


2023

Annual Report

S.O.S.

Foundation



Healthier food for a healthier community

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Letter from SOS's Executive Director

Dear SOS Team,

I could not be more excited to have finished the 2023 year as the new Executive Director of SOS Foundation. The past four months have been filled with listening, learning, and lots of gratitude. I have been a member of teams my entire life. If there is one resounding thing I can take from my short time at SOS, it is that this team is one of the best. Not only is the SOS staff incredibly mission-driven, but the team behind the team is one of the best I have worked with. The volunteers, the donors, and the board members are second to none. I have chased gold medals among Olympians and Paralympians, and I have never been prouder to be a part of a team than I am today. To each staff member, volunteer, partner, donor, and board member who has allowed me to ask questions, listen, and learn, I thank you. It is because of each of you that SOS can better the lives of so many Monroe County residents.

This last year at SOS has been one of exciting growth. Two innovative additions have kept the SOS Team particularly busy! Thanks to a United States Department of Agriculture grant and a partnership with MARC House, SOS now has 60 aeroponic towers located at MARC House. These towers will provide over 15,000 pounds of herbs and vegetables in the coming years! These items are used at the Callahan Community Kitchen, distributed at the Stock Island Pantry, and used at the MARC House Rainbow Café. The SOS Eco Farm also held educational classes and welcomed field trips by Poinciana and Gerald Adams Elementary Schools. We cannot wait to see what next year has in store for The Eco Farm!

The Callahan Community Kitchen also added a Frozen Meals Program to its already thriving Fresh Meals Program. These frozen meals allow SOS to reach more individuals in need, not only in the Key West community but further up the Keys. Another USDA grant is helping to support these meals while simultaneously creating new market opportunities for small and medium-sized Florida farms. We are excited to roll out the Florida Keys Local Food Alliance to help these Florida farmers as well. Look for the FKLFA logos at your favorite local restaurants in the coming year!

SOS is proud of what we have accomplished in 2023, but we know we are capable of much more. We hope you continue to be part of our team. Please consider donating, volunteering, or even just learning more about SOS. You won't regret it. I look forward to continuing to learn from each of you and creating a healthier Monroe County.

With gratitude,

Morgan Tracey
Executive Director



Monroe County: Who We Serve

Monroe County, Florida, also known as The Florida Keys, is often thought of as a tropical paradise and welcomes more than 3.5 million visitors every year (Monroe-County.gov). However, the 120-mile long island chain presents many barriers to healthy food access and affordable living. In fact, **Monroe claims the highest cost of living and the highest meal cost in the entire state of Florida.** Despite these expenses, there is a plethora of low-wage service industry jobs available, and a prominent lack of affordable housing. In their 2023 report, the United Way of Collier and

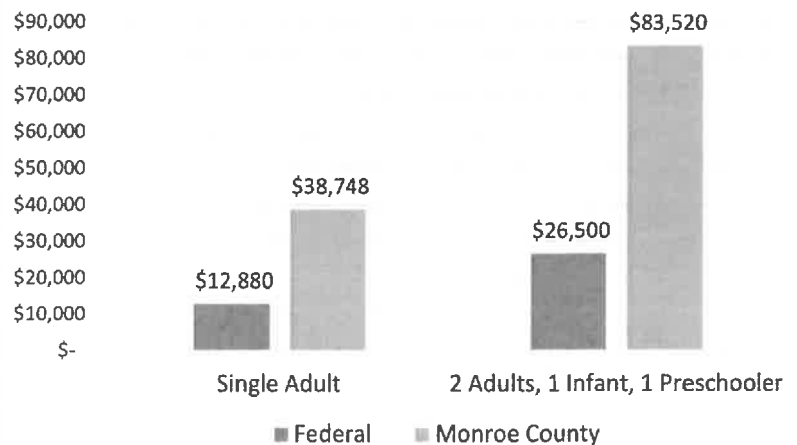


the Keys found that **43%** of Monroe County households qualify as living under the poverty line or ALICE- Asset Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (United Way). SOS serves these households through our two food pantries, community kitchen meal programs, and nutrition education outreach.

Quantifying the Need

- Monroe County's average meal cost is **30%** higher than the state of Florida's (Feeding America).
- **61%** of public elementary school students qualify for free or reduced school lunch. 69% in the Key West area (Monroe County School District).
- **59%** of residents live at or below 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but in order for a family of four to afford to make ends meet in Monroe County, they must earn **three times (315%) FPL** for their family size (Feeding America; 2023 United Way ALICE Report).
- There are **no** nutrition or food-related curricula included in state guidelines in Florida.

