

The Do the Right Thing of Charlotte County recognition ceremony was held on Thursday, September 5, 2024, at Punta Gorda Police Department. The following students were recognized:

Evan Drake, Grade 10, Charlotte High School

Evan Drake was recognized for helping an elderly citizen in distress. While on a bike ride, Evan noticed an elderly woman laying down in the front yard of an assisted living facility and immediately went to see if she was ok. She needed help. Evan knocked on the facilities door, but no one was answering. He went back to the elderly lady, helped her up, and he started walking her to the front door as staff came out to assist. That evening, the owner thanked my Evan for being so kind and helpful and allowed him to see the elderly women to check in with her. She was so happy to see Evan, and thankful. (Though she has dementia and may not remember today what exactly happened), I believe through her crying and tears that night she was appreciative. I was so proud of the way Evan handled the situation, his kindness, and wiliness to help anyone he can. I was even able to get a couple of pictures of them together that evening.

Israel Hernandez, Grade 11, Charlotte High School

Israel was recognized for notifying authorities of a friend in need. Israel received a series of text messages from a friend that they had had enough and were leaving school to commit suicide. Israel was extremely concerned but unsure of what to do. When he got to class, he immediately went to his teacher. His classmate, Richard, overheard him ask their teacher what to do. The teacher was not sure how to answer and thought Israel might be trying to avoid taking his exam: however, after a few minutes, Israel was still concerned and asked again. Richard stepped in and told Israel and the teacher he had a contact at the Police Department and wanted to call them. Richard was able to reach his contact, and the police took immediate action. It was discovered that the friend had left campus. Thankfully, they were found by the police and received the help and support they needed. Thanks to Israel's and Richard's quick thinking, initiative, and caring heart, their friend was located.

Richard Lehmkuhl, Grade 11, Charlotte High School

Richard was recognized for notifying authorities of a friend in need. Richard overheard his classmate, Israel, ask their teacher, "What do I do if a friend just texted me that they were going to go kill themselves right now?" The teacher was not sure how to answer and thought Israel might be trying to avoid taking his exam: however, after a few minutes, Israel was still concerned and asked again. Richard stepped in and acted. He stopped his exam, told the student and teacher he had a contact at the Police Department, and stepped outside the class to make a call. Richard was able to reach his contact, and the police took immediate action. It was discovered that the friend had left campus and was taking steps to carry out their plan. Thankfully, the friend was found by the police and received the help and support they needed.

John Lewis, Grade 4, Sallie Jones Elementary School

John was recognized for his assistance in a medical emergency. John and his father were fishing when his dad collapsed. John used his dad's phone to call 911. He waited with his father until EMS arrived and transported him to the hospital. His dad remained in the hospital through the end of that week. I am proud of John for remaining calm and knowing how to call 911. It takes a lot of courage and strength to provide support to someone during a medical emergency. John did so without thinking twice!

Abayomi Walker, Grade 1, Meadow Park Elementary School

Abayomi was recognized for being a respectable student. Abayomi comes to school every day ready to learn and is a significant help in the classroom. She follows all directions, respects others, and makes sure to do what is right. She speaks up when something happens and fixes what she can on her own or with the help of her peers. She is very independent and responsible for a kindergartner! Lucy is always so sweet and makes good decisions every day at school.