

The Studio at Lotus Village & Lotus Village Voices

Program Overview

With deepest gratitude to
The Children's Trust



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Introduction

Lotus Village is a state-of-the-art, comprehensive homeless services facility nestled in the heart of the historic African American district of Overtown - one of the poorest neighborhoods of Miami, Florida¹, itself one of the poorest large cities in the United States.² Lotus Village is home to the Lotus House Women's Shelter ("Lotus House"). Sheltering over 500 high special needs women and children nightly from across Miami-Dade County, it is one of the largest women's shelters in the country. Based on principles of education and empowerment, Lotus House offers a trauma-informed sanctuary with comprehensive support services, education, tools and resources to heal and empower women and children to reclaim their lives and build the foundation for safer, brighter futures. Among many unique features, Lotus House includes an intake sanctuary, employment and education center, working classroom kitchen, yoga/meditation room, salon, art and activities lab, neighborhood health clinic, and a children's playroom with play spaces throughout.

Lotus Village has been humbled and privileged to receive three consecutive Innovations Awards from The Children's Trust of Miami Dade County, Florida that have sparked innovation, best practices and enriched programming and services for sheltered children at Lotus House, and serve as a model on a national level for putting children first. The first such award in 2018 seeded the research and development of a model therapeutic children's wellness center using trauma informed, best practices to help vulnerable children and families heal, grow, learn and thrive together. Today Lotus Village includes the Micky and Madeleine Arison Family Foundation Children's Wellness Center, offering six classrooms for early education and childcare provided by the Miami-Dade United Way Center for Excellence in Education, together with individual screening and therapeutic interventions provided by Lotus House's Children's Services Program. Building on and enriching those successes, The Children's Trust, Miami Dade County and other key funders helped Lotus House launch "The Farm" at Lotus Village in 2019, a unique children's learning environment, science lab and urban garden based in a high-tech, climate controlled, hydroponic growing-outfitted freight container. The Farm offers seed-to-harvest and farm-to-table educational programming for children of all ages; at the same time, the vegetables produced nurture and nourish the entire Lotus House shelter community. At the time of writing (Feb. 2021), these programs have welcomed upwards of 2,000 sheltered program participants - 1,288 children and 658

¹*American Community Survey 2017*. United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

² Lipscomb, J. (2017, Aug. 22). *Miami Ranks Second-Worst in Nation for Income and Poverty Level, Census Says*. Miami New Times. Retrieved from <https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/miami-ranks-second-worst-in-country-for-income-and-poverty-level-census-survey-says-9689540>.

mothers assessed in our Children's Wellness Center; 400 children and 250 adults in the Farm; provided 5,640 counseling sessions for mothers and children; nurtured over 20,000 plants and 1,700 pounds of fresh vegetables to feed the growing and developing bodies under our roof; fostered partnerships between multiple trusted service providers in the community (including United Way, Florida International University, Hammock Greens and Green Haven Project); and enriched the lives of our children, mothers and families in unprecedented ways otherwise likely inaccessible outside the Village.

In pre-pandemic, early 2020, as we stood firmly established yet ever-evolving, pondering the ways in which we could further deliver unique, empowering and enriching experiences and new ways of learning for our sheltered children - who have endured so much trauma, yet contain such limitless potential - sharing their stories, talents, hopes and dreams in a more impactful way with the community and our world at large. Organically, the idea for the "Studio" at Lotus Village and "Lotus Village Voices Vodcast" (Vodcast) was born.

Project Overview

In the Studio at Lotus Village, we aim to create an exploratory educational, therapeutic and creative arts program and vodcast for the sheltered children and families of Lotus House; and launch the Vodcast utilizing an all new recording studio at Lotus Village to amplify their talents, stories, hopes and dreams. Our project goals are to:

- 1) Enhance and encourage creative expression and learning in all forms of language, sound, performance and visual arts, including personal and creative storytelling, spoken word, song, poetry, music, and performance; build confidence and self-esteem; and encourage positive social interactions and relationships;
- 2) Create outlets for the voices of children and families - who have too often survived by being invisible - and their life experiences, perspectives, stories, messages and artistic creativity that will be heard, seen and appreciated within Lotus Village and beyond by establishing a cloud-based audio and visual archive, and with permission, broadcast to our Miami-Dade community and the wider world; and
- 3) via an all new Vodcast, raise awareness of children with no place to call home; their need for safe, supportive shelter in times of transition; giving voice to their stories, special needs, strengths and creativity, messages, hopes and dreams; and sharing evidence-based best practices, service-driven research, and innovative solutions modeled in Lotus Village.

