



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

Date: Thursday, November 1st, 2018

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Sheriff Recognizes Volunteers that Helped Find Missing Child Rickey Wheeler

Thursday morning, Sheriff Rick Staly recognized integral members of the Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) as well as the over 100 volunteers who dropped what they were doing on the afternoon of September 25th and joined deputies to search for missing and endangered child Rickey Wheeler.



Chief Paul Bovino, who led the search as the Incident Commander, as well as Detective Nicole Quintieri, Sergeant Mike Miller and Sergeant Jon Dopp received Certificates of Commendations from Sheriff Staly.

Seventeen-year-old Rickey Wheeler was reported missing on Friday, September 21st. FCSO Deputies, the Bike Patrol, the Marine Unit, the Emergency Response Team, C.O.P.s, the Mounted Posse and detectives searched tirelessly to find Rickey for five days.

On Tuesday, September 25th, the community's desire to help was so strong that a structured volunteer search was organized. Over 100 community members came out to search for Rickey. The first couple to sign up for the volunteer effort, Anthony and Dawn Butrym, located Rickey's clothing. Putnam County Sergeant Emmett Merrit and his K9 Bloodhound, Putnam, found Rickey soon after. The search was successful and Rickey was reunited with his family.

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From left: Anthony Butrym, Isis (Rickey’s sister), Tyisha (Rickey’s Mother), Rickey, Sheriff Staly, and Dawn Butrym.

“This family experienced every parent’s worst nightmare – their child vanished,” Sheriff Rick Staly said at the awards ceremony. “But our community – most of them strangers to the Wheeler family – stopped in their tracks to help find him. The support was overwhelming and it is a testament to Flagler County and the people that live here.”

Rickey was in attendance at the awards ceremony along with his mother and sister. His mother spoke to the crowd about her appreciation for the volunteers and relayed that Rickey is alive and well today due to their efforts.

Many volunteers attended the ceremony to receive certificates of appreciation from the Sheriff and to see firsthand how Rickey is doing today. After recovering in the hospital, Rickey returned home and was outfitted with a tracking device from St. John’s County to help find him quickly if he were to wander off again.



Sheriff Staly and the Wheeler Family surrounded by the volunteers at the awards ceremony on Thursday morning.

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Commissioner Hansen and Commissioner-Elect Joe Mullins were in attendance and both spoke highly of the wonderful citizens of Flagler County.

To see a video highlighting the ceremony, please click here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5juht9n67q0590c/WHEELER%20CEREMONY%202.mp4?dl=0>

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