



## Kristi House's Project GOLD (Girls Owning their Lives and Dreams)

# FACT SHEET

**Kristi House** has led the Miami community response to commercial sexual exploitation of children since 2007 with a program encompassing community collaboration, prevention and treatment. Project GOLD provides health services linkages, case management and therapy services to survivors who experience physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual repercussions from the trauma of sexual exploitation.

**Project GOLD** also focuses on raising awareness about the reality of children being bought and sold in the commercial sex industry and building community capacity to treat and heal victims. The project is breaking new ground locally and nationally in addressing a previously overlooked and hidden population of child sexual abuse victims.

### THE PROGRAM

- Since referrals began in 2008, **180 girls**, ages 11-18, have received direct services.
- Supported through a **community partnership** of law enforcement, child welfare and social service agencies coming together around the issue, known as *Miami CSEC Working Group*.
- Major grant funding has included:
  - National Children's Alliance's **Urban Initiative** project in 2009 (first of its kind)
  - **U.S. Dept. of Justice** training and dissemination site under a three-year grant, 2009-2012
  - **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Local Funding Partners** grant recipient, 2011-2015, matched by local funders for \$1 million toward emergency shelter and drop-in center.
- **Replication** of CSEC training program in four Florida cities in 2011-2012 (Tampa, Orlando, Gainesville and Fort Lauderdale/Broward County).

### THE SHELTER

The next critical component to helping girls **escape "The Life,"** get off the streets and restore their lives, a **drop-in center and emergency shelter** of six beds is planned for a 2012 opening.

- Will be home to Project GOLD program of **specialized health, mental health and victim advocacy support services** to girls, and also offer **short-term respite** from the streets.
- Backed by local funders matching the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant with **support designated for the shelter and its operations**.
- Key **community partners** include Miami-Dade Police; Miami-Dade County Juvenile Services; Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc.; State of Florida Dept. of Children and Families; University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Division of Adolescent Medicine; among many others.

### ADVOCACY, AWARENESS, EDUCATION

- Kristi House leading **Safe Harbor legislation** efforts in Florida, which would shift children being exploited in prostitution from the criminal system to the child welfare system.
- Kristi House launching major trafficking identification and rescue program with Miami-Dade County Airport and Seaport, collaboratively with air and cruise industry leaders.