To give the reader and those considering a similar type of project, the steps to accomplishing these goals include three major components:

- 1) Build The Studio. In our case, construction will consist of a retro-fitted room with enhanced mobile capabilities to record throughout Lotus Village and potentially elsewhere. Retrofitting includes additional lighting, air conditioning, electrical service, painting and soundproofing, installation of audio-video recording and broadcast equipment, and development of props. The Studio is sited in close proximity to The Farm, to encourage cross pollination!
- 2) Develop Program Guide. The Lotus House programming team is conducting in-depth research of other educational, therapeutic and creative arts programs to develop a program manual and curriculum (Guide) for use with the program. When complete, this Guide will be shared with other organizations via social media and our website. Based on prior experience with innovation projects, this Guide will serve as a living document, continually expanded and refined throughout the term of the project as we tailor the program to our children's needs.
- 3) Develop Cloud-Based Audiovisual Archive. A cloud-based audio and visual archive will be developed with public and private (participant only, password protected) viewing areas, and with permission, broadcast to our Miami-Dade community and the wider world beyond;
- 4) Enriched Therapeutic Arts Program for Lotus House Children and Families. Using the Guide, implement therapeutically informed arts programming for Lotus House sheltered children - most with developmental, social and emotional challenges, behavioral issues and trauma histories - with evidence-based activities involving music therapy and sound exploration, live performance, creative writing and storytelling, theatre and drama play, spoken word and poetry.
- 5) Lotus Village Voices Vodcast. Lotus House will create, record, edit and publish its own podcast/vodcast of a semi-scripted narrative, interview and educational nature. Our goal is to amplify the lived experiences, hopes and dreams of our children and families; spotlight the evidence-based best practices, policy and research initiatives and innovative solutions in Lotus Village; engage with experts working within the shelter, public health and social/human service industries; and end every episode with a call to action to our immediate Miami community that will further fortify our services and sustain our vital programming. Each episode will be published on multiple prominent digital platforms including Spotify, Apple Podcasts and YouTube, the latter in audio-visual format. This new show will allow our Village to deliver news and narratives to our followers in an unprecedented manner, broadcasting our everyday struggles and triumphs into their phones, computers, homes, offices and classrooms.

Right idea, right now

While the pandemic delayed our plans and changed nearly every aspect of shelter operations to advance the health and safety of our children and families, it actually underscored the importance of this project. While we as an emergency homeless shelter - serving as a home for children and families who have none - operates by necessity in-person 24/7 365 days a year, the rest of the world migrated to virtual platforms. The broader digital revolution ushered in the growth of 500,000 active podcasts in 2018 to 1,750,000 in January 2021³, and the short-form video content app TikTok rose meteorically as the fastest-growing social media platform of all time.⁴ Web-based information sharing and social media were more essential than ever to elevate our work and connect to broader audiences across space and time. Lotus House has grown at rapid speed in 15 years of operation - from dilapidated apartment buildings to state-of-the-art, mixed-use comprehensive homeless services facilities - and is today the largest women's shelter in the State of Florida and one of the largest in the country. We recognized, now is the time to grow into the digital space.

Amidst the chaos of sudden lockdown and shift to online schooling in April 2020, we created the #washyourhands music video⁵ as a collective effort between programming staff, school-age children, alumni, mothers and skilled volunteers. Complete with independent composition, choreography and editing, this cherished video exemplifies one small nugget of what will come with our enhanced in-house production capabilities.

2020 was a year of global racial reckoning and calls for racial equity, social justice, diversity and inclusion. Homeless children and families are marginalized on every level in our society, shrouded in misplaced shame, judgements, stereotypes and misinformation, which has too often led to a dearth of resources to truly address their needs. They are disproportionately victims of domestic and/or intimate partner violence, gender based violence, trafficking and other crimes and trauma. They are also disproportionately Black and Hispanic in Miami. In the three year period of 2018-2020, 60-70% of sheltered women and children at Lotus House were Black, 25-35% were Hispanic, and 1-5% Other. It is time that sheltered women, youth and children emerge, heads held high, from the shadows to receive long overdue and richly deserved

³ Winn, R. (2021, Jan 1). *2021 Podcast Stats and Facts*. Podcast Insights.
<https://www.podcastinsights.com/podcast-statistics/>

⁴ Mohsin, M. (2020, Sept 3). *10 TikTok Statistics That You Need To Know in 2021*. Oberlo.
<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/tiktok-statistics>.

Koetsier, J. (2020, Sept 14). *Massive TikTok Growth: Up 75% This Year, Now 33x More Users Than Nearest Direct Competitor*. Forbes.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkoetsier/2020/09/14/massive-tiktok-growth-up-75-this-year-now-33x-more-users-than-nearest-competitor/?sh=71e065044fe4>.

⁵ Available on YouTube; 2,068 views to date: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqpA3EzdL-4>.

resources for their healing, growing, learning and thriving together. It is the time to center the voices and stories of Black and Hispanic children, single mothers, youth, women young and old experiencing homelessness. This historic moment is an unparalleled opportunity for deeper understanding and sharing, advocacy, social impact and reach, and empathic connection. The threats of institutional and interpersonal violence, illness, loneliness, unemployment and homelessness are acutely real, and the virus has exposed how intricately and delicately interconnected we all are. The timing of this project is all the more relevant as we seek to touch hearts and deepen understanding, in our community and beyond, of the unique needs of children and families experiencing homelessness, their stories, hopes, dreams, talents and potential in the expanding medium of podcasting and digital media.

