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DATE: April 23, 2008
For Immediate Release

Many Make Pledge to Help Kristi House Break the Silence

More than 200 friends of Kristi House turned out for Breaking the Silence on child sexual abuse April 23 at the children advocacy center's second annual luncheon for the community initiative. More than \$311,000 was raised in gifts and pledges to help children who have been sexually abused in Miami-Dade County.

"We launched *Breaking the Silence* because we believe that now, 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."

Guests heard a testimonial from a young adult survivor of child sexual abuse, from a mother whose daughter was victimized and from a therapist who provides counseling to children who have suffered the trauma of sexual abuse.

Leon Medical Centers underwrote the luncheon at the Country Club of Coral Gables for the program aimed at building awareness and support from concerned and caring parents, business leaders and community supporters who want to assist Kristi House in its mission and who share the organization's vision of ending child sexual abuse in Miami-Dade.

The event was co-hosted by Barbara Hinterkopf and Judy Zeder. Table captains included Lourdes Leon-Vega, Fernando Tamayo, Meg Daly, Judy Zeder, Sybil Barkett, Marty Steinberger, Glenn Huber/BNY Mellon Bank, Francesca Araujo, Edie Murphy/Wachovia, David Evensky/Evensky & Katz, Lizzie Padro, Mona Chanouha, Rima Shahin, Suzanne Anderson, Maureen Gragg, Jeanette Nuñez, Mayra, Lopez, Brett Barfield, Evelyn Budde, Nicole Vascianna, Jennifer Maduro, Monica Betancourt, and Barbara and Mercedes Saewitz

Kristi House is centrally located on the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital campus at 1265 NW 12th Avenue. Founded in 1996, Kristi House has served more than 6,000 victims of child sexual abuse and their families. Thousands more are reached every year with education and prevention outreach programs. Services include case management, therapy, referral, transportation, advocacy and emergency assistance. For more information visit www.kristihouse.org.

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