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Kristi House awarded major grant from Florida Blue Foundation for child safety and health program

Award expands Kristi House's work in deep south Miami-Dade County

Miami, FL – Kristi House, Inc., the not-for-profit Children's Advocacy Center serving Miami-Dade County that provides services and coordination of cases for children who have been victims of abuse and related trauma, has been awarded a \$302,000 grant for prevention and intervention work.

Child Safety Champions will provide a comprehensive, three-year child safety program targeting children, parents and professionals in underserved south Miami-Dade County, building upon Kristi House's priority focus on better serving this area.

Child Safety Champions was developed to increase awareness and prevention of child trauma resulting from sexual or physical abuse, sex trafficking, bullying, cyber dangers or exposure to violence. Kristi House specialists will present prevention education classes in schools and provide specialized trainings to professionals and adults in the community. All will be underpinned by a Spanish-language TV campaign in partnership with Univision. All those who need services will get help from Kristi House's expert therapists treating child trauma, at no cost to families.

"While Kristi House serves as the Child Advocacy Center for all of Miami-Dade, many children and families in our sprawling county encompassing more than 2,000 square miles face major barriers to accessing services due to distance, traffic conditions and inadequate public transit to get to one of Kristi House's five locations," CEO Claudia Kitchens said.

"Naturally we are thrilled that Florida Blue Foundation recognized that children and adults in deep south Miami-Dade would greatly benefit from the programs and services of Kristi House," she said.

In addition to services for child sexual abuse, Kristi House uses evidence-based practices to treat physical abuse, child sex trafficking, children with problematic sexual behavior and children and youth with substance use disorders and trauma.

The three-year grant from Florida Blue Foundation will enable Kristi House to present safety programs geared for children at different grade levels, as well as work with community agencies and other service providers on the front lines of serving children and families who might also be experiencing trauma.

Evaluation of the project and its effectiveness will be conducted by Maureen C. Kenny, Ph.D., Professor of Counselor Education at Florida International University and nationally recognized for her child abuse expertise.

As a federal SAMHSA grantee since 2012, Kristi House is dedicated to training others in the community and delivering evidence-based, culturally competent interventions for child victims overcoming trauma, especially related to sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation.

Kristi House is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and National Children's Alliance. Kristi House is also a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, the preeminent national body for collaborating professionals dealing with child trauma, affording significant resources for our community.

About Florida Blue Foundation

Florida Blue Foundation enables healthy communities by making grants, building coalitions and rewarding best practices. More than three million people in Florida have received direct health services as a result of grants made to nonprofit organizations since its founding in 2001. Florida Blue Foundation is a trade name of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, Inc., an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.floridabluefoundation.com

About Kristi House

Kristi House is dedicated to eradicating child abuse and child sex trafficking. Kristi House works to heal victims, and train the community on how to prevent abuse atrocities by equipping professionals, children and families with evidence-based prevention practices. As the state-designated Children's Advocacy Center for Miami-Dade County, Kristi House is responsible for coordinating the systems of justice and care for 1,000 child-victims of sexual abuse each year, working side by side with our partners in law enforcement, medicine, prosecution and guardianship. Kristi House provides a full continuum of wrap-around services and care for victims and their families free of charge including mental health services, critical for recovery from the trauma of sexual abuse for most survivors.

Kristi House is located on the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital campus at 1265 NW 12 Ave. It operates four satellite locations for improved client access. Founded in 1995, Kristi House has served more than 15,750 victims of child sexual abuse and their families. Thousands more are reached every year with education and prevention outreach programs. Visit www.kristihouse.org for more details.