Programming Design & Outline

Programming Considerations & Contextualization

As with the Farm at Lotus Village in 2019, we felt it was necessary to create our own programming guide, with its own research base, due to the unique needs of sheltered children. Children experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable and carry with them heavy trauma - not to mention the traumatic experience of homelessness itself.

These often intersecting, complex traumas may include interpersonal violence, physical and sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence, community violence, death or loss of loved ones, bullying and grief. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network states that complex trauma in young children may influence attachment and relationships with caregivers, authority figures and peers; physical health, functioning and development of the body and brain due to toxic stress; dysregulated emotions and behavioral responses such as overreacting, outbursts, numbing and dissociation; cognitive difficulties that affect learning, planning, and problem-solving; and low self-esteem and self-image.⁶ Evidence-based assessments of Lotus House children upon intake in 2020 reveal that 83% of children experienced trauma symptoms in a clinically significant range (*Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen - Caregiver's Report*) with 63% showing delay in at least one of five areas of development (*Battelle Developmental Inventory Screening Test*).⁷

These varied, extensive cognitive and behavioral characteristics affect interpersonal and classroom dynamics in ways that may not be prevalent in typical after-school or child care settings - and require an abundance of flexibility and patience with regards to curriculum and program planning. But the long-term health impacts and chronic illness, increased risk of juvenile delinquency and adult incarceration, economic impacts and financial disadvantages associated with childhood trauma⁸ make accessible, enriching, empowering, evidence-based, trauma-informed programming all the more critical.

Of equal importance for programming design is physical context and age range. Lotus House is the primary residence of all children participating in programming, and while

⁶ *Effects of Complex Trauma*. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/complex-trauma/effects>

⁷ Internal data for January 2020 - January 2021. For more info, see Graziano et al, 2020 (under peer review).

⁸ Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998). **Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study.** *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8)

some attend nearby public and private schools, many are attending school virtually inside the walls of the Lotus Village Education and Employment Center. The hours during which Studio programming will occur - largely from 4-6 pm with some weekends and holidays - are an important free time for the children that is neither school, therapy, nor work. This time must be fun, relaxing, intrinsically therapeutic and educational without being overly structured or demanding too much from the children. It is a mixed-age group ranging from 3-18 years old, sometimes younger, with mothers and adults present. For these reasons, Lotus House deeply embraces an experiential learning philosophy or “learn by doing” model that is engaging, hands-on and peer-led in place of traditional instruction.

Relatedly, programming staff who lead the bulk of activities are in a unique position - certified child-care providers who are experienced and attentive to the needs of sheltered children, though not credentialed music therapists nor music producers. Therefore, Skilled Volunteers in these areas have been recruited whenever possible to lead and/or collaborate on activities,⁹ and programming staff will serve as a type of “para-therapist” who will guide the creative environment,¹⁰ with additional support from Children’s Services team members and counselors. This report focuses on programmatic activities taking place in the Studio, Arts & Activities Lab, Yoga/Meditation Room and Lotus Learning Pod/Education Center; however, the existing staff infrastructure allows for a potentially organic expansion of the Studio program into the child and family counseling realms. We intend to firmly establish the core structures of Studio outfitting and performance activities during the grant period in order to make space for the limitless crossovers and collaborations, internally and externally, that will sustain and vitalize the program for many years to come.

Programming research methods, evidence base & limitations

To develop this program, we conducted our own systematic review of the extant literature in order to identify an evidence base that fits our needs and context. The search began broadly on open-access databases for keywords related to expressive arts therapies (including music therapy, drama therapy, play therapy, performance arts, dance & movement, creative writing, poetry, digital storytelling, rap & hip hop) within trauma-informed care or child welfare settings. 162 articles were initially identified, then narrowed down to approximately 60 for additional relevance (removing those taking place prior to 2005; in medical or unrelated clinical and educational settings, adult-only studies, etc.). Eventually, less than 20 articles remained, with the topics of Community

⁹ Grant deliverables include at least 10 “skilled volunteers,” demonstrated via resume.

¹⁰ Partab, V. (2012). Creative Healing - An Examination of the Value of Creative Drama in helping South African children deal with the Traumas of their lives. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 69, pp. 487-491. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.437.

Music Therapy (CoMT) and Arts-Based Participatory Action Research (PAR) emerging as predominant themes.

Music Therapy (MT) is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions within a therapeutic relationship. It is an established health profession, conducted by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program.¹¹ There are over a dozen MT specializations for different groups or settings - e.g., for Autism Spectrum Disorder, Alzheimer's disease, pediatric cancer, etc. Whereas traditional MT takes place between the therapist and a single subject or small group in private or clinical settings, CoMT occurs in various community settings that may facilitate wider engagement and amplify marginalized voices. It allows for a more flexible, inclusive, collaborative approach that involves various community stakeholders and can feature larger performance-based group activities rather than a typical one-on-one therapy model. And while the field is relatively young, there is growing evidence that CoMT brings with it many of the same benefits as traditional MT: social-emotional skills like increased confidence, feelings of calm and better communication skills,¹² improved self-esteem, social connectedness and decreased mental health stigma,¹³ and neurobiological traits like improved neuroplasticity and speech development.¹⁴

PAR utilizes a research method, used previously in Lotus House projects,¹⁵ in which the research "subjects" work alongside researchers to take an equal and active role in crafting study design and outcomes. Arts-based PAR applies this one step further by using artworks and documentation of the creative process as evidence in and of itself. For example, Fairchild & Skews-McFarren (2019) used collaborative group songwriting with children experiencing homelessness and the resulting recording as an investigative piece into the healing power of music.¹⁶ This undertaking of PAR with children

¹¹ **What is Music Therapy?** American Music Therapy Association.