Household Survival Budget Comparison:
Monroe County vs. Federal Poverty Line



Source: United Way ALICE Report 2023. For ALICE Survival Budget sources, visit [UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology](https://www.unitedforalice.org/methodology)

Our mission is to foster a healthier Monroe County community by increasing equitable food access through food distribution, food recovery, and nutrition education.

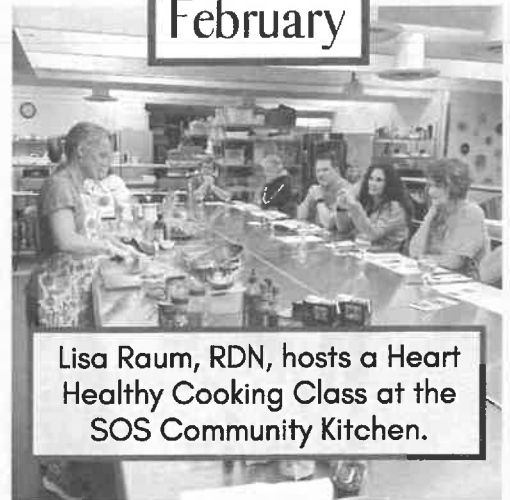
2023 Highlights

January



SOS's launches its first-ever CSA program in partnership with Worden Farm, bringing 22,500 lbs of local produce to the Keys.

February



Lisa Raum, RDN, hosts a Heart Healthy Cooking Class at the SOS Community Kitchen.

March



200+ kids attended SOS's second annual Field Day, which encourages healthy eating and exercise.

April



After 12 months of training, SOS earns its Service Enterprise Certification from Allve for excellent volunteer engagement!

May



SOS VISTAs lead a volunteer event to establish The SOS Eco Farm, consisting of 60 aeroponic Tower Gardens.

June



Florida's Division of Food, Nutrition and Wellness selects SOS for a community Spike Event to launch the Summer Food Service Program!

July



For the first time, SOS distributes 1,384 freshly prepared, then frozen lunches for local children in need.

August



SOS's Back-to-School Food Drive collects 456 lbs of food donations for local families visiting SOS's Pantries!

September

an Community Kitchen
er food for er community



SOS welcomes new Executive Director, Morgan Tracey!

October



SOS's Nutrition Education team leads school-wide taste tests at Poinciana and Gerald Adams Elementary for 1,000+ students.

November



SOS's pantries accommodate 6,780 client visits this month, and distribute 500 Thanksgiving baskets to local families in need.

December



114 students visit The SOS Eco Farm through field trips!

Client Choice Food Pantries

Through SOS's client choice food pantries and food distributions, SOS aims to make healthy food accessible to all. Approximately 50% of the food distributed at our pantries is recovered fresh produce. By saving money on food costs, clients have more funds to put towards rent, utilities, childcare, healthcare, and other costs of living. Less than 5% of SOS pantry clients are unhoused—the vast majority are working-poor, struggling to make ends meet.

1.6 mil
pounds of food
distributed



\$2.8 mil
in savings
for working-poor Monroe
County households



“ I really appreciate SOS for the fresh vegetables and fruits. It's a blessing for us to have access and the availability to get fresh food. My family can eat healthy! ”
-Stock Island Pantry Client



44%
increase in Upper Keys
client visits
compared to 2022



10,632
volunteer hours
at our food pantries

Our St. Justin's Food Pantry serves 180+ households every Monday

Fresh Meals Program

Meals prepared at SOS's Callahan Community Kitchen are five components: a fruit, vegetable, grain, protein, and low-fat milk. Meals utilize 90% fresh fruits and vegetables, prioritize whole wheat and 100% whole grains, and limit the consumption of high-sodium, high-salt snacks that are often the norm for many children and seniors.

72,613
meals prepared



SOS prepares fresh meals for low-income seniors, Monday-Friday



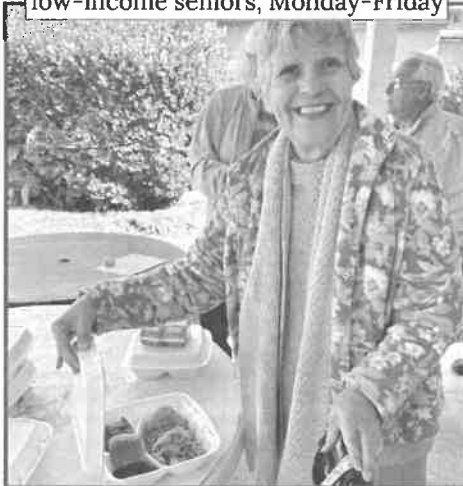
Receiving an SOS lunch at summer camp



Kitchen volunteer, James, prepping fresh squash coins for roasting

I was in food and beverage for 30 years and can appreciate the work and dedication you put into your meals. I just wanted to say THANK YOU!

