

March 15, 2022 – Kristi House

Thank you so much Amanda, Theresa and Dr. Ramirez. What a thorough and informative meeting- we learned so much!

Amanda Altman is the CEO of Kristi House.

- At the start of the pandemic there was a decrease in the number of children served. This is because over 40% of cases are reported by the schools.
- Kristi House has 6 locations, with the main location in downtown Miami (across from the State Attorney's Office). There are satellite locations in Miami Gardens, Homestead, Palmetto Bay, and Naranja.
- There are 2 drop-in centers for girls who are victims of child sex trafficking.
- Kristi House serves both males and females.
- 1 out of 4 females and 1 out of 6 males are assaulted before age 18.
- Kristi House sees children who have experienced any trauma or abuse or who have witnessed domestic violence.
- They have a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) comprised of GAL, the Criminal Court Project (Fran Feinberg or Katrina Valiente), State Attorney's office (SAO), DCF, law enforcement from City of Miami and Dade County, CPT (Child Protective Team), and they meet every Friday morning to discuss new and pending cases.
- CPT has an office at Kristi House.
- They also conduct all forensic interviews with children.
- They provide case coordination and advocacy.
- They have 4 prevention education specialists.
- There is an in-house psychiatrist from Nicklaus Children's Hospital there 1x/week

Dr. Vanessa Ramirez -- Chief Program Officer

- Kristi House offers wrap-around services/
- 16 therapists on staff use evidence-based trauma treatment. They work with children who have experienced physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, or who have been a witness to homicide/suicide/
- They help children ages 12 and under who are acting out inappropriately sexually -- it is an 18-week program, evidence-based, and includes group sessions. Older children are referred to Citrus.
- Psychiatrist comes 1x week.
- Therapists help children prepare for Court (testifying, depositions). They will also accompany the kids to court, if necessary.
- Family Advocate Department
 - Provides case coordinators for families, aside from the therapy for children. They offer support to the family and provide additional therapy, if necessary (behavioral, mental health, etc.).
 - Provides financial assistance -- rent, food pantry, furniture, etc.
 - Links clients with community resources and referrals.
 - Provides legal aid, if needed
- Unaccompanied minor specialization
 - Trauma, immigration/refugee issues
- Education and outreach -- 4 prevention-education specialists
 - Train community members on trauma -- how to recognize it, respond to it, and prevent it.
- All services are free.

- People often disclose after community-education presentations.
- All zip codes and socio-economic classes are served by Kristi House/
- Most therapists are bi-lingual, and they also have translator services if it's a language none of the therapists speak.

Theresa Kennedy -- Project Gold

- Project GOLD was named by the girls and stands for Girls Owning their Life and Dreams.
- 2 drop-in centers.
- Wrap-around services, which are survivor-led and survivor-informed.
- Since 2012, they have served female victims of sexual exploitation.
- The drop-in centers are safe-space physical homes at an undisclosed address for the protection of the children and the staff.
- Laundry services.
- Family-style meals provided Mon.-Thurs. Group sessions are followed by dinner and closed with another group session.
- Transportation coordinators.
- Serve ages 11-18 but members for life -- can always come back to join/lead group, etc.
- Children come from both the dependency system and the community-at-large.
- Services:
 - Survivor mentoring
 - Therapy-group programs, life skills, Motivational Edge -- survivor led.
 - Survivor advocacy
 - Bridges to the Future -- career counseling and employment, work with the school system for educational programs.
 - Tutoring
 - Emergency assistance: financial, food, uniforms, school supplies, etc.
 - Connect to other services within the community
 - Part of the MDT for human trafficking reports
 - Incentive based

Kristi House:

- They are looking for special people to teach financial literacy and car purchasing.
- Survivor Pathways provides special services for transgender youth and LGBTQ females. There are specialists at Kristi House for LGBTQ youth.
- Kristi House has therapists that work on Saturdays or provide virtual therapy.
- They have street outreach with various community partners -- SAO, law enforcement, and Citrus. With Formula 1 Race coming in May, they are working very hard with hotels, motels, and missing-children flyers.
- They are also working with children who are victims of labor trafficking.