<https://www.musictherapy.org/about/musictherapy/>.

¹² Parker, A., Marturano, N., Lewis, G., & Meek, R. (2018). **Marginalised Youth, Criminal Justice and Performing Arts: Young people's experiences of music-making.** *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 21 (8) doi:10.1080/13676261.2018.1445205

¹³ Woofenden, N. (2020). **Decreasing Mental Health Stigma One Song at a Time: Using Community Music Therapy to Increase Social Connectedness and Decrease Self-stigma and Perceived Stigma.** *Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses*, No. 295. https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses/295

¹⁴ Kraus, N., Hornickel, J., Strait, D., Slater, J., & Thompson, E. (2014). **Engagement in community music classes sparks neuroplasticity and language development in children from disadvantaged backgrounds.** *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 5. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01403

¹⁵ Eaton et al (2021). **A culture of care: How Lotus House Women's Shelter heals program participants through genuineness, dignity, belonging, individualized attention, high expectations, and space.** *Journal of Community Psychology* (Manuscript under peer review; study ongoing).

¹⁶ Fairchild, R., Skews McFerran, K. (2019). **"Music is everything": Using collaborative group songwriting as an arts-based method with children experiencing homelessness and family violence.** *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, Vol. 28 (2), pp. 88-107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2018.1509106>

exemplifies a move away from traditional adult-led research methods and instead a “move towards a more inclusive and collaborative approach to research where children’s voices and contributions are viewed as essential to understanding their perspectives.” Importantly, the authors also note that “This approach to research allows children, even those who are less talkative, developmentally impaired or otherwise marginalized, the opportunity to fully participate and contribute through creative modes of communication without the need to rely on verbal or written accounts.” Villaincourt (2012) articulates how the combined CoMT/PAR framework can connect the individual benefits of expressive arts therapies with larger social justice movements by “help[ing] society evolve toward a broader understanding and resolution of injustices by raising awareness on both sides of the fence: on one side, the clients claiming the right to exist as who they authentically are and, on the other side, the community learning to include them as equal members of society.”¹⁷ In this unique format, by centering women and children’s voices and creating myriad arts-based work products in the form of lyrics, poems, song recordings, music videos, live performances, podcast interviews and social media/web-based content, we can contribute to the research literature in a novel way that is relevant and accessible in the digital age.

Practically speaking, day-to-day Studio programming will include creative play-based activities such as collaborative and individual songwriting, poetry and choreography workshops; “musicking” or explorative music-making with professional and homemade instruments; and flex-time for rehearsals (detailed in following “Program Outline” section) that will build up towards the aforementioned creative work products. A typical live performance, or in-house production, may include set design, makeup, costumes, songs and poems created by guests and staff. Every performance will be recorded using Studio equipment by a minimum of two people (staff and/or Skilled Volunteers) for later editing. Active creative participation by children and families will be supplemented with more passive musical activities, such as listening to outside performers and tutors who can serve as positive models of what’s possible in the creative field. Positive modeling is a component of Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that individuals learn by observing the behavior of others.¹⁸ Lyrical content and creative subject matter will be strengths-based and prosocial in nature, which has been shown to reduce aggression and antisocial behaviors.¹⁹

There are some important limitations in the evidence base worth noting. While growing, the area of CoMT research is relatively small; most of the sources in this report were

¹⁷ Vaillancourt, G. (2012). **Music therapy: a community approach to social justice.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, Vol. 39, pp. 173-178. doi:10.1016/j.aip.2011.12.011

¹⁸ Bandura, A. 1977. *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

¹⁹ Greitemeyer, T. (2010). **Exposure to music with prosocial lyrics reduces aggression: First evidence and test of the underlying mechanism.** *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 47, pp. 28-36. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2010.08.005

published in the last five years. Many articles were either qualitative analysis, systematic reviews, or merely arguments in favor of the expansion of CoMT programs, and almost none had experimental or randomized-controlled design. Where applicable, effect sizes were small. With the exception of a single project in Los Angeles, all published programs were in Europe, Australia, Asia or South Africa. One systematic review attempting to quantify credentialed music therapists working in Child Advocacy Centers (multidisciplinary service hubs for low-income or abused children, similar to Lotus House) in the United States delivered a number “in the single digits.”²⁰

