



832 K9's Deputy Dog
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“Saving Lives and Catching Bad Guys”

Kathy Phillips, Publicity for K.S.M.F.
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832 Heroic Hound Daytona (Putnam)

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A 17-year-old boy who was missing for days was found alive in Palm Coast, Florida, Tuesday evening, and a couple of volunteer searchers and a bloodhound are to thank for it.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office said Rickey Wheeler, who suffers from muscular dystrophy, had been missing since Sept. 21 and did not have his medication. Deputies said he left his home last week without a cellphone, medication or a bank card.

Deputies did not start recruiting volunteers to assist in the search until Tuesday. Anthony Butrym and his wife Dawn decided to volunteer their time to help look for Wheeler that morning.

“I think our involvement in this is divine intervention,” Anthony Butrym told WFTV. “I found his clothes and then shortly after that, my wife found his shoes in the field sitting next to it.”

Authorities were alerted and Putnam County Sheriff's Office handler Sgt. Emmett Merritt and his bloodhound, named Putnam, used the scent from the clothing to find Wheeler about 100 yards away at the end of a dead-end road in a development site. “He was down in a really deep ditch,” Sgt. Emmett Merritt said. “I want to thank everyone for their tips, emails and support during this search,” Flagler County Sheriff Rick Staly said in a statement Tuesday. “I believe that Rickey Wheeler was found alive because of the massive efforts from our employees, our great community and volunteers and support from our neighboring law enforcement agencies along with our local fire/rescue departments.” The Sheriff's Office said Wheeler was transported to a local hospital and reunited with his family. He is in stable condition.



832's Daytona (Putnam)
Sgt Emmett Merritt

On behalf of Duke and Angela Snodgrass, co-founders of Deputy Dogs—to all of our volunteers, fosters, family, friends and financial supporters—we appreciate you very much. Because of your love and dedication since 2001, we have been able to provide over 200 trained bloodhounds to law enforcement worldwide. Our dogs are helping to find lost and abducted children, disorientated adults and giving closure to families 24/7. For information about Deputy Dogs, visit www.deputydogs.org.