KRISTI



HOUSE

Kristi House Services

VANESSA RAMIREZ, PSY.D.
Chief Program Officer

Theresa Kennedy
Chief Operating Officer

Kristi House Children's Advocacy Center

- ▶ The nationally accredited CAC for Miami Dade County
- ▶ Provide free services to children and their families affected by trauma and abuse (kristihouse.org/services)
- ▶ Training to the community on childhood trauma (kristihouse.org/education)
- ▶ Locations: Downtown Miami, Palmetto Bay, Miami Gardens, Homestead, and North and South Project GOLD Drop In Centers
- ▶ Multidisciplinary Team— law enforcement, SAO, DCF, CPT, GAL, foster care agencies

KRISTIHOUSE.ORG | (305) 547-6800



Kristi House Services for Children

Evidence-Based Trauma Therapy for Children and Families

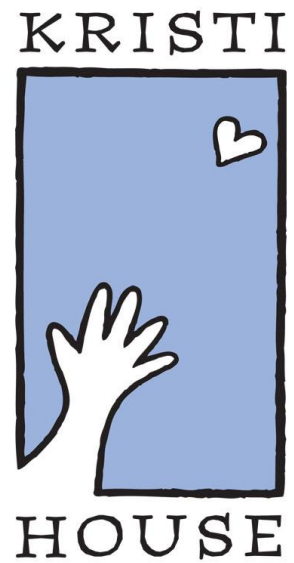
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (all traumas)
- TF-CBT for UC and CSEC
- Alternatives for Families: a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Physical Abuse & Family Conflict)
- Problematic Sexual Behaviors Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Risk Reduction Family Therapy (Trauma and substance abuse/risky behaviors)
- Education and Prevention Groups

Family Advocacy

- Provide education, resources and referrals to caregivers and families
- Provide education and advocacy

Prevention Education

- ▶ Stewards of Children
- ▶ Child Safety Matters
- ▶ Childhood Problematic Sexual Behavior
- ▶ Children and Traumatic Stress
- ▶ CSEC 101
- ▶ Hurricane Trauma
- ▶ Mental Health Wellbeing (children and adults)



PROJECT GOLD

GIRLS OWNING THEIR LIVES AND DREAMS



Project GOLD is committed to providing Survivor Led and Informed wrap-around services and support to youth who have experienced or are at risk of human trafficking using a Drop-In Center model and trauma-informed care.

Project GOLD Drop-In Center:

In 2012 Project GOLD began operating the first Drop-In Center in Florida exclusively for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

- Undisclosed Location
- Safe Space to “drop in”
- Home-like Setting
- Family Style Meals
- Washer & Dryer
- Transportation Available
- Individual & Group Services

Who We Serve

- ▶ All female program
- ▶ Ages 11-18 at intake, but “Members for Life”
- ▶ Victims or at risk of Human Trafficking (HT), and their non-offending caregivers
- ▶ “Community kids” vs. Dependency/Child Welfare Involved Youth
 - ▶ Occasional youth placed in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Institutions
- ▶ Varying racial and ethnic diversity
- ▶ Miami-Dade County

Project GOLD Services



- ▶ Survivor-Mentoring
- ▶ Intake & Assessment
- ▶ Individual & Family Therapy
- ▶ Youth Advocacy & Case Management
- ▶ Group Programming
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Meals & Supplies
- ▶ ***Bridges to the Future Program***
 - Career Coaching & Employment
 - Paid Internships
 - Academic Enrichment & Education
 - Tutoring
- ▶ Crisis Intervention
- ▶ Emergency Assistance



Offer groups between 3 pm to 7pm Monday -Thursday at the Drop-In centers



Trained staff and community partners facilitate groups



Plan groups based on educational, vocational, social, emotional, developmental, and other needs



Participation is voluntary and mostly open-format



Evidence-Informed/Based Curriculums (sometimes closed in membership or duration)



Incentivized program for attendance

Project GOLD Group Model

Groups at Project GOLD



- ▶ Survivor-Led
- ▶ Lyrical Expression/Music and Art
- ▶ Life Skills
- ▶ Therapeutic and Supportive
- ▶ Safety and Prevention
- ▶ Recreational
- ▶ Education and Employment
- ▶ Holiday and Special Events
- ▶ Field Trips

Project GOLD Leadership

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