



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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

NEWS RELEASE

Date: April 23, 2026

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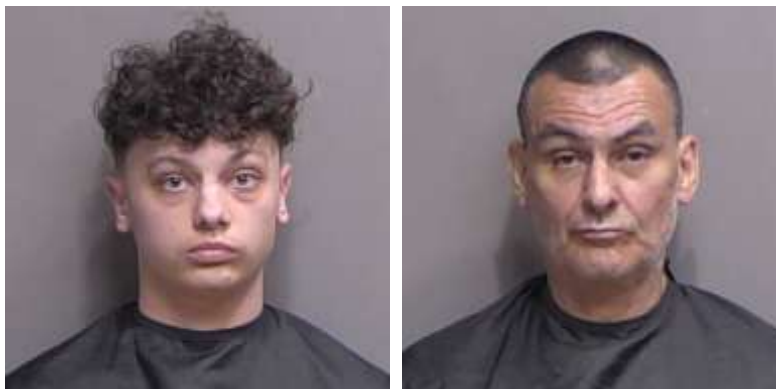
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Release #: 2026 – 091

Teen and Stepfather Arrested for Harboring a Runaway Juvenile During Multiple Missing Person Investigations

BUNNELL, Fla. — The Flagler County Sheriff's Office arrested a Palm Coast teen and his stepfather after detectives determined that both knowingly harbored a habitual runaway juvenile who was most recently reported missing on April 2. This was the seventh documented incident over the last year the juvenile was reported missing.

Deputies arrested Christopher Galezaai, 17, and Richard Rios Jr., 53, both of Palm Coast, following an investigation into numerous missing person cases involving the runaway juvenile, Galezaai's girlfriend, who also resides in Palm Coast.



Christopher Galezaai and Richard Rios Jr. (Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility mug shots)

Following each reported incident, which cost taxpayers thousands of dollars and tied up FCSO resources, deputies often located the runaway juvenile with Galezaai. In this latest incident, the

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missing juvenile returned home on April 4, only to leave again after a disagreement with her parents. On April 5, Galezaai's mother contacted the Flagler County Emergency Communications Center to turn the missing juvenile over to law enforcement. Galezaai was with his mother and the missing juvenile when deputies arrived.

During the investigation, Major Case Unit detectives reviewed each incident and determined that Galezaai had Rios pick up the missing juvenile and transported her to their residence, where they allowed her to stay for an extended period of time without notifying her parents or law enforcement, despite countless previous warnings from deputies and knowing she had been reported missing. Through investigative means, detectives also determined that Galezaai and Rios provided false and misleading statements to law enforcement to conceal their involvement in harboring the runaway juvenile.

"This dirtbag will not receive the stepfather of the year award. Harboring a runaway juvenile is not only irresponsible but illegal and comes with serious consequences, as these two found out the hard way," said Sheriff Rick Staly. "In this case, our deputies and detectives have dedicated time and resources on numerous occasions to locate the missing juvenile only to discover these two knew her location all along and helping her. Their criminal behavior diverts law enforcement from responding to real emergencies and wasted taxpayer dollars. We plan to sue them to recover all costs taxpayers incurred. Let this be a reminder to anyone thinking of interfering in a missing persons case that if you interfere in an investigation, you will be held criminally and civilly accountable."

Deputies arrested both Galezaai and Rios for interfering with the custody of a minor, a third-degree felony in Florida, punishable by up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fines. They were transported to the Sheriff Perry Hall Inmate Detention Facility where they were processed. Galezaai was ordered to be released to his parents by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice while Rios was released on \$2,500 bond.

Rios has an extensive criminal history, which includes a prior arrest in Colorado from 2000 for harboring a minor and other arrests for charges including burglary, domestic battery, DUI, battery on a law enforcement officer, aggravated battery, child neglect with great bodily harm, driving while license suspended, and violation of probation.

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