



# Rick Staly, Sheriff FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

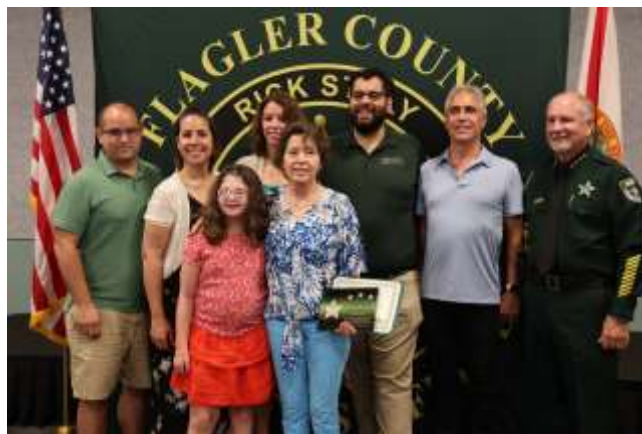
## NEWS RELEASE

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### FCSO Employees, Partners Honored at 2024 First Quarter Awards Ceremony

**BUNNELL, FL** – Employees who providing life-saving CPR, rescued a missing person hiding under a dock, and solved lengthy investigations are among those who were honored during the Flagler County Sheriff’s Office’s 2024 First Quarter Awards Ceremony held on June 17, 2024, at the Flagler County Sheriff’s Operations Center.

Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly awarded several Life Saving Awards to employees and citizens for their roles in saving the lives of others. In one case, a man who was saved by CPR directions provided by 9-1-1 Communications Specialist Lucas Santos was in attendance with his family to once again personally thank Santos for his calm demeanor and providing life-saving CPR instructions.



*Communications Specialist Santos and Sheriff Staly with the family of Dan (blue shirt) who Santos provided life-saving CPR instructions for.*

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“All of our employees that were honored today went above and beyond the call of duty and I was honored to recognize them,” said Sheriff Staly. “It was especially gratifying to see the family and the man that Communications Specialist Santos was instrumental in saving his life walk into the room. Without our well-trained Communications Center team, this could have had a very tragic outcome instead of being a heart-warming encounter.”

Sheriff Staly also awarded several individuals with Unit Citations and Certificates of Appreciation as part of the ceremony. Three employees received Employee of the Month recognition, while 15 others were recognized for reaching years of service milestones from five to 35 years of service. In addition, Sheriff Staly presented the awards for Detention Deputy of the Year, Law Enforcement Deputy of the Year, Professional Support Staff of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and Citizen of the Year for 2023.

Below is a summary of each award winner and why they received an award.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Commander Glenn Davis Jr. and Deputy First Class Laura Jenkins**

On March 8, while off duty, Commander Davis noticed a traffic crash at the intersection of Palm Coast Parkway and the off-ramp for I-95 southbound. Davis stopped to begin rendering aid. The driver of one of the vehicles was unconscious and not breathing. Davis immediately started to provide life-saving CPR. Deputy First Class Jenkins responded and assisted Davis with CPR. Jenkins used her AED and the two continued to provide life saving measures until Flagler County Fire Rescue (FCFR) arrived on scene. FCFR was able to get the driver’s vitals stable and transport the driver to the hospital.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Deputy Sheriffs Caleb Tassy and Lauren Liptak**

On January 28, Deputy Tassy observed a reckless driver and conducted a traffic stop at which time he observed the driver beginning to lose consciousness. Tassy was able to move the occupant safely to the ground in order to perform triage. During triage, the driver stopped breathing and Tassy and Deputy Liptak administered Narcan while performing sternum rubs until they were relieved by EMS. It was learned that prior to deputies engaging the vehicle, it was involved in a hit-and-run crash. The subject was placed under arrest for DUI with Property Damage, Leaving the Scene of a Crash with Property Damage, and Possession of Fentanyl.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Deputy Sheriff Cameron Punskey**

On January 14, Deputy Punskey was traveling southbound on US 1 in Bunnell when he witnessed a white pickup truck strike three pedestrians near the area of 100 North State Street. He immediately stopped his

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patrol vehicle and began to triage and perform lifesaving measures on the victims. Due to the life-saving measures that were taken by Punsky, one of the victims was able to survive the horrific incident.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Love McLaury (Citizen)**

On March 15, Love McLaury, a senior client of PROJECT WARM, saved a newborn's life by administering CPR. While holding an infant for another client, McLaury noticed the infant was not breathing and was turning blue. She immediately notified staff and 911 was called. McLaury was encouraged by the dispatcher to begin CPR. McLaury began CPR under the direction of the dispatcher and remained doing so until EMS arrived and took over caring for the child.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Communications Specialist Lucas Santos**

