



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 19, 2023

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## **Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Visits Local Students with Autism**

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., April 19, 2023 – On Tuesday, April 18, 2023, members of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office visited Connections Education Center of the Palm Beaches to educate students and young adults with autism about their role in the community. The officers and their therapy dogs met with students in small groups to discuss their duties as first responders and answer questions.

By visiting students in a familiar setting and incorporating therapy dogs into the visit, officers created a more comfortable environment where students learned about the role of law enforcement in their community. This visit gave students and young adults with autism the opportunity to understand how police officers work to keep them safe.

School Principal Debra Johnson says, "It's so important for people with autism to know how the police can help them. If they're lost or having a problem, they need to know they can ask an officer for help. We're grateful to the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office for giving our students the opportunity to better understand their role, and we believe this visit will not only positively impact our students but also promote the vital work that law enforcement does in the community."

In addition to meeting with officers, students had the chance to interact with therapy dogs. It has been documented that spending time with animals has a positive impact on individuals with autism, and these therapy dogs have been specially trained to provide comfort and support to those in need.

April 2023 is Autism Acceptance Month, and programs like this one can help promote understanding between individuals with autism and the community.

### **About Connections:**

Connections is a nonprofit educational center that delivers high-quality, specialized instruction to students with autism in Palm Beach County. They serve students ages 3-22 years and offer an innovative program for young adults with autism. Learn more at [connectedpb.com](https://connectedpb.com).

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