Also noteworthy is that nearly all of the available publications on MT and CoMT with children focus on those ages seven and up. While almost half of the Lotus House population are children, nearly two-thirds of those children are under the age of five; many are infants ages zero to one. Research on this age group predominantly focuses on the benefits of MT in neonatal intensive care units²¹ and the capacity for parent-child bonding through “communicative musicality.”²² While these study settings do not translate to that of Lotus House, we hope to engage mothers and their infants whenever possible through the use of Skilled Volunteers or Children’s Services team members. In their editorial for the Young Children special issue of the International Journal of Community Music, titled *Where have all the little ones gone?*, Dansereau and Ilari note the “relative absence of young children from the community music literature” and the organic overlap between the fields of early childhood education and community music - their mutual emphasis on care and hospitality; the centering of children’s ideas and voices; and use of behavioral modeling, free play and creative exploration. They attribute this academic dearth to the apparent lack of agency among babies and young children, and advocate for the specific creation and publication of child-centered CoMT programs.²³ Additionally, nonprofit organizations such as Music Together LLC identified the need for evidence-based music programs for children aged birth through eight, and designed an MT program to complement parent-child therapies²⁴ similar to those already implemented in the Lotus Village Children’s Wellness Center such as the

²⁰ Blank, C.A. (2018). **Child Advocacy Centers in the United States and Music Therapy: Relationships in the Making**. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, Vol. 18 (4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v18i4.2589>

²¹ Haslbeck, F.B., Jakab, A., Held, U., Bassler, D., Bucher, H.U., & Hagmann C. (2020). **Creative music therapy to promote brain function and brain structure in preterm infants: A randomized controlled pilot study**. *NeuroImage: Clinical*, Vol. 25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nicl.2020.102171>.

²² Malloch, S., Shoemark, H., Crncec, R., Newham, C., Paul, C., Prior, M., Coward, S., Burnham, D. **Music Therapy With Hospitalized Infants—the Art And Science Of Communicative Musicality**. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, Vol. 33 (4), pp. 386-399. DOI: 10.1002/imhj.21346.

²³ Dansereau, D. & Ilari, B. (2017). Where have all the little ones gone? Young children and community music. *International Journal of Community Music*, Vol. 10 (3), pp. 237-246. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm.10.3.237_2.

²⁴ Music Together LLC. (2012). Music Together Supports Parenting Programs and the Parent-Child Relationship.

Strengthening Families Program.²⁵ This copyrighted, subscription-based curriculum requires a full-time trained music therapist - a position currently unfilled at Lotus House but worth investigating as a complement to our counseling program in year two of the project. One planned activity is an “audio time capsule” of sorts in which new or expecting mothers can record songs or messages for their infants to share at a later date, through the use of our cloud-based archive. For children ages 1-3, musical engagement will be largely play-based²⁶ through the use of child therapists and age-appropriate musical instruments and toys (see equipment list for details). There are additional evidence-based arts and crafts activities applicable to all ages including healing sock puppets²⁷, DIY percussion instruments, graffiti art²⁸, and face painting²⁹ and set design for performances.

We acknowledge that these shortcomings are the cost of experimentation and innovation, and we hope our project can meaningfully contribute to the literature and visibility of the field. In this case, our “evidence base” is a combination of peer-reviewed literature and our own experience in operating a special needs shelter for women and children for over 15 years.

²⁵ Blank 2018.

²⁶ Woolett, N., Bandeira, M., Hatcher, A. (2020). **Trauma-informed art and play therapy: Pilot study outcomes for children and mothers in domestic violence shelters in the United States and South Africa.** *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104564>

²⁷ Anderson, K. (2019). **Puppet Creation: A Lost Art in Treating Child Trauma.** *Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses*, No. 136. https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses/136

²⁸ Klingman, A., Shalev, R., Pearlman, A. (2000). **Graffiti: A Creative Means Of Youth Coping With Collective Trauma.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, Vol. 27 (5), pp. 299-307.

²⁹ MacKay, B. (1987). **Uncovering Buried Roles Through Facepainting and Storytelling.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, Vol. 14, pp. 201-208.

Program Summary (*first year*)

Target service population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheltered/alumni children ages 0-18 - Sheltered/alumni mothers and youth ages 18+ - <i>High special needs (developmental and behavioral disorders; histories of trauma and abuse; mental illness)</i>
Target audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guests and alumni of Lotus House - Miami-Dade and South Florida community - Community leaders, activists, researchers, policymakers and citizens locally, statewide and nationwide
Target outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 300 children participating - 100 mothers participating - 3 live performance/productions by Lotus House guests - 3 live performances by outside musicians/actors - 2 children's music videos - 4 vodcasts (monthly after first year) - Creation of Spotify, Apple, Stitcher, and Tik Tok platforms - Complete construction/installation/outfitting of in-house recording studio
Target reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase to 10,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing by 1,000 annually - 150 YouTube subscribers - Avg. 1K views on YouTube per vodcast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increasing by 1K annually

