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Many Make Pledge to Help Kristi House Break the Silence

More than 260 friends of Kristi House turned out for Breaking the Silence on child sexual abuse April 30 at the Children Advocacy Center's third annual luncheon for the community initiative. More than \$320,000 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 an adult survivor of child sexual abuse who told of being sexually abused by her uncle as a young girl and harboring her secret for years. Now a wife and a mother of a 12-year-old daughter, she has broken her silence and urges others to speak out. A teenage girl receiving therapy services from Kristi House spellbound the crowd as she sang Somewhere Over the Rainbow and played the guitar. And testimonial was given from another mother, a prominent business leader, who talked about the trauma her young daughter underwent being sexually abused at the age of 4, but how Kristi House had helped her heal.

Leon Medical Centers underwrote the event at the Grove Isle Hotel & Spa.

Launched three years ago, *Breaking the Silence* is 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 Rachelle de Moya, Glenn Huber of BNY/Mellon, Barbara Hinterkopf and Judy Zeder. Table captains included Lourdes Alvarez, Suzanne Anderson, Brett Barfield, Josephine Burke, Anita Cachaldora, Laura Cava Northrop, Mona Chanouha, Rima Shahin, Raquel Cohen, Nelson David Diaz, Alina Fernandez, Maureen Gragg, Liz Hogan, Joy Intriago, Anne Jackaway, Bobbie Jones-Wilfork, Marcia Koo, Richard Langhorne, Lourdes Leon, Edie Murphy, Lourdes Cuevas, Zandra Rucker, Mercedes & Barbara Saewitz, Fernando & Sue Tamayo and Marielena Villamil.

Kristi House's main office 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 6,800 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, comprehensive behavioral assessments and emergency assistance. For more information visit www.kristihouse.org.

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