



The Melissa Institute  
For Violence Prevention and Treatment

**2011 Report to the Community**

# The Earlier, the Better







Art by Jamesha Rollins, Young Women's Academy for Academic and Civic Development at JRE Lee.

# The Earlier, the Better

**W**e wait at the doctor's office, at the mechanic's shop and in the supermarket. These daily inconveniences do us no real harm. So we wait and make the best of it.

But in some cases, waiting can be harmful to us and others.

Violence prevention is like that. A child's early years are formative years. Childhood experiences can have lasting impact. Parents, teachers and other adults can help determine whether that impact is positive or negative.

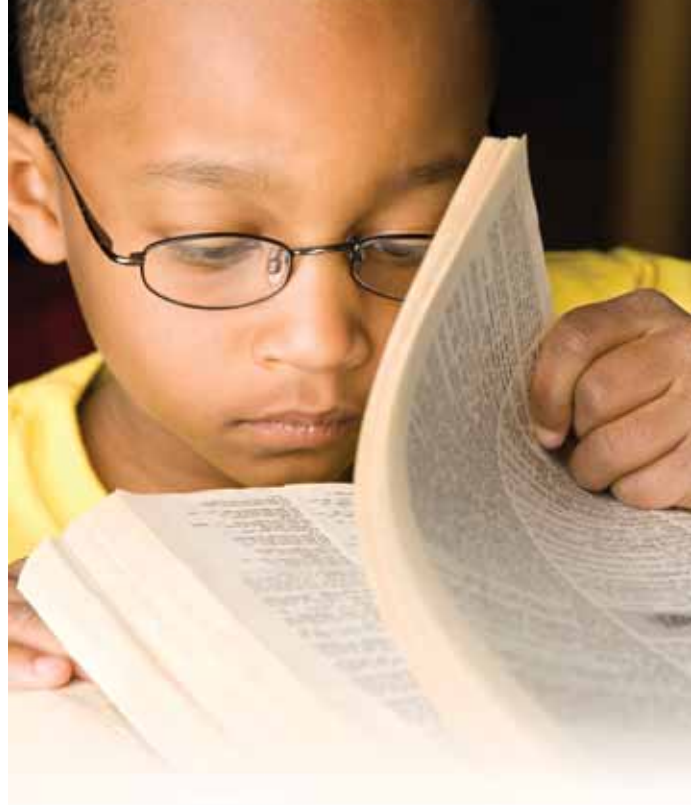
The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment has always been a strong proponent of the notion "the earlier, the better." While we believe that it is never too late to address violence, we know that the sooner we address the issue, the greater the chances of success.

"Violence prevention begins in the high chair, not the electric chair," said Institute President Suzanne L. Keeley, Ph.D. That may seem severe, but it reflects an undeniable truth: A child who lacks basic reading skills can become trapped in a downward spiral of violence and low self-esteem.

What does literacy have to do with an infant in a high chair? Simple. His parents' reading ability affects how they will raise him. Which, in turn, affects how he will later raise his children.

The one thing that all children have a right to expect from their parents is to be raised in a safe, stable, nurturing atmosphere. They have a right to expect their parents to protect them.

When parents attend to the basic needs of their children, those children are more likely to become productive, nonviolent members of the



*A child who lacks basic reading skills can become trapped in a downward spiral of violence and low self-esteem.*

community. And they, in turn, are more likely to do what is best for their children.

Nonviolence can be an upward spiral. It's a positive force that we can create and encourage.

At The Melissa Institute, we are here to "give science away" to help meet that goal. We do it through literacy initiatives, bullying prevention, parent education, suicide and domestic violence prevention, and more.

If "the earlier, the better" is true, it follows that the sooner we reach our goals through your support, the better our chances of success. Every dollar we spend on prevention can save up to \$28 down the road.

Why wait?

