



**Rick Staly, Sheriff**

## **FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

*"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."*

# **NEWS RELEASE**

**Date:** January 20, 2023

**Prepared by:** Ava Hanner, Public Affairs Office

**Phone and Email:** 386-262-8066, [AHanner@flaglersheriff.com](mailto:AHanner@flaglersheriff.com)

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## **Juveniles Arrested After Making Threats to Kill, Stealing and Possessing Firearms**

BUNNELL, FL – On Tuesday, January 17, 2023, FCSO Communications received a call from a male stating that their child, M.T., had run away and was possibly going to Holland Park in Palm Coast to engage in a physical altercation with other juveniles. A short time later, the male called again and advised that two firearms were missing from his home and that M.T. had possibly stolen them.

Deputies responded to Holland Park while others responded to the father's residence. M.T. returned home shortly after deputies arrival to the residence. M.T. was informed of his rights and agreed to speak with deputies with his father present. M.T. advised that he has been involved in an ongoing dispute with other juveniles in the area. He advised that he had taken two handguns and cash from his older brother "for his protection" and then traveled to Holland Park with friends where the other juveniles are known to spend time. When M.T. and friends arrived at the park they saw the deputies who had responded to the reported possible altercation and decided to return home where deputies were waiting.

Upon further questioning, M.T. divulged that he had intended to scare the other juveniles with the guns while at the park. A search of M.T.'s phone showed several threats sent to others mentioning shooting them and killing them.

Following the discussion with M.T., the juvenile was taken into custody for Sending Written Threats to Kill, Grand Theft (\$750 - \$5,000), and two counts of Grand Theft of a Firearm.

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“Thank you to the father of M.T. who saw something, and said something! Because of his actions and responding FCSO deputies, a potentially deadly altercation between juveniles was likely avoided,” said Sheriff Rick Staly. “Parents, be the Sheriff in your home and talk to your children on how to handle disagreements. Taking a gun to an argument, is not it! If you don’t, we will be the Sheriff to your children and the outcome will likely be an arrest. I also commend our K-9 Unit, School Resource Deputies, Community Policing Division, and detectives for quickly intervening to get these guns out of the hands of juveniles before someone could get hurt or killed.”

The juvenile did not have the firearms when taken into custody and were believed to be in M.T.’s friends possession. On Wednesday, January 18, 2023, the case was turned over to FCSO’s Criminal Intelligence Unit and Problem Area Crime Enforcement (PACE) Unit. Detectives responded to the residence of two of M.T.’s friends who were determined to be involved. While there, detectives located one of the two stolen firearms in a wooded area behind the home. The two juveniles that live at this residence are not facing charges at this time, but additional charges may be forthcoming. Investigation into who may have placed the firearm in the woods is ongoing.

On Thursday, January 19, 2022, detectives made contact with another friend of the juvenile, J.S., who had been hiding at his girlfriend’s residence. While there, detectives located the second stolen firearm hidden in a dresser drawer in the girlfriend’s bedroom. J.S. was placed under arrest and charged with Possession of a Firearm by a Minor, Tampering with Evidence, and Grand Theft of a Firearm.



*L-R: Firearm recovered in the woods, firearm located at J.S.’s girlfriend’s residence*

M.T. has not been an in-person student in the Flagler Schools system since the 2021-2022 school year and is currently a virtual iFlagler student. J.S. has never been enrolled in Flagler Schools. At both residences where each of the firearms were located, all parents and/or guardians were fully cooperative with the investigation.

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Both juveniles were processed at the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention facility and turned over to the Department of Juvenile Justice, where they remain.

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