Sample Programming Calendar - 1 Week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2:00 - 3:00 pm <i>Location:</i>	Snack & garden activity <i>Rooftop garden/ hydroponic farm</i>	Snack & garden activity <i>Rooftop garden/ hydroponic farm</i>	Cooking class <i>Arts & Activities Lab</i>	Snack & garden activity <i>Rooftop garden/ hydroponic farm</i>	Snack & garden activity <i>Rooftop garden/ hydroponic farm</i>
3:00 - 4:00 pm <i>Location:</i>	Tutoring/ homework <i>Education Center</i>	Tutoring/ homework <i>Education Center</i>	Tutoring/ homework <i>Education Center</i>	Tutoring/ homework <i>Education Center</i>	Tutoring/ homework <i>Education Center</i>
4:00 - 5:00 pm <i>Location:</i>	Music class with Nayleen <i>Arts & Activities Lab</i>	Crafts with Stephanie <i>Arts & Activities Lab</i>	Fitness class <i>Yoga/ Meditation Room</i>	Flex/rehearsal time (see <i>activities list</i>)	Flex/rehearsal time (see <i>activities list</i>)
5:00 - 6:00 pm <i>Location:</i>	Dance class with Angelika <i>Yoga/Meditation Room</i>	Arts & Movement therapy class with Jenna <i>Yoga/Meditation Room</i>	Songwriting/ Storytelling Workshop with Lina <i>Arts & Activities Lab</i>	Karaoke Open Mic <i>Pavilion</i>	Crafts with Jada <i>Arts & Activities Lab</i>

Sample Programming Calendar - Monthly & Annual

Monthly:

- Week 1 = Workshopping
- Week 2 = Workshopping
- Week 3 = Finalizing & Rehearsals
- Week 4 = Show Week & Cast Party

Annual:

- January = Children and Families' Live Music Performance
- February = Black History Month Fashion & Talent Show (Live Performance #1)
- March = Music Video 1 (Spring Break)
- April = Podcast Episode #1
- May = Guest Live Music Performance #2
- June = Slam Poetry Night (Live Performance #2)
- July = Podcast Episode #2
- August = Summer Drama Series (Live Performance #3)
- September = Podcast Episode #3
- October = Music Video 2
- November = Podcast Episode #4
- December = Guest Live Music Performance #3

Activities List

General Activities

Collaborative group songwriting (as outlined by Fairchild & Skewes-McFarren, 2019)

Location: Arts & Activities Lab

Age group: children 7-12, youth, mothers

Led by: programming staff and volunteer music therapists

Equipment: N/A; whiteboard and/or flip chart

Process: Begin with brainstorming interpretations and ideas around a given topic (e.g., “what music means to me,” “living at Lotus House,” “my hopes and dreams,” etc.), ensuring every child’s voice is represented (approx. 20 minutes). Write all ideas on the board/chart. Work together to agree upon main ideas by asking children which ideas are their favorite and how they can expand upon them, selecting 3-4 main ideas. Begin co-creating song lyrics by providing structural options for the piece (e.g. verse/chorus sequence, rap or spoken word, singing); music therapists are needed at this point. Work one line at a time so children do not lose interest or get frustrated. Select melody via improvisation. Practice songs at least three times before recording. Note: authors stated the entire songwriting process took 4 hours; activity can be broken up into four sessions if needed.

Haiku Show & Tell

Location: Arts & Activities Lab

Age group: children 7-12

Led by: programming staff & general volunteers

Equipment: N/A; whiteboard, pencil and paper

Process: Use whiteboard to teach children about haikus and general structure. Provide a writing prompt (e.g., “how I’m feeling right now”) and direct each child to create their own haiku with the help of volunteers. When finished, go around in a circle so each child can present.

Percussion Play

Location: Yoga/Meditation Room or Playroom

Age group: young children birth - 7 (mothers welcome), children 7-12

Led by: programming staff, general volunteers

Equipment: chimes, triangle, rainstick, tambourine, xylophone, shakers, maracas; floor piano

Process: Free play time for young children (great option if younger children need to be separated from older children for music therapy activities). Attempt to synchronize children’s music-making with one another - early evidence suggests that preschool activities centered on beat synchronization and motor coordination skills in a group setting can enhance young children’s motor, auditory, and self-regulatory functioning.³⁰ If

³⁰ Williams, K.E. (2018). Moving to the Beat: Using Music, Rhythm, and Movement to Enhance Self-Regulation in Early Childhood Classrooms. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education*, Vol. 50. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-018-0215-y>

age appropriate, instruct children to listen to the duration of the entire note from beginning to end, and feel it vibrate through their bodies, as a mindfulness practice.³¹

Choir Practice & Vocal Exercises

Location: Yoga/Meditation room

Age group: children, adults (separate)

Led by: programming staff, volunteer music therapists

Equipment: sheet music, shakers, tambourine

Process: Vocal exercises led by Skilled Volunteer. Vocal arrangements to be determined by group from a selection of options by staff. Songs/arrangements will be recreated through harmonization, percussion making, step dance and vocal solos. May also include vocal practice and composition for performance rehearsal.

DIY Rainstick Craft

Location: Arts & Activities Lab

Age group: children (3-12)

Led by: programming staff, general volunteers

Equipment: cardboard roll (from wrapping paper, paper towels, etc.), aluminum foil, uncooked beans or lentils, tape, scissors, crayons/markers for decoration.

Process: Follow steps outlined by NASA Climate Kids.³² Be sure to discuss the history of rainsticks, made from dried and hammered cacti, and the potential role of food/plants in music history!