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**The Institute's mission is to prevent violence and promote safer communities through education and application of research-based knowledge.**


# A New Balance | Violence

A major contributing factor of criminals who engage in violent behavior is the lack of literacy. Adults who are illiterate account for more than 80 percent of the prison population in the United States.

If someone had gotten to those individuals much, much sooner and had taught them reading, writing and comprehension skills as children, the odds are they would be occupying their time productively, rather than occupying a prison cell.

Someone is doing that for today's children — before they become tomorrow's inmates. That someone is Dale Willows, Ph.D., an internationally acclaimed reading expert and Scientific Board member.

Dr. Willows' "Balanced Literary Diet" is a powerful, inexpensive and innovative approach that educators can use to teach reading skills. Children, contrary to popular belief, do not simply grow naturally into readers, even in a supportive environment. Dr. Willows has found that when teachers have a positive impact on a child's reading success they can also benefit from the positive cycle of teaching and learning that develops. "If we can simply raise the teacher's knowledge of literacy, this can be a gift to many children," Dr. Willows said. This can be especially advantageous for educators who teach children who live in disadvantaged populations or in home situations that do not know how to encourage literacy.



*Dr. Willows has found that teachers who have a positive impact on a child's reading success can benefit from the positive cycle of teaching and learning that develops.*



# Prevention Through Literacy

The Balanced Literacy Diet organizes teaching methods into a “diet” containing “food groups” for literacy. The approach helps educators assess the needs of students, create powerful, simple lesson plans, and create an atmosphere of success for reading.

The Melissa Institute has brought Dr. Willows’ Balanced Literacy Diet to teachers of at-risk students in Hialeah, Overtown and Liberty City. The results are impressive. Hialeah Elementary School, for instance, went from being a “D” school to an “A” school as a result of its implementation of the program.

## Crime-clock facts

In the United States, there is, on average:

- One murder every 32.3 seconds.
- One forcible rape every 5.9 minutes.
- One robbery every 1.2 minutes.
- One aggravated assault every 37.8 seconds.
- One burglary every 14.2 seconds.
- One larceny-theft every 4.8 seconds.
- One motor vehicle theft every 33 seconds.

## Balance — online

In late 2011, The Melissa Institute will launch an innovative new website. The Balanced Literacy Diet site will include more than 300 instructional videos, and will combine the expertise of Dr. Willows and her staff of reading experts with the Institute’s financial and organizational support. Educators everywhere will benefit from this free, user-friendly tool. Meanwhile, you can visit [youteachreading.org](http://youteachreading.org) now to see a preview of the site.

Our two other websites, [melissainstitute.org](http://melissainstitute.org) and [teach-safeschools.org](http://teach-safeschools.org), have totaled more than 3 million hits worldwide. And if you Google “violence prevention,” our Teach Safe Schools website will appear near the top of the list — out of more than 44 million violence prevention references.

The screenshot shows the homepage of [youteachreading.org](http://youteachreading.org). The header includes the site logo, a navigation menu (Home, About Us, Literacy Approach, Get Involved, Resource Center, Blog, Contact Us), and login fields. The main banner features a photo of a teacher and children with the text "Help us to make communities safer" and "2x4, 2x3, 4x5, 4x4, 5x6, 5x6, 5x7". To the right are buttons for "Donors" (Make a Donation, Sponsor the Balanced Literacy Diet Website), "Educators" (Tell a Friend, Send Feedback, Support Us, Share a Story), and "Literacy Program" (Did you know?, Weekly Presentation, Overview, Watch Sample Videos). Below the banner is a section for "ACT Against Violence Training Program" with contact information for the Melissa Institute (786-462-5210) and a "Sponsor The Balanced Literacy Diet Website" button. The footer contains three columns: "About Us" (The Melissa Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and prevention of violence through education, community service, research), "About The Literacy Approach" (The Institute's Literacy Initiative evolved out of research that demonstrates a clear linkage that exists between literacy and violence prevention), and "How to Get Involved By" (You can get involved by donating funds to help develop the literacy website and / or sharing your experiences, feedback, ideas and suggestions).

