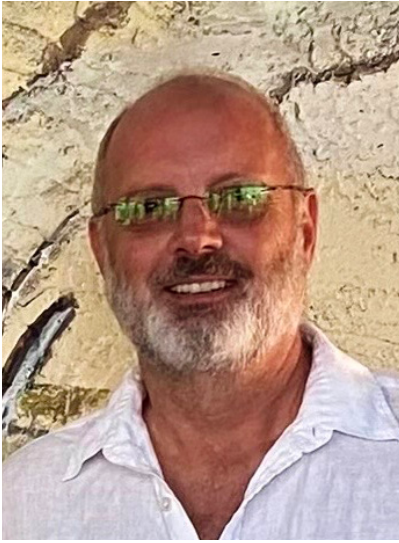


Our Director of Senior Services, Erika Broyles, always goes above and beyond. Here she is visiting a client in the hospital, bringing them a warm meal (from their favorite restaurant) and some comfort items. The client's family does not live in-state, so they were happy to see a familiar face during this isolating and difficult time.

Our visitation program includes helping seniors [and other] in many ways, including a recent technology visit to one of our older community members. During a scheduled home visit, an island senior asked the FISH team – Erika Broyles and Merari Salinas – to help with her electronic devices, specifically as it related to storage. She keeps pictures of her grandchildren and family outings on her phone and computer and connects them to a digital picture frame. She was having trouble accessing her photos, uploading and navigating her computer file system. FISH was happy to assist, and was able to clean up storage space and show her how to organize her photos for easy access. In a note to FISH, the individual writes, "Thank you so much for your help with my laptop and iPhone. It felt like you did a deep clean of my pictures file. It gives me comfort that you are there for me if another problem with storage comes up. I admire how confident you are with your devices. Thank you both for solving my problem."



Friendly Faces Luncheon with Sanibel Honey



Islanders, friends and family are invited to the community-wide FISH OF SANCAP Friendly Faces Luncheon, scheduled for Tues., May 14 beginning at 11:00am.

Says Erika Broyles, Senior Services Director, FISH, who facilitates the monthly event, "We've hosted some great speakers this year, and are excited to hear from Brad MacKenzie, Sanibel beekeeper and owner of Sanibel Honey. If available, Brad may bring a sweet sampling with him!"

Sanibel Deli will provide lunch, complimentary to all guests. Giveaways and interactive group games are included. Monthly luncheons are held at the Sanibel Recreation Center, 3880 Sanibel-Captiva Road, each 2nd Tuesday of the month. A virtual option is also available. Reservations and meal choices are required by Fri., May 10 to Erika Broyles at FISH at 239-472-4775.

Space is limited and FISH requests RSVPs as soon as possible. Zoom instructions for those joining virtually will be provided with RSVP. There is no meal delivery for virtual participants.

Brad MacKenzie moved to Sanibel five years ago, and his beekeeping journey started the next summer, when his girlfriend gave him a beehive. Four years and a hurricane later, Sanibel Honey has over sixty hives at different locations - mostly homeowners' yards - throughout Sanibel.

Sanibel Honey is made solely by Sanibel bees from Sanibel flowering plants, and harvested and bottled by MacKenzie. The honey is - exactly and only - what the bees provide, made from the wide variety of blooming flowers, bushes, trees, palms and mangroves on Sanibel Island. The company also makes beeswax products, and will be introducing a no-see-um repellent next year.

"In the post-hurricane year, my first-year bees were busy building their hives and making enough honey to get through the winter," says MacKenzie. "They didn't make much surplus for us humans. This year, they will make more than ten times as much honey for me to bottle, so we're really looking forward to that!"

In this discussion, MacKenzie will discuss Sanibel Honey's mission and role in Sanibel's ecology and human community. He will also touch on the role of U.S. managed commercial honey bees, the unique post-hurricane opportunity for bees on Sanibel, the life cycle of the Honey Bee and more. Additional information is located at SanibelHoney.com and on the company's social media, Sanibel Honey on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube at [@sanibelhoney](https://www.instagram.com/sanibelhoney).

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



Mental Health Wednesdays

We realize many storm survivors are struggling with emotional stress, trauma and anxiety. We've formed important partnerships to address these issues by partnering with SalusCare who offers counseling services on Sanibel to anyone who needs them.

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)".

We continue to offer "Mental Health Wednesdays" by appointment between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. at Saint Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, 2304 Periwinkle Way, in a continued effort to address mental health needs and hurricane-related

topics such as PTSD, trauma, and loss.

In a recent study titled Association Between Repeated Exposure to Hurricanes and Mental Health in a Representative Sample of Florida Residents, it was noted, "recovery from natural hazards may be a protracted process; psychological distress may persist and be exacerbated by subsequent exposures.

This study's results highlight the need to address the mental health implications of repeated exposure to natural hazards, particularly in areas such as the Gulf Coast that are at high risk for repeated hurricane exposure, as risk of hurricanes and other climate-related threats is expected to increase.

Additionally, the anniversary of a disaster event combined with the upcoming hurricane season may cause survivors to experience symptoms such as worry, fear, panic attacks and other. "Reactions can involve several days or weeks of anxiety, anger, nightmares, flashbacks, or depression. And feelings of grief and sadness over the losses you've suffered, especially the loss of a loved one, are very common," notes Dr. Ronald Smallwood, a board-certified psychiatrist with Lee Health Behavioral Health.

We currently have availability! Email erika@fishofsancap.org to schedule a session.

Sources: Lee Health Hubspot and Hurricanes and Mental Health







Join us Saturday, April 13
from 3:30-6p at

Tutti Pazzi, 1200 Periwinkle Way

TUTTI PAZZI

ITALIAN KITCHEN

SANIBEL ISLAND

Come support CHR and affordable housing in a fun, foodie, and refreshing way featuring some of our favorite island friends serving as

celebrity bartenders

A portion of all proceeds from Tutti Pazzi that night will be donated to CHR!



Sam Ankersen
Executive Director
Bailey-Matthews
National Shell Museum



Emily Ankersen
Executive Director
Captiva Civic Association



Maria Espinoza
Executive Director
FISH of SanCap



Lee Ellen Harder
Executive Director
Big Arts of Sanibel Island



Bill Harkey
President
"Ding" Darling
Wildlife Society



John Lai
President
Sanibel Captiva
Chamber of Commerce



Nicole McHale
Executive Director
Community Housing
& Resources



Alison Hussey
Executive Director
Clinic for the Rehabilitation
of Wildlife (CROW)



239.472.1189 | sancapchr.org
800 Casa Ybel Rd | Unit #7 | Sanibel, FL 33957



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)**



Cape Christian Service Day with FISH





Our Volunteers, Partners & Team in Action



THANK YOU