Intro to Beatmaking with TIDUR

Location: Education & Employment Center (groups) OR Studio (individual)

Age group: youth & adults

Led by: Skilled Volunteer

Equipment: If EEC: SmartBoard; if Studio: Editing Station

Process: Introduction to Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) for music production and editing.

Healing Sound Bowls for Children

Location: Yoga/Meditation Room

Age group: children 7-12

Led by: Skilled Volunteer

Equipment: *provided by volunteer* - crystal sound bowls, Koshi chimes

Process: Sound bowl meditation adapted for children.

Healing Sock Puppets

Location: Arts & Activities Lab

Age group: children 3-12

Led by: programming staff, general volunteers

³¹ Auerbach, C. & Delport, A.C. (2018). Developing mindfulness in children through participation in music activities. South African Journal of Childhood Education, Vol. 8(1), a519. [https:// doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v8i1.519](https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v8i1.519).

³² [Make Your Own Rainstick! - NASA Climate Kidsclimatekids.nasa.gov > rainstick > rainstick](https://climatekids.nasa.gov/rainstick/)

Equipment: N/A; socks, buttons, glue, markers, pipe cleaners

Process: Children will be provided with a single sock and supplies to create a face and outfit if desired. Children will be asked to name and introduce their sock puppet friend, sharing at least three facts about their personality and how they are feeling. If time permits, sock puppets may be used in a short puppet show.

Studio Activities

Audio Time Capsule

Age group: mothers; children accompanied by mothers

Led by: trained programming staff and therapists

Process: Mothers may record a message for their children and vice versa, up to 15 minutes long. Recording will be edited for quality control by staff and uploaded to Cloud archive for guest access.

Pre-Scheduled Individual Studio Time

Age group: children ages 13 and up; youth; adults

Led by: trained programming staff and therapists

Process: Guests, as an incentive, may schedule individual studio time in one-hour slots for desired purposes including vocal tracks, music production, beatmaking, etc.

Vodcast Interviews - Village Voices

Age group: all guests ages 4+

Led by: trained programming staff and therapists

Process: 15-minute slots for guests of any age to answer given prompts in interview or long-form format. Questions/topics may include:

For children: What are your biggest hopes and dreams? If you could be anything in the world, what would it be? If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be?

What's your favorite thing to do in your free time? What's your favorite object to play with and why? What's your favorite subject in school and why?

For adults/mothers: What are your biggest hopes and dreams? What's keeping you from achieving those hopes and dreams, or what needs to happen to help you get there? If you are comfortable sharing, how did you arrive at Lotus House? In what ways has Lotus House supported you so far? If you had a message to other women in your position, what would you tell them? If there was one thing you could give to your children right now, what would it be?

Family & Baby Photos, Headshots

Age group: all

Led by: programming staff or volunteer photographers

Process: Formal photoshoot (backdrop, lighting, etc.) for families or individuals for personal or professional use to be uploaded to Cloud archive. May include set design created by guests.

Studio and Vodcast Design & Outline

Studio Design Considerations

Similar to programming design, special considerations were undertaken in selecting and outfitting the physical Studio space. Room selection was based on availability within the Lotus Village development and cohesion with other programming spaces; a “programming hub” of sorts will be created by locating the Studio room next to the hydroponic Farm and ceramic kiln in the building’s covered back entrance. This area, separate and outside from building common spaces, reduces noise and is optimal for recording and editing. Soundproofing will be included. Interior design of the Studio will feature in one corner a table, armchairs, backdrop and microphones for the “Recording Station;” studio desk, desktop computer, monitors and swivel chairs in another corner as the “Editing Station,” and extensive shelving in all other spaces for equipment storage.

Equipment was selected on the basis of mobility, ease-of-use and durability. Mobility, because physical recording space is limited and we intend to engage all other areas of the shelter and beyond for a “mobile studio” concept, as with music videos and live performances. Ease-of-use, because programming staff are not trained professionals and because we want to engage children and young people with the technology as much as possible. Hahna et al found that music technology was underutilized in most music therapy programs; while the majority of surveyed music therapists were female ages 21-30, music technology was predominantly utilized only by self-taught males in the field.³³ We hope to shift this paradigm and maximize technological engagement by training programming staff (via skilled volunteers and self-teaching) who can then educate guests and peers for further use. Lastly, durability of equipment is a priority given the sheer number of children and others who will be interacting with it.

Equipment was selected via consultation with Sweetwater Sound, Inc. and expert volunteers. Two cameras were purchased: GoPro 8 Suite, for mobile and child-friendly recording, and Panasonic AG-UX90E Camcorder bundle for in-studio Vodcast recording and live performance recording only. Selected bundles include add-ons for enhanced audio quality and content creation. LogicPro was selected as the DAW based on volunteer recommendation and compatibility with Apple products. All other equipment was selected based on the aforementioned criteria and space considerations.