# Bullying | Prevention Begins at an Early Age

In September 2010 Tyler Clementi, a violinist and Rutgers University freshman, committed suicide. He jumped off the George Washington Bridge as a result of a cyberbullying incident. In March, high school freshman Phoebe Prince hanged herself from a stairwell. She was the victim of relentless taunts and physical threats from fellow students.

These suicides gained national notoriety. But they are by no means isolated incidents.

Bullying is a relationship problem. It is all about a power imbalance. It can be extremely stressful for those who are victimized. And it can be prevented.

The Melissa Institute addresses the issue of bullying and victimization through education and research. We conduct numerous programs that address bullying and childhood aggression. Scientific Board members Debra Pepler, Ph.D., and Jim Larson, Ph.D., each conducted bullying prevention conferences and workshops for students and school counselors.

In November, the Institute hosted a series of bullying programs: a cyberbullying presentation given by Wendy Craig, Ph.D.; an



**Dr. Debra Pepler elicits a response from a student at a bullying prevention conference.**

elementary school bullying prevention youth conference led by Drs. Pepler and Craig; and a conference on Bullying Prevention: Social Responsibility for 21st Century Schools. This seminar, presented at South Miami Hospital in partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, featured Scientific Board members Drs. Pepler, Craig and Ron Slaby, as well as Kim Storey, Ed.D.



**Counselor Julie Astuto and her anti-bullying team from Palmetto Elementary School.**





Students share bullying concerns with school counselors and other adults.



Participants create artwork, as well as songs, poems and skits, about bullying prevention.

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Dr. Slaby has also been working on an advisory panel for Cartoon Network, helping design a campaign to combat bullying by teaching children how to intervene. The campaign will use cartoons and recognizable characters to teach kids a wide range of bullying prevention tactics.

In late October, The Melissa Institute took part in Baptist Children’s Hospital’s annual Children’s Health Day. Institute members handed out “Love Your Kids. Lock Your Gun” bookmarks in English, Spanish and Creole, and distributed “No Bullying Buddies” stuffed animals with printed rules to teach children how to avoid violence and prevent bullying.



The Institute distributes “No Bullying Buddies” at Baptist Children’s Hospital’s Children’s Health Day under the watchful eye of Education Director Trish Ramsay and her team of volunteers.



# Domestic Violence | Empowering Families

**Q**uestion: What is the single most important and influential institution in the United States? Answer: The family. That means that parenting is one of our country's most important careers. Because, as we know, when it comes to having a positive impact on children, "the earlier, the better."

It is known that domestic violence is frequently a learned behavior. It's learned in the home, during childhood. It involves

physical, mental or emotional abuse against children or a spouse or other family member. The problem is complicated by a lack of knowledge, as well as by a lack of societal response.

Society changes slowly. Years ago, it was perfectly normal for children to ride in cars without seatbelts, for newborns to come home from the hospital in their mothers' arms — who also weren't wearing a seatbelt — and for anyone to light up a cigarette anywhere. We've learned, at great personal expense, that these behaviors cannot be tolerated. The time has come to do the same for domestic violence.

What can we do to help parents? That was the question at a seminar held last year at South Miami Hospital. "Reducing Violence Through Family Empowerment" was sponsored by The Melissa Institute, the Thelma Gibson Health Initiative, University of Miami School of Education, Baptist Children's Hospital and The Children's Trust.

The conference began with short presentations from a panel of experts, including Dr. Keeley, Thelma Gibson and Scientific Board members Guerda Nicholas, Ph.D., and Isaac Prilleltensky, Ph.D.



Keynote speaker Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky, Dean of the School of Education at the University of Miami.



Baptist Children's Hospital Administrator Randy Lee, Judge Orlando Prescott, Dr. Guerda Nicholas, Dr. Suzanne L. Keeley and Dr. Frank DeLaurier during a break at the Family Empowerment conference.



