



## Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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### Media Release

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**From:** Denise M. Moloney  
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**Re:** Teamwork of HCSO Saves Trapped Man

**Date:** November 7, 2018

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On 11-04-18, at approximately 7:30 p.m., Deputy Vincent Donato was dispatched to a 9-1-1 Hang-up call that mapped in the area of a specific address on Deltona Boulevard. *It should be noted that the name, address, and telephone number of a 9-1-1 caller is confidential as per Florida Statute 365.171(12) and will be withheld to protect the caller's privacy.*

Initially, dispatchers advised Donato that they heard what was believed to be “a male mumbling” on the line. A short time later, dispatchers were able to determine that the male caller was trying to say he had fallen in his driveway.

Knowing that the male may have fallen, operators dispatched Hernando County Fire Rescue to the scene.

Donato and Fire Rescue arrived at the incident location at the same time. They did not observe anyone who had fallen in the driveway or in the immediate area. Donato made contact with the resident, a female, who advised she did not call 9-1-1 and no one in her residence required assistance. With the homeowner's permission, Donato checked the home to be certain that no one inside required assistance.

While searching the residence, dispatchers contacted Donato via the radio, advising him (through research) the phone number that was used to call 9-1-1 actually belonged to an individual a few streets away. Donato immediately responded to the new location.

Upon arrival, Donato immediately observed a male, on his back, with his head against the outside wall of the residence. The male was partially in a wheelchair that was flipped over on its back.

As Donato approached the male, he could hear the male making gurgling sounds. Donato also noted that the male was only partially coherent.

Donato requested that Fire Rescue respond to the new location.

Donato determined that the wheelchair had flipped over in the yard. The male was unable to get free from between the wheelchair and that wall. Due to the way the male fell, his air supply was restricted and he was beginning to choke. By the time Donato got to him, the male's face and lips were extremely blue.

Donato quickly pulled the male's head from against the wall and attempted to speak with him. Once his airway was clear, the male became more coherent.

The male told Donato that he fell backwards in his wheelchair and was accidentally choking himself as he tried to get free. The male went on to say that he had been on the ground for almost an hour before he was able to use the emergency alert button around his neck to summon help.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, "This call for service illustrates a couple very important points. First, calls for service often have very cloudy information. They never come across like those seen on television. Second, this is a great example of initiative and teamwork by Hernando County First Responders. The communication center, although very busy, went above and beyond on their research. That, combined with the deputy and fire/rescue working quickly to get the person stabilized, turned a very bad situation into a happy ending."

The male was transported to a local hospital by Fire Rescue. Physicians advised that the male will have a full recovery.

#### **The Office of Sheriff:**

**The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.**

**Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.**