



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
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Re: Hernando County Deputy Uses Drone to Locate Missing Special Needs Child
in Northern Pasco County

Date: August 17, 2020

On 08-16-20 just before 1 p.m., Hernando County deputies were dispatched to the area of Squirrel Prairie Road (Hernando County) and McMullen Road (Pasco County) to assist the Pasco Sheriff's Office in locating a **Missing Endangered Juvenile**.

Upon arrival, Hernando County Deputy Josh Mitro met with Pasco County Deputy Topham. Deputy Topham explained the Missing Juvenile was an 11-year-old with two prosthetic legs and multiple special needs.

Deputy Mitro, a Commercial UAS Pilot, immediately deployed his agency issued Unmanned Aerial System, commonly referred to as a drone, and began searching for the juvenile.

Pasco County deputies and K-9 teams continued to search by ground.

A resident notified Pasco deputies they had seen the juvenile on their property, sometime "earlier."

Deputy Mitro flew to the area where the juvenile was last seen and located the juvenile nearby, sitting behind a small garage/shed type building. Deputy Mitro notified Pasco deputies of the juvenile's location and continued to hover until he observed the Pasco deputies make contact with the juvenile.

It should be noted that from the time the UAS was launched until the juvenile was located was approximately 19 minutes.

We are extremely pleased with the outcome and thankful to have been able to assist our fellow law enforcement officers at the Pasco Sheriff's Office.

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, ran unopposed in 2016, and remains accountable to them.