Community icon Thelma Gibson, President Emeritus of the Thelma Gibson Health Initiative.





Dr. Suzanne L. Keeley, Institute President.



Karen Aronowitz, President of United Teachers of Dade, leads a table discussion.

The format quickly shifted to a more hands-on approach. Workshop leaders joined discussion groups with 10–20 local experts. The process was repeated twice, with attendees switching groups and topics. Topics included: Coming to the U.S.A. — Fitting in a New Country; Religion and Spirituality — Guiding Peace; and Managing Stresses — Race, Family and Economy. All the groups

then collated the information they had gathered and presented a report to the attendees.

Many parents who live in high-risk neighborhoods, or who are straddling cultural boundaries, want to do what is best for their children. The purpose of conferences such as this is to help develop culturally relevant ways to educate and empower parents through community partnerships.

## ACT: Following the Leader

Kids learn at a very young age to play “follow the leader.” Whether or not they play the actual children’s game with one another is beside the point. They follow the leader by taking cues from their parents’ behavior. That means when you’re a parent, you are leading your children 24 hours a day, rain or shine, no matter what.

A program of Adults and Children Together (ACT) Against Violence, “Parents Raising Safe Kids,” was designed by the American Psychological Association to train early childhood, mental health and service agency professionals to deliver an enhanced parent education curriculum. The Melissa Institute has been designated as the ACT Regional Training Center for the southeastern United States.

ACT-trained facilitators conducted two series of two-hour, eight-week parent classes in Miami-Dade County last year. The first, in English, met on Saturday mornings at Hibiscus Elementary School. Another series, in Spanish, was conducted at enFAMILIA in Homestead. The parents who participated wrote about the experience. Here are some of their comments:

“Every parent began somewhat apprehensive and finished empowered, able to see things from a child’s point of view.” “These sessions have taught me not to easily become angry and act out by hitting my daughters.” “The ACT program is an instrumental tool that teaches parents they have several options when it comes to disciplining or rewarding our children.” “I am giving out more hugs. Home is supposed to be a place of love, comfort and security.”

ACT Southeast Regional Center Director Trish Ramsay was again invited to talk about the program at the annual meeting of the Florida Association for the Education of Young Children held in Orlando. ACT facilitator training seminars were also held at South Miami Hospital in English and Spanish.



# May Conference | Promising Hope and Facilitating Change

The Melissa Institute's 14th annual May conference, "Child and Adolescent Depression and Suicide: Promising Hope and Facilitating Change," drew more than 200 interested professionals to South Miami Hospital on May 7.

The meeting, sponsored by Baptist Children's Hospital and the Ganley Foundation, was featured in local news coverage on CBS4. It focused on identifying warning signs, assessing adolescent depression, and intervention methods to prevent suicide. Dr. Keeley, conference director, was joined by Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., Research Director of The Melissa Institute. Guest presenters included Grace L. Carricarte, M.S.Ed., Executive Director of the Ganley Foundation and a member of the Institute's Board of Directors; Joan Rosenbaum Asarnow, Ph.D., director of the Youth Stress and Mood Disorders Program at UCLA; and psychiatrist Fernando Pino, M.D. Attendees also heard from Jordan Burnham, a suicide attempt survivor, who gave a firsthand



Joan Rosenbaum Asarnow, Ph.D., UCLA.

account of what it was like for a successful, popular student to battle depression. His miraculous survival has helped him discover healthy coping mechanisms.



Attendees at the annual conference listen to co-presenters Dr. Joan Rosenbaum Asarnow and Dr. Donald Meichenbaum.





Suzy Berrios (Miami-Dade County Public Schools), Dr. Suzanne L. Keeley, Jordan Burnham, Lynn Aptman, Dr. Michael Aptman, Grace Carricarte, Dr. Donald Meichenbaum and Ann Ganley.