-Jack T. (senior meal client)



95%

of senior meal clients believe their diet is healthier because of SOS's meals



Kitchen Attendants, Edgar and Gustavo sorting local produce at the SOS Kitchen!



7,776
volunteer hours
at our Community Kitchen

NEW

Frozen Meals Program

In June 2023, SOS began preparing and distributing freshly prepared, then frozen meals for children in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and for low-income, homebound senior citizens. This new equipment and methodology will help SOS increase healthy food access for more people in need than ever before!

4,208
frozen meals
prepared



Chicken Teriyaki



“ I love all of them,
I can't pick a favorite!
-child receiving fresh and frozen
meals during the summer



Cuban Picodillo



Chicken Parmesan



Our freshly prepared, then frozen meals
are sealed with special equipment!

89%
of parents reported that frozen
summer meals **helped their
family save money,**
so they could afford healthcare, housing,
and other bills in an August 2023 survey.

Nutrition & Agricultural Education Program

SOS was awarded the USDA's prestigious Farm to School Grant for the 2022-2023 school year and for summer sessions at the local Boys and Girls Club chapters. With the support of private foundations and generous individuals, SOS continued this curriculum through Fall 2023. The program consists of 16 weekly nutrition and agricultural education lessons at three Title One schools in Monroe County, school-wide taste-testing events, engaging field trips to Keys farms, and the use of local food items!

447
students taught



This week's snack was basil hummus, with basil from the classroom Tower Garden!



Students visiting the SOS Eco Farm on a field trip

98%
of students reported confidence in preparing healthy snacks
in a post-survey



Hands-On Cooking Lesson



Enjoying a Florida Carrot Salad at a school-wide Taste Test Event



3,160
volunteer hours
in our Nutrition & Agriculture Education Program

Community Cooking Classes

SOS continued to offer free hands-on and demonstration-style cooking classes at the SOS Callahan Community Kitchen for adults and children! 2023 also marked the launch of our Hands-On Children's Cooking Classes. These interactive classes taught children important topics regarding nutrition and basic cooking skills. We are grateful to the many local chefs who helped lead these community classes.

10
classes



Seasonal Veggie Tacos
Chef Abigail, Seaside Shallots



Grouper Cakes
Chef Dan, Blue Heaven

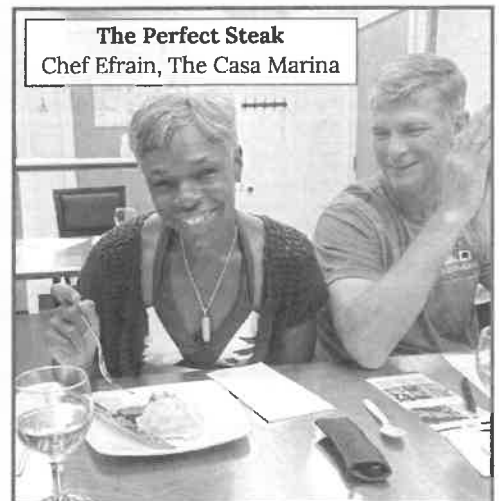
“
It was so much fun, educational, and delicious!”
- January Attendee
Indian Food Demonstration



Whole Grain Pop-Tarts
SOS Staff



Indian Food Demonstration
Intern Rebecca, Shor American Seafood Grill



The Perfect Steak
Chef Efrain, The Casa Marina



Traditional Peruvian Dining
Chef Juan Cuadra, La Concha



Whole Grain, Homemade Pizza
SOS Staff

127
attendees

NEW

The SOS Eco Farm

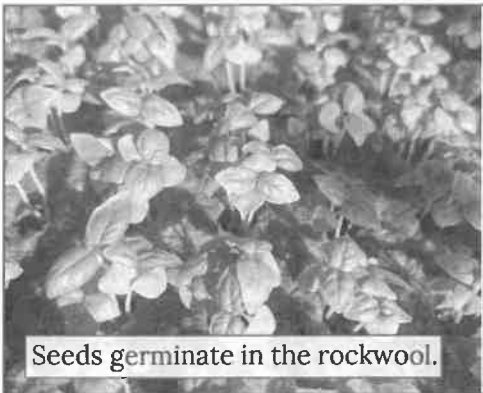
This year, SOS officially launched the SOS Eco Farm at the MARC House. With 60 Tower Gardens capable of producing thousands of pounds of produce each year, the SOS Eco Farm will provide our community with a sustainable stream of fresh, healthy fruits, vegetables, and herbs at our food pantries and in our meals programs. The SOS Eco Farm is maintained by SOS Staff and MARC House staff and clients, and it is open for the community to visit and learn all about aeroponic farming systems.



