

**CONSTANCE A. COLLINS**

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**Constance Collins**, JD, Since 2004, Constance Collins is the Founder and President of the *Sundari Foundation, Inc.*, a non-denominational 501c3 public charity, best known as the *Lotus House Women's Shelter*, and its supporting foundations, Lotus Endowment Fund, Inc., Lotus Village Development, LLC, Lotus Village, II, LLC, and Lotus Supporting Foundation, Inc. A lawyer and businesswoman prior to founding Lotus House, Constance has been a full-time volunteer for the Lotus family of charitable organizations since 2004, establishing and overseeing the development, operations, programming, services, research and growth of the Lotus Village. In the all new, state of the art, comprehensive homeless services facility in Lotus Village and its planned expansion in the Children's Village at Lotus Village, Lotus House is setting new standards on a national level with trauma informed, evidence based, best practices, and proven strategies to ending and preventing homelessness that put children first and respond sensitively to the gender specific needs of sheltered guests.

Winner of the 2016 *Non-Profit Innovation Award of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce* and 2018 *Project of the Year Award of the Urban Land Institute Southeast Florida/Caribbean*, Lotus Village is a life-changing prototype for the future, designed as a mixed-use "village" combining state of the art shelter facilities and holistic, trauma-informed, supportive services to heal, nurture and uplift children and families experiencing homelessness. With capacity to shelter over 500 women and children nightly, this trend-setter includes: solution focused individual needs assessments and social services supports, individual and group counseling, child and family therapy, and social services advocacy; a working classroom kitchen sized to deliver a half million meals a year; an urban garden nourishing body, mind and spirit; a healing hands salon to soothe and uplift; a computer library for adult education, after school programming and job readiness training and employment assistance; yoga, Reiki, meditation, dance and exercise classes; an art and activities lab offering alternative pathways to healing and creative expression; and welcoming play spaces for children throughout the village. Aptly named, Lotus Village, because *it takes a village*, this new facility is the first of its kind on a national level, the more so because it includes a trauma-informed, therapeutic children's wellness center including six classrooms offering early child care and education for newborns to age three, with a therapeutic overlay of child-parent therapy, play therapy, parenting classes, resource coordination, and linkages to key community partners to strengthen and uplift children and families. Enriched with a health clinic for women and children, Lotus Village is deeply embedded in and serving the neighborhood it calls home, preventing and bringing an end to homelessness with a full range of medical and dental services. So much more than a shelter, Lotus Village is a center for innovative, best practices, research and advocacy for public and social policies to raise awareness of the gender specific needs of women and youth experiencing homelessness and advance the health, wellbeing and school readiness of children experiencing homelessness, transforming trauma into a window of opportunity to strengthen children and families, and offers a platform for deeper community engagement, collaboration, shared learning and dialogue, on a local, state and national level.

The latest planned expansion of Lotus House includes the establishment of an innovative, new model neighborhood children's resource center, the Children's Village at Lotus Village, providing enriched educational facilities, therapeutic supports, diverse programming, greater access to health, legal and social services, and a wide range of community resources. The Children's Village has already been recognized as an innovative new model for establishing neighborhood children's resource centers with an *Innovation Award from the Miami Dade County Children's Trust* and the *Neighborhood Builder's Excellence Award from the Bank of America Charitable*

*Foundation.* Creating a platform for unprecedented collaboration, the Children's Village is designed as a holistic collective impact model where Lotus House and other Overtown based nonprofits and community organizations are working together to heal, empower and uplift the Lotus House sheltered children and the children and families of their beloved Overtown neighborhood and surrounds. Ground breaking on this state of the art, 75,000 sf, trauma informed, children's facility is planned for the Spring of 2023, with occupancy in 2024.

Ms. Collins also serves as the President and Executive Director of the *National Women's Shelter Network*, a powerful and growing network of women's shelters and shelter programs from across the country aimed at sharing evidence based best practices, building organizational capacity, developing innovative public policy, and advancing resources for women and children experiencing homelessness and the shelters that serve them to prevent and end homelessness.

Ms. Collins' work on behalf of the Foundation was preceded by over twenty-two years of business, finance, real estate and legal experience. Constance served as the chief operating and financial officer, general counsel, and co-founder of a full service real estate investment advisory firm, Urban Investments Advisors, LLC (and its predecessor Starwood Urban Investments) and real estate holding company, Starwood Urban, LLC, and its subsidiaries, responsible for the management and operation of a national commercial real estate investment portfolio, overseeing growth and value-added strategies, development, financing, accounting, and reporting for portfolio revenues, until the successful disposition of those investments in 2004. Prior to Starwood, Ms. Collins was in private law practice, representing institutional investors and lenders in structuring, negotiating and documenting complex real estate, business and financial transactions, credit recovery, litigation oversight, and repositioning of investment properties. Her business career laid the foundation for her work today in ending and preventing homelessness.

**Education:**

*Juris Doctorate*, University of Colorado School of Law, Boulder, Colorado, 1983, Order of Coif  
*Bachelor of Arts*, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, 1980

Professional trainings include: Foundations in Contemplative Care of the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, New York, New York, 2016, in addition to continuing legal education.