On December 18, 2023, Santos answered a 911 call from a resident who was reporting that her husband was having a medical episode. Santos started gathering information and asking pertinent questions that helped determine the patient was not breathing and was described to be turning blue. Santos immediately started with the necessary pre-arrival instructions that helped walk the caller through seven minutes of CPR compressions. The caller followed the instructions provided by Santos perfectly and continued CPR compressions until EMS arrived on scene. When EMS arrived on scene, they confirmed they were working a code. Shortly after, the patient was transported to the hospital and it was unknown what the status of the patient was.

On February 2, 2024, the FCSO Communications Center received a visitor. At the door was the patient who was having the medical episode from the call in December, Dan. Dan and his wife, Carol, both said they came to the Communications Center because they were hoping to meet the dispatcher who saved Dan's life. Dan explained that the doctor told him that he is still alive today because of how quickly the CPR compressions were started. Carol expressed how helpful Santos was on the phone with her and how his calmness allowed her to focus on his instructions to make sure the compressions were done properly. Dan and Carol both attributed Dan's second chance at life to Santos.

### **LIFE SAVING AWARD – Communications Specialist Whitney Zuazua, Deputy Sheriffs Aaron Clay and Hayleigh Prentiss**

On March 19, FCSO Communications received a call regarding a CPR in progress. Communications Specialist Zuazua was able to walk the reporting party through CPR instructions. Upon the arrival of Deputies Clay and Prentiss, they identified the subject may be suffering from a narcotics overdose and administered two doses of Narcan to the subject. The subject was still unresponsive, so life-saving

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measures continued along with additional doses of Narcan. Ultimately, the individual became responsive and was transported to the hospital for further treatment. Without the life-saving CPR instructions provided by Zuazua and the life saving measures taken by deputies, this call may have had a different outcome.

**LIFE SAVING AWARD – Detective Bryan Denker, Lieutenant Dan Driscoll, Firefighter Joshua Gilliam**

On January 4, FCSO Communications received a call pertaining to a single-vehicle accident by the sole occupant who advised he intentionally drove his vehicle into the woods in an attempt to end his life. Detective Denker arrived on scene and immediately entered the wood line toward the vehicle, which was now on fire. Denker was able to move the occupant from the vehicle and towards safety while additional resources were entering the woods. Lieutenant Dan Driscoll and Firefighter Gilliam of the Palm Coast Fire Department took over life-saving measures and transported the subject to the hospital.

**UNIT CITATION – Commander Scott Vedder, Sergeant Paul DeSousa, Corporal Adam Barkoskie, Master Deputy Marcus Dawson, Deputy Sheriffs Marx Rexford and Ardit Coma**

On December 26, 2023, FCSO responded to a county road in Bunnell in reference to a Suspicious Incident. The reporting party advised they heard a woman’s voice in distress calling for help. Responding units quickly utilized forward-looking infrared, known as FLIR, while waiting for a drone for support. Voice contact was made with a female and the drone operator was able guide ground units to her location. When the female was located, she was suffering from a mental health crisis and was irate, combative, dehydrated, and showed symptoms of hypothermia. Due to the condition of the female, she required the use of a backboard/litter to be extracted from the woods. The female was transported to the hospital under a law enforcement Baker Act upon other injuries she sustained for her duration in the woods. The female was accompanied by a dog that was also secured and returned to her nephew who resided in close vicinity of the location.

**UNIT CITATION – Sergeant Jacob West, Corporal Troy Cavas, Corporal Joseph Barnett, Master Deputy Jeff Turner, Deputy First Class Philip Kotowski, Deputy Sheriffs Kyle Somers, Matthew Mortimer, Cameron Punsky, and Kayleigh Perkins**

On March 5, deputies responded to a missing person call. The reporting party stated his sister was displaying erratic behavior throughout the night and when he awoke, he could not find her anywhere in the area. Deputies began a neighborhood canvas and Corporal Cavas and his K-9 partner, K-9 Holmes, were deployed. The search led them to a dock, where a hand was spotted. The female was ultimately located under the dock. Deputies were able to grab the female’s hand, but she would not let go. Deputy

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First Class Kotowski entered the water and was able to safely rescue the female. Master Deputy Turner responded to the area with watercraft and aided during the rescue. The female received further treatment by FCFR and was transported to the hospital.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – Commander Jonathan Dopp, Sergeant Franklin Gamarra, and Deputy Sheriff Dominic Quintieri**

