



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



June, 2022

WINTER SPRINGS DYNAMIC DUO

Meet Officer Jesus Hilerio and K9 Maxio, from the Winter Springs Police Department. This dynamic duo serves the Winter Springs

community and surrounding Seminole County areas in special situations. Officer Hilerio is approaching his 6th year with the WSPD, where he has done many roles such as field training officer and is now a K9 handler. Together, he and Max report to the most dangerous calls, such as burglaries, robberies, and drug trafficking.

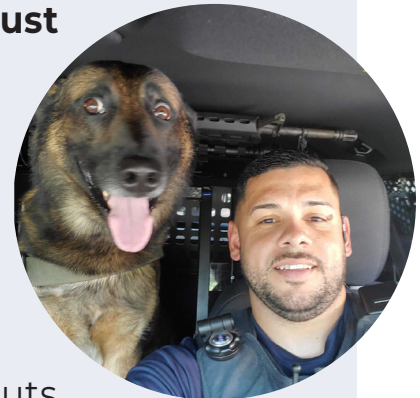
K9 Maxio (Max) has quite the portfolio as well. K9 Max is a Belgian Malinois trained to be a full-service K9. His skills range from tracking, searching, criminal apprehension, and narcotic sniffs. Max has over 480 hours of training for his FDLE certification and has successfully passed his physical and obedience training test. Max also trains weekly



with Officer Hilerio in “scenario-based training,” such as burglary, security, and apprehension. Together they have over 3000 hours of training.

When asked what it is like to work with Max, Hilerio says, **“Working with Max, I feel very protected. I know he will always have my back and will not hesitate to take action. He is my best friend. I trust him with my life because I know he will do the same without hesitation.”**

To Max, work is playtime. When Officer Hilerio puts on his uniform, Max paces back and forth because he knows it’s time to go to work soon.



Officer Hilerio shared about a few cases he and Max have worked on. In one incident, he reported to a suspect who refused to stop after going



southbound on a northbound lane. The car maneuvered to hit officer Hilerio but was stopped by the road strips. After being stopped, the suspect refused to come out of the vehicle. K9 Max was sent to apprehend the suspect, which allowed the officer to make a safe arrest.

In another incident, Seminole County reported a stolen vehicle from Volusia county. The car was spotted in a nearby parking lot. When the suspect noticed police units, they ran into the woods. Officer Hilerio and Max gave a verbal warning to come out of the woods. In his interview, he said, **“we always announce ourselves to give an opportunity to surrender.”** The subject was not compliant, at which point Max was sent in. Max was able to locate the subject and apprehend them. **“Doing this job, you have to be confident in making big decisions. Be up to date with statutes and state laws”**, says officer Hilerio.

When we asked Officer Hilerio for advice for aspiring K9 handlers,

he said, **“I think the most important thing is to have a lot of responsibility. You have to feel comfortable being around an animal. It’s like**



having a child with you—lots of liabilities. You have to make decisions in a matter of seconds. You are also worried about his life. He is a tool but also a living animal that we protect.”

When K9 Handler Hilerio and Max are off duty, they have a normal family pet relationship.



Max lives with officer Hilerio and gets along well with his family members and other dog. **“ He has a switch and knows when to turn it on and off,”** says officer Hilerio. If you find officer Hilerio and Max in your community or out on patrol, please feel free to wave and say hello. Officer Hilerio and Max are more than happy to take pictures with residents. “ I trust Max that he won’t do anything he’s not told to do. He is very obedient.”

Winter Springs thanks this dynamic duo for their dedication, teamwork, and, most importantly, for protecting our community.