**Mark Your Calendar  
May 6, 2011**

The 15th annual conference, **“Resiliency Training: A Lifespan Perspective,”** is scheduled for Friday, May 6, at South Miami Hospital. More than 250 mental health professionals are expected to attend.

## 2010 Belfer-Aptman Scholars Award for Dissertation Research

The Melissa Institute awards scholarships to doctoral students who are conducting research within the area of violence prevention and treatment. The Institute has partnered with the Belfer Family Foundation to create a permanent endowment for the Belfer-Aptman Dissertation Research Award. The following individuals received \$2,000 each:

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**Lydia Barhight, M.A.**

University of Delaware

“Children’s Physiological and Emotional Reactions to Witnessing Bullying”

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**Heidi Kar, MHS, M.A.**

Stony Brook University

“Victims Who Victimize: The Association Between PTSD and Intimate Partner Violence Among Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Veterans”

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## Peace, Harmony and Moonlight

For years, The Melissa Institute has hosted “An Evening of Peace and Harmony: Music for a Better World.” This March, we made it even more appealing. “Peace, Harmony and Moonlight” featured live music and a tram ride through a moonlit Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden to view sculpture in a natural setting. Entertainment was provided by musicians from Coral Reef High School. The event was chaired by Dr. Suzanne L. and Brian E. Keeley, President and CEO of Baptist Health South Florida, and Lynn and Michael Aptman, M.D. The dinner and a silent auction, chaired by Grace L. Carricarte, raised more than \$80,000 for the Institute. The auction included 131 items, including signed Panthers hockey pucks, a two-night stay at the Biltmore Hotel, a high-definition TV and free orthodontic services.



Dr. Michael and Lynn Aptman, Dr. Suzanne L. Keeley and Jo Baxter.



Alyse and Jonathan Messinger, Brian E. Keeley, Dr. Barry and Judy Katzen, Judge Norman Gerstein and Lisa Levinson enjoyed the evening.





Susan and Larry Kahn, Dr. Suzanne L. Keeley, Wayne and Shaida Brackin.

**Mark your calendar. The next fundraising concert, "Peace and Harmony in the Garden," is scheduled for Thursday, March 3. Join us!**



Trish Ramsay, the Institute's Education Director, and Grace Carricarte, who chaired the silent auction.



Philipp Ludwig, Andres Aguirre, Alejandro Blanco and Wayne Brackin await the outcome of their silent auction bids.



Tram riders about to embark on a tour of the garden.

## OUR VOLUNTEER BOARDS

Without the participation, expertise and leadership of our volunteer boards, the Institute could not accomplish its goals. The boards include the Board of Directors, Scientific Board and Honorary Board.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Committed individuals who volunteer their time to oversee the operation of the Institute, assist with fundraising, plan projects and represent the organization at community events.

**Suzanne L. Keeley, Ph.D.**, President and a founder of The Melissa Institute, a psychologist in private practice with extensive clinical experience in treating victims and perpetrators of violence.

**Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D.**, Research Director and a founder of The Melissa Institute, a clinical psychologist, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Waterloo, Ontario, and a former Distinguished Visiting Professor, University of Miami.

**Lynn Aptman, M.Ed.**, Melissa's mother, one of the founders of The Melissa Institute and Director of Information Services.

**Michael Aptman, M.D.**, neurologist, Melissa's father, one of the founders of the Institute and Vice President.

**Jo Baxter, MBA**, Corporate Vice President, Baptist Health South Florida.

**Kenneth Bloom, Esq.**, Bloom & Minsker, P.L.

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**Grace L. Carricarte, M.S.Ed.**, Executive Director, Ganley Foundation.

**Penn B. Chabrow, Esq.**, Vice President and Director, law firm of Wampler Buchanan Walker Chabrow Banciella & Stanley, P.A.

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**Lisa M. Goldberg, Esq.**, Office of Gen. Counsel, Internal Revenue Service.