All seeds must be planted in rockwool before being planted in a Tower.

30
Plant Varieties

60
Tower Gardens



Seeds germinate in the rockwool.

330
lbs harvested
from July - December



MARC clients help us harvest produce.



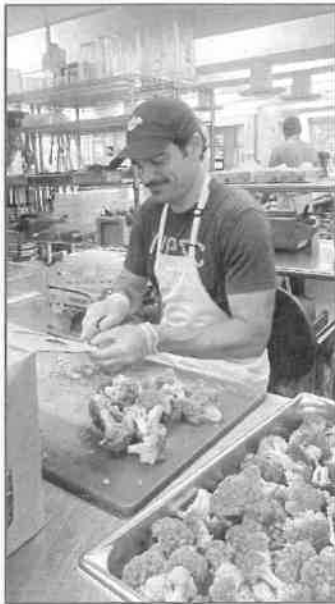
Our crops grow three times faster in these aeroponic systems than through traditional agriculture methods!



Produce harvested is utilized by our community members.

SOS's Volunteer Program

The impact of volunteers' time and effort towards SOS's programs cannot be overstated. The need in Monroe County surpasses SOS's small staff's capacity, and therefore we would not be able to feed and educate 11,000+ Keys residents without the generosity and devotion of our volunteers.



Our amazing volunteer team oversees our St. Justin's Pantry every week!



Over the past year, volunteers have supported the following efforts:

Preparation of kitchen meals and bulk frozen produce, pantry food distribution, nutrition education classes and snack preparation, collection of donations at a local stores, distribution of school snacks, donation solicitations, local tabling efforts, food and clothing drives, leading of cooking classes, and more!

Volunteer Hall of Fame

Adler, JD	Decker, Frank	Kirkbride, Tami	Perez, Adam
Ainsworth, Suzanne	Del Rio, Raul	Kostmayer, Pamela	Pfeiffer, Michael
Allen, Fred	DeMartino, Donna	Lafaurie, Brian	Piccillo, Maureen
Amaro, Brianna	Derrig, Jean	Landau, C	Polowsky, Gary
Anderson, Johnny	Diaz, Evan	Leflar, Carly	Pourciau, Jules
Antonowich, Frank	Dietrich, Brian	Lewis, Ayn	Power, John
Antonowich, Ruth	Dougherty, Jennifer	Lombard, Emily	Rade, Rachel
Ayala, Denise	Douthit, Connie	Lopez, Francisca	Ramsingh, Ian
Baker, Patricia	Dusaintil , Elise	Lopez, Nelson	Rodriguez, Melanie
Barber, Jean	Ed, Pat	Madison, Hannah	Ruocco, Joe and Lynne
Benado, Jill	Estenson, Lee	Mallan, Francis	Ruoz, Kristi
Bentley, Gail	Fischer, Verna	Marconi, Teri	Saunders, Ryan
Berthold, Maggie	Fontana, Leigh	Margalli, Giulio	Scalera, Tony
Berthold, Maxwell	Ford, Dan	Marrin, Amy	Scholes, Veronica
Bertucci, Andy	Ford, Lisa	Martin, Debbie	Schwartz, Daniel
Bertucci, Renee	Fuhrman, Chef Dave	Martinez, Cheryl	Senez, Gwendolin
Besler, Kaitlyn	Garcia, Audrey	Martinez, Gustavo	Shannon, Danny
Bird, Kathleen	Gillihan, Deborah	Martinez, John	Silvestre Mushi, Sr Mary
Bonomi, Lauren	Givens, Doris	Mastrobuono, Patricia	Simmons, Kasey
Bowes, Ginny	Glorioso, Lisa	Mathews, Taw	Smotryski, Nathan
Bozard, Heather	Goldberg, Jill	McCann, William	Springer, Steve
Brown, Mickey	Good-Chanmugam, Sara	McCullah, Meaghan	Stjean, WD
Bueno, Monica	Hace, Francie	Mcdaniel, Steve	Strickland, Stuart
Burns , Jean	Handlow, Kevin	McInnis, Shelley	Sympson, Bill
Bygren, Chloe	Hann, Barb	McManus, James	Sympson, Kathy
Calderon, Oxana	Harrison, Deborah	McManus, Tess	Thompson , Kristina
Cambridge, Jeffrey	Hatch, Chef Dan	McPeters, Joy	Tolf, Linda
Canton, Fabiola	Heels, Joyce	Menditch, Lisa	Tree, Connie
Carranza, Alejandro	Heichelbech, Nita	Mobley, Kathryn	Vazquez Rivera, Jose
Chesla Quigley, Victoria	Henning, Tim	Moeller, John	Verde, Jean
Clawson, Abby	Henry, Leila	Montalto, Helen	Vogt, Maureen
Codde, Winter	Hill, Laurel	Monteiro, Lorrie	Wagner, Kip
Condella, Maria	Hodgson, Joni	Moore, Betsy	Wagner, Sandra
Connell, Pat	Houff, Abigail	Morin, Carol	Walton, Lois
Consorti , Pietro	Hubbard, John	Morse Whitten, Rebecca	Wavra, Lynsi
Cooper, Ed	Hutchisn, Laura	Mullins, Lori	Weeks, Mark
Cooper, Philomena	Jackson, Darlene	Mumford, Lew	Whetman, Lawrence
Coulter, Aydan	Jenner, Beth	N, Ryan	Williamson, Kathy
Crisci , Veronica	Justin, Andy	Nevils, Anthony	Wimmer, Wyatt
Cruz, Chef Efrain	Justin, Rene	Niekamp, Pam	Winkler, Ed
Cuadra, Chef Juan	Kelly, Lori	Night, Patrick	Winters, Kristen
Darcaci, Iulia	Kelly, Shannon	Nossof, Pat	Xu, Xu
deBettencourt, Michael	Kerwick, Richard	O'Connor, Rory	Young, Deborah

