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DATE: September 2018
For Immediate Release

Kristi House welcomes Vanessa Ramirez as Director of Programs

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 sexual abuse and related trauma, announced the appointment of Dr. Vanessa Ramirez, Psy.D. as its new Director of Programs.

Dr. Ramirez will fulfill a vital role overseeing delivery and evaluation of the organization’s programs, including its staff of 15 licensed and masters level clinicians. She will be responsible for ensuring quality service provision of all therapeutic programs, including program management, grant management and clinical supervision.

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Ramirez to Kristi House," CEO Claudia Kitchens said, "Her combination of clinical, research and management experience will lead Kristi House's growing program treating an array of childhood trauma, in addition to sexual abuse."

As a doctorate of psychology, Dr. Ramirez joins Kristi House with 15 years of research and clinical experience working with high-risk children and families with complex psychiatric and social needs. Having recently served as the Research Director/Assistant Clinical Director of Lotus House, Dr. Ramirez oversaw program planning and implementation of multiple evidence-based therapies, including Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), the mainstay trauma treatment Kristi House provides.

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. Dr. Ramirez will be instrumental in ensuring all therapy programs Kristi House provides are of the

highest standard, working closely with research partners at the University of Miami and Florida National University.

Having also served as the clinical supervisor of Citrus Health Network, Dr. Rameriz will bring her local knowledge of the most vulnerable children in Miami-Dade including those in foster care, and those who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Dr. Ramirez will take on the role of chief investigator for Kristi House's federal grant, C-START (Child Sexual-related Trauma, Advocacy, Response and Treatment). C-START was launched in 2012 to build community-wide capacity to deliver evidence-based, trauma-informed, culturally competent treatment interventions for child victims of sexual abuse and other types of trauma.

C-START is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). More than 200 therapists and case workers in South Florida have been trained by Kristi House in year-long training and practice programs under C-START.

As a SAMHSA grantee, Kristi House is 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. Kristi House is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and National Children's Alliance.

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 over 1,400 child-victims of 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 16,750 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.

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