On February 22, the FCSO Communications Center received a call from a female about her boyfriend attempting to jump out of the car and run into traffic on I-95. Upon deputies' arrival, the male was visibly distraught and acting erratically. He was standing near the fog line on the left lane of the highway and yelling about not wanting to die. Deputies attempted to communicate with the male, but he laid on the ground near the fog line asking them not to kill him. Deputies quickly secured the male and pulled him away from the travel lanes, where he again began to panic and resist efforts to keep him calm. Due to the unsafe location and excited state of the subject, deputies placed the male into a patrol vehicle and he was taken to the hospital for treatment. Deputies acted quickly in a dangerous situation to save the male's life, remaining calm and compassionate while trying to render aid to someone who was in danger of being struck by traffic.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – Sergeant David Edmonds**

Effective in April, Sergeant Edmonds resigned his tenure with the Emergency Response Team (ERT). Edmonds served on the ERT for approximately 11 years and was one of its founding members. During his time, he was involved in several local hurricane responses and also responded to many other natural disasters across Florida. Edmonds' contributions to the ERT cannot be overstated, and his time and dedication to the team are greatly appreciated. He will be missed as he transitions to the next phase of his career.

**CERTIFICATION OF APPRECIATION – Deputy Sheriff Kayleigh Perkins**

On December 7, 2023, Deputy Perkins responded to a Palm Coast home in reference to a Fraud/Larceny that occurred with an elderly victim. Perkins was able to identify a possible suspect that had access to the victim's finances and often was trusted as a caregiver to the victim. The victim had approximately \$350 taken from a debit card associated with her Social Security benefits, which was her only form of income. Perkins expressed interest in taking additional steps to work on the case. Through a series of interviews, subpoenas, and other investigative techniques, a suspect was identified, and an arrest warrant was obtained for Fraudulent Use of Identification (Victim over 65), Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card, and Petit

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Theft. Perkins was able to obtain a successful conclusion of the case resulting in multiple felony charges while also performing her regularly assigned job duties with the Community Policing Division.

#### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – Master Detectives Daniel LaVerne and James Crosbee**

On July 26, 2022, FCSO responded to an address in Palm Coast in reference to a sex offense. Master Detective LaVerne was assigned as the lead investigator and Master Detective Crosbee was assigned to assist with the investigation. Between July 26 and August 22, 2022, both detectives worked tirelessly to bring the suspect to justice. Advanced investigative techniques were used to build a strong case against the defendant. This included travel to West Virginia to conduct a suspect interview in which the suspect confessed to all the allegations made by multiple victims. The confession proved to be devastating to the defense, and the individual was convicted of seven charges in total.

#### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION – Detective First Class Kathryn Gordon**

On September 3, 2023, Detective First Class Gordon responded to a shooting at a Palm Coast residence which resulted in the death of a young male. Gordon went above and beyond to ensure that justice was served for the decedent. Gordon executed numerous search warrants and subpoenas, conducted countless interviews, and followed up on all investigative leads without hesitation. She explored creative ways to assist with her investigation, including State Attorney subpoenas, confidential source meetings, and grand jury proceedings. Gordon showed determination and high initiative during this entire investigation, which resulted in the shooter being charged with manslaughter with a firearm.

#### **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

January – Deputy Sheriff Cameron Punsy

February – Communications Specialist Lucas Santos

March – Detective First Class Kathryn Gordon

#### **YEARS OF SERVICE**

5 years – CCTV Operator Andrew Crowley, Detention Deputy Douglas Evans, Crossing Guard Lisa Hanson, Detective Stacy Kusek, Deputy Sheriff Michael Lane, Public Service Officer Kenneth LaVerne, Detention Deputy Abd Lulu, Deputy Sheriff Christopher Nguyen, Deputy Sheriff Jonathan Schmidt

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20 years – Commander Glenn Davis Jr., Records Clerk Mera Kozlenko, Sergeant Chris Ragazzo, Commander Scott Vedder, Commander Bernard Woodward

35 years – Records Clerk Sandra Terrell

## **2023 PERSONS OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

Detention Deputy of the Year – Corporal Peter Descartes

Law Enforcement Deputy of the Year – Deputy First Class Jennifer Prevatt

Professional Support Staff of the Year – Communications Specialist First Class Megan Burton

Volunteer of the Year – Citizen Observer Patrol Chief Roberson Brown Jr.

Citizen of the Year – Carol Nitopi

Kiwanis Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – Corporal Peter Descartes

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