



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

NEWS RELEASE

Date: Friday, November 30, 2018

Contact: Shannon Martin; (386) 586-2637; martin@flaglersheriff.com

FCSO Identifies Man Who Attempted to Gain Access to Wadsworth Elementary School

Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Deputies have positively identified the man who attempted to gain access to Wadsworth Elementary School yesterday. The man, Ronnie Niemela of Palm Coast, was identified through the investigative efforts of the FCSO Patrol Unit. Niemela has since been interviewed and is not considered to be a threat to the school at this time.

FCSO received a call about a suspicious person at Wadsworth Elementary School on November 29th after Niemela attempted to gain access into the schools media center to attend a Book Fair. When Niemela was asked to identify himself by school staff he became confrontational and made an inappropriate comment about school shootings in general before leaving the area.

School staff followed security protocol and alerted the School Resource Deputy of the encounter who then initiated an investigation. Less than 24 hours later, FCSO Deputy Jay Rodenborn was able to identify the vehicle driven by Niemela by using intelligence led policing tactics and contact was then made at his home.

"We take the safety of our children in Flagler County very seriously, especially in our schools," Sheriff Staly said. "I am very proud of the investigative work done by Deputy Rodenborn and the rest of our team to identify this guy. I also want to thank everyone who shared our Facebook post and sent us tips. Unfortunately, in this day and age we have to follow every single lead because you can never be certain of a person's intentions. Make no mistake, if you make an inappropriate comment or a threat in Flagler County you will receive a visit from the Sheriff's Office."

FCSO wants to remind its citizens that if you see something, say something. No tip will be dismissed and every lead will be followed. Anyone can submit a tip by using the FCSO App or emailing TIPS@FlaglerSheriff.com. This investigation is ongoing.

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901 East Moody Blvd, Bunnell, FL 32110 – 386-437-4116 – Fax 386-586-4820 – www.flaglersheriff.com