³³ Hahna, N.D., Hadley, S., Miller, V.H., Bonaventura, M. (2012). **Music technology usage in music therapy: A survey of practice.** *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, Vol. 39, pp. 456-464. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2012.08.001>

Equipment List

Editing Station:

Desktop Computer: Apple Mac Pro 8-Core/32/256/580X + Apple AppleCare+ for Mac Pro

Additional computer monitor: Viewsonic 24" FHD LED Monitor

Hard Drive: G-Technology G-DRIVE USB 4TB Desktop Hard Drive

Audio Monitors (x2): Yamaha HS8 8"

Audio Interface: Universal Audio Apollo Twin X QUAD 10x6

DAW: Logic Pro

Beat Making/Drum Machine: Akai Professional MPK Mini MK III 25-key Keyboard Controller

Workstation: On-Stage Stands WS7500 Workstation Desk - Rosewood

Recording Station:

Desk and Chairs to be donated by Thrift Boutique

Camera: Panasonic AG-UX90E Camcorder

Tripod: MACTREM Professional Camera Tripod DSLR

Podcasting Microphones (x4): Shure Digital Podcast Mic

Podcasting Microphone arm (x4): Gator Frameworks GFWMICBCBM2000 Desk-Mounted Broadcast Microphone Boom Arm

Pop Filters (x2): Shure PS-6 Popper Stopper

Headphones: AKG K240 Studio Semi-open Pro Studio Headphones

"Mobile" Studio Equipment:

Camera: GoPro HERO 8 + Media Mod Expansion Pack + Display Mod Flip-Up Screen + Light Mod Compact LED Light + Waterproof/Dive Housing + Tripod Extension Grip

Portable Speakers: JBL Boombox duo OR Studio Audio Monitors

Vocal Microphones: Lauten Audio LA120 Small-diaphragm Condenser Microphone Pair

Microphone Stands (x2): On-Stage Stands MS7701B Euro Boom Microphone Stand

Keyboard/Drum Machine: Casio SA-76 Portable Arranger Keyboard

Portable Audio Recorder: Zoom H4n Pro Handy Recorder

Lotus Village Voices Vodcast Overview

Similar to programming design, Lotus House staff undertook a systematic review of existing podcasts related to homelessness, housing, trauma-informed care, social services, domestic and partner violence, and children's welfare. 29 shows were identified; only 18 were active (posting new episodes within the last three months) at the time of research. Some were recorded by individuals currently or previously living on the streets, some by concerned citizens, some by service providers, some by advocacy organizations, and some by local or regional radio stations. Most were produced in coastal areas, predominantly California and the Northeast United States, with a few in Texas and the Midwest. No existing shows on the topic, to our knowledge, are in Florida or Miami. Research matrix is available upon request.

While today there are more published podcasts than any one person could listen to in a lifetime, we believe our show will be different in a few important ways. Most of all, our show will engage all the aforementioned stakeholders - those we currently shelter with lived experience, professionals and advocates, media personalities and the local community. Each episode will feature a novel mixed format including semi-scripted narratives, research overviews, interviews with staff and other outside professionals, and of course most importantly - and notably absent in the podcast research - the voices and stories of children and youth.

Working Title: Lotus Village Voices - The Official Podcast of the Lotus House Women's Shelter

Show Description: *Lotus Village is a holistic emergency shelter for women, youth and children experiencing homelessness in Miami Dade County, FL. In this show, we amplify the voices and stories of our sheltered guests; share our trauma-informed, best practices and innovative solutions from over 15 years of shelter operations, programming and service delivery; and explore solutions to end homelessness in our country. For more information on Lotus House, visit www.lotushouse.org or follow us on social media @lotushouse1.*

Cover Art: [photo of Lotus Village building exterior (see Appendix) overlaid with white sans serif font reading, "LOTUS VILLAGE VOICES" with Lotus House logo]

Keywords: *homelessness, housing, health and human services, children, innovation*

Style: Semi-scripted interview, narrative and educational audio podcast with video/vodcast component (for YouTube); estimated 30-45 minute episodes

Editors & Software: Recorded and edited by staff - trained and assisted by Skilled Volunteers; Logic and Adobe suite

Hosts: Jackie Roth

Projected publishing timeline: May 2021, July 2021, September 2021, November 2021

General episode structure:

- Introduction & Housekeeping - 2-5 minutes
- Interview with Lotus House team expert(s) - 5-10 minutes
- "Village Voice" - in-house children's/families voice recording - 5-10 minutes
- Research topic overview - 5 minutes
- Conclusion/call to action - 2-5 minutes

Potential episode run & topics (for first year; in no particular order except episode #1)

- Episode 1: Intro to Lotus House
 - Comprehensive overview of our services, facilities, and history
 - Interview - Constance, Sharonee, Georgette
- Episode 2: Children First
 - Intro to Children's Wellness Center
 - Deep dive on research background & findings

- Interview - Shana, Muriel, Nadly
- Episode 3: Seeding Innovation & Cooking Up Change
 - Intro to Farm & Culinary Center
 - Overview of child and family hunger, obesity & poverty, nutrition education, culinary education
 - Interview - Jackie R., & Genevieve & Jackie W.
- Episode 4: The Value of Lived Experience
 - Intro to Operations Team; evolution of shelter staffing
 - Research into lived experience
 - Interview: Katy or Isabella; Sharonee, Monyia, Pat and/or Dominique

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