**Professional Licenses:** Florida Bar, 1985; District of Columbia Bar, 1989.

**Government Appointed Board Service:**

- Miami Dade County Children's Trust, Gubernatorial appointment, 2018-2023
- Miami Dade County Domestic Violence Oversight Board, 2018-2021
- Miami Dade County Homeless Trust, 2015-2018

**Honors:**

- 2022 & 2021 Florida Trend: 500 Most Influential Business Executives, Philanthropy & Nonprofits
- 2018 Women of Impact Award, Women's History Coalition of Miami Dade County, Inc.
- 2018 Philanthropy Award, Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness, New York
- 2018 Girl Power Rocks Award, Girl Power, Miami
- 2017 Spectrum Award, American Red Cross

- 2016 Visionary Award, Miami Herald
- 2016 Julia Tuttle Award by City of Miami Commission on the Status of Women
- 2016 Salutation Honoring Women in Public Service by the City of Miami
- 2015 Public Servant Award – South Florida Community Development Coalition
- 2014 FBI Director’s Community Leadership Award by United States Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation
- 2010 Woman of Vision Award by the Weitzman Institute
- 2008 Local Hero Award by Bank of America
- 2007 Honoree, Women Who Make a Difference by Junior League of Miami, Inc.
- 2006 Commendation For Women Builders of Communities and Dreams, National Women’s History Month, by the City of Miami and Miami Commission on the Status of Women

**Lotus House/Lotus Village Awards:** CARF International Accreditation since 2019; Four Stars, Charity Navigator, annually since 2015; Platinum Status, GuideStar, annually since 2017; Neighborhood Builder’s Excellence Award: Children’s Village at Lotus Village 2022, Bank of America Charitable Foundation; Innovations Project Award: Children’s Village at Lotus Village 2022; Innovations Project Award - Lotus Village Voices Recording Studio and Vodcast, Children’s Trust 2020; Innovations Award - The Hydroponic Farm at Lotus Village, Children’s Trust 2018; 2018 Project of the Year, South Florida and Caribbean Urban Land Institute; 2018 Structures Award for Community Impact, South Florida Business Journal; 2017 Housing for Everyone Award, TD Charitable Foundation; 2016 Innovations Award - Children’s Wellness Center in Lotus Village, The Children’s Trust; 2016 Non-Profit Innovation Award of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce; 2014 Housing for Everyone Award, TD Charitable Foundation; “Best Charity” by New Times 2013; 2013 Community Spirit Award from the Commission on Women; 2012 Outstanding Service Excellence Award from the American Society for Public Administration – South Florida Chapter; 2012 Zeta Phi Beta Community Achievement Award; Neighborhood Builder Award of the 2011 Neighborhood Excellence Initiative of Bank of America; Leave a Legacy 2010 Donor Next Door award presented by the Health Foundation of South Florida; 2010 Unity Award by Theodore R. Gibson Memorial Fund; 2010 Health Care Hero Award by Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce; “Best of Miami Shelter” by New Times, 2010; and 2005 and 2006 Networking Deal of the Year for Sundari Foundation, by Miami CREW, for Lotus House, and numerous proclamations of Miami Dade County and City of Miami Commission recognizing the important work of Lotus House.

**Professional Publications/Presentations:**

Co-Author: Doblecki-Lewis S, Lester L, Schwartz B, Collins C, Johnson R, Kobetz E. *HIV risk and awareness and interest in pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis among sheltered women in Miami.* Int J STD AIDS. 2016 Sep;27(10):873-81.

Co-Author and Co-Principal Investigator: Eaton A, Stephens D, Ruvalcaba Y, Banks J, and Sundari Foundation, Inc. *A Culture of Care: How Lotus House Women’s Shelter heals program participants through genuineness, space, high expectations, dignity, individualized attention, and community.* Journal of Community Psychology, 2021.

Co-Author and Co-Presenter: Poster Presentation recognized as “Best Reflects Policy Research,” Society for Research in Child Development, Biennial Conference, April 2021.

Co-Author and Co-Principal Investigator: Graziano P, Spiegel J, Arcia E, and Sundari Foundation, Inc. *Early Assessment and Intervention for Families Experiencing Homelessness: A randomized trial comparing two parenting programs*. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, accepted for publication 2023.

Co-Author and Co-Principal Investigator: Spiegel J, Graziano P, Arcia E, and Sundari Foundation, Inc. *Addressing Mental Health and Trauma-Related Needs of Sheltered Children and Families with Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, July 2022.

### **Videos and Social Media:**

Today Show, NBC National News:

<https://www.today.com/video/how-lotus-house-helps-homeless-women-and-children-129166405835>

NBC Local Story:

<https://www.nbcmiami.com/on-air/as-seen-on/lotus-house-shelters-community-impact/2645281/>

Learn more about the Children's Village at Lotus Village at [www.lotushouse.org](http://www.lotushouse.org)

Watch this video for a tour of the incredible features of Lotus Village: <https://youtu.be/UIjOmCdqeMs>

Lotus Village Voices Podcast

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/lotus-village-voices-official-podcast-lotus-house-womens/id1570293561>

See the Emmy Award Winning Grand Opening Video - [The Lotus House Story](#)

Hear the voices of those we serve: <https://youtu.be/O1J22jC2bBY>

Learn about the Lotus House Children's First principles in *Through the Eyes of Children* video:

<https://lotushouse.org/childrenfirst/>

Watch a news video on our work

here: <http://miami.cbslocal.com/2018/04/10/mentoring-matters-lotus-house-founder-helps-homeless-people-get-back-on-their-feet-pay-it-forward/>.

<https://www.facebook.com/LotusHouseShelter/>

<https://www.facebook.com/lotushouse.thrift/>

<https://twitter.com/lotushouse1/>

<https://www.instagram.com/lotushouse1/>

Learn more at [www.lotushouse.org](http://www.lotushouse.org) and [www.lotusendowment.org](http://www.lotusendowment.org)

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