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Kristi House and 350 supporters dedicated to *Breaking the Silence* of child sexual abuse convene for fourth annual event

Kristi House and 350 supporters came together for organization's 4th Annual *Breaking the Silence* program designed to build awareness and focus attention on the epidemic of child sexual abuse. The luncheon on April 23 at The Biltmore Hotel featured a guest speaker who is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, as well as the premiere of a new five-minute video.

Leon Medical Centers was Title Sponsor and Lourdes Leon-Vega was Honorary Chair. Event co-chairs were Rachelle de Moya, Edie A. Murphy of Wells Fargo Wealth Management, and Brett Alan Barfield, partner at Holland & Knight.

"We launched *Breaking the Silence* because we believe that as a society we are finally seeing widespread recognition of child sexual abuse as the public health epidemic it is," Kristi House Executive Director Trudy Novicki said. "We are at the brink of a sea change in understanding, and are experiencing an emergence of those willing to speak out, seek solutions, and break the silence."

Read G. Harris, a retired military officer now an executive with American Red Cross in Columbus, Ohio, spoke of the emotional trauma he endured as a child sexually abused by his stepfather from age eight to 12. His past haunted him and his relationships until he got professional help several years ago to cope with what was by that time "full-blown post traumatic stress disorder." His poignant book, *The*

Child Cried Alone,” chronicles his journey of recovery from the brutal, vile abuse he survived.

Kristi House also debuted a compelling new video produced by Within Productions, New Art Miami and The Yellow Butterfly Project. The video featured a young woman who got help from Kristi House several years ago as a teenager after enduring abuse at the hands of her stepfather for nearly a decade.

Kristi House is located on the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital campus at 1265 NW 12 Ave. Its south facility is located on U.S. 1 and 152nd and its north facility is located at 18441 NW and 2nd Avenue. Founded in 1996, Kristi House has served more than 7,000 victims of child sexual abuse and their families. Thousands more are reached every year with education and prevention outreach programs. Services include case coordination/case management, therapy, comprehensive assessments, transportation, advocacy and emergency assistance. Visit www.kristihouse.org for more details.

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