Thank you, SOS Donors!



In 2023, SOS served more than 10,000 individuals in Monroe County. We would not be able to achieve this level of impact without the hundreds of individual donors, community partners, and foundations who fund these efforts. Whether you donated funds, food, clothing, household supplies, or your time, SOS is extremely thankful for your support! **Included here are just a few of our generous donors and funders!**



SOS Staff

SOS is extremely grateful for our dedicated, kind-hearted team of staff who work hard every day to make Monroe County healthier and more food-secure.



In Loving Memory



SOS Board of Directors

Doria Goodrich (President)
Pat Nossov, DVM (Treasurer)
Thomas M. Callahan (Director)

Fr. John Baker (Director)
Erica Sterling Hughes (Director)
Nathan Eden (Director)

On the Horizon...

Florida Keys Local Food Alliance



Connecting Florida Food to the Florida Keys.



The Florida Keys Local Food Alliance aims to support our local economy and farmers by partnering with food sellers who prioritize local food purchasing. SOS will work with local grocers, restaurants, and retailers to increase local food purchasing.

To learn more and to get involved, please contact us via our website below.

Save the Date!

SOS's 9th Annual Casino Night

Friday, November 15, 2024

6-11 PM

The Marriott Beachside Hotel

"The best night of the year!"

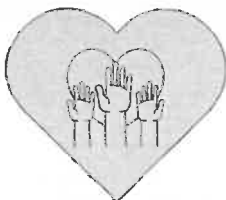


Get Involved with SOS!



www.sosfoundation.org

  @sosflkeys



Volunteer

Join our amazing volunteer community and make a difference today!

Subscribe



We have a Monthly E-Newsletter, an Advocacy Newsletter, Weekly Donation Wishlist, and Cooking Class Mailing List.

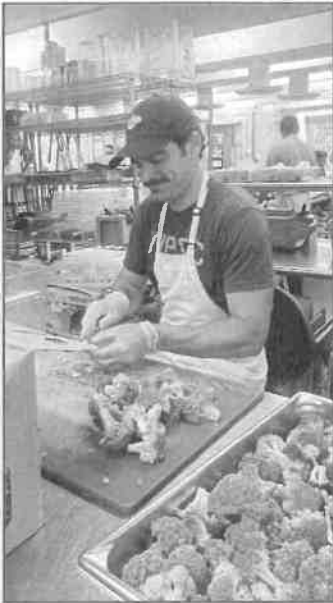


Donate

We accept donations of food, clothing, funds, and more!

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