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**Philipp N. Ludwig, M.S., MBA**, Treasurer of the Institute and Assistant Vice President, Baptist Health South Florida.

**Kristy Nunez, Esq.**, Assistant State Attorney.

**Ana M. Ojeda, Psy.D.**, licensed psychologist.

**Judge Nushin G. Sayfie**, 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida.

**Maggie Snyder, Esq.**, law offices of Ronald Weil, P.A.

**Atlee Wampler III, Esq.**, President, law firm of Wampler Buchanan Walker Chabrow Banciella & Stanley, P.A., former U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Florida.

## SCIENTIFIC BOARD

This board comprises international experts in the areas of violence prevention and treatment of victims.

**Etiony Aldarondo, Ph.D.**, is Associate Dean for Research, Director of Dunspaugh-Dalton Community and Educational Well-Being Research Center and an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Miami. His professional career includes appointments at Boston College, Harvard Medical School's Cambridge Hospital and the Philadelphia Child Guidance Center. The recipient of various recognitions for academic excellence, his scholarship focuses on positive development of ethnic minority and immigrant youth, domestic violence and social justice-oriented clinical practices. His publications include the books *Advancing Social Justice Through Clinical Practice* (Routledge) and *Programs for Men Who Batter: Intervention and Prevention Strategies in a Diverse Society* (Civic Research Institute, with Fernando Mederos, Ed.D.)

**Wendy Craig, Ph.D.**, is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Queen's University in Ontario. She has published widely on the topics of bullying and victimization, peer processes, sexual harassment and aggression in girls, and was editor of a volume on childhood social development. As a Canadian representative, Dr. Craig works with the World Health Organization and UNICEF conducting research and promoting healthy relationships. She recently wrote a chapter on bullying and fighting for the World Health International Report for the World Health Organization. She is an author and co-editor of *Understanding and Addressing Bullying: An International Perspective*. Together with Dr. Debra Pepler, Dr. Craig is leading PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network), a Networks of Centres of Excellence — New Initiative.

**Jim Larson, Ph.D., NCSP**, is Professor of Psychology and Director of the School Psychology Training Program at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. He has more than 25 years' experience with the study and treatment of anger-related behaviors in children and youth. Dr. Larson was a school psychologist with the Milwaukee Public Schools for 14 years and directed their violence prevention program. He also has extensive experience in the area of parent management training and is the co-author of *Parent to Parent: A Video-augmented Training Program for the Prevention of Aggressive Behavior in Young Children and Helping School Children Cope with Anger: A Cognitive-behavioral Intervention*. His most recent book is *Think First: Addressing Aggressive Behavior in Secondary Schools*.

**Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D.**, is Research Director of The Melissa Institute and Distinguished Visiting Professor in the School of Education at the University of Miami. He is one of the founders of cognitive behavior therapy. North American clinicians voted Dr. Meichenbaum "one of the 10 most influential psychotherapists of the 20th century." He has published extensively, and his most recent book is *Treatment of Individuals with Anger-control Problems and Aggressive Behavior*. Other books include *Treating Adults with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*, *Nurturing Independent Learners* and *Stress Inoculation Training*.

**Guerda Nicolas, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Educational and Psychological Studies at the School of Education at the University of Miami. As a multicultural (Haitian American) and multilingual psychologist (English, Spanish, French and Haitian Creole), her research focuses on developing culturally effective mental health intervention for people of color, particularly immigrant children, adolescents and families. Concerned about women's issues, depression, spirituality and social support networks of ethnic minorities, Dr. Nicolas is author of many articles and book chapters and is an invited presenter at national and international conferences. She is a member of the Caribbean Studies and 2009 president of the Haitian Studies Association.

**Clifford R. O'Donnell, Ph.D.**, is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Community and Cultural Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Hawaii. He has published on topics such



as delinquency prevention, school violence, firearm deaths among children and youth, cultural-community psychology, and education and employment in community psychology. He serves on the board of directors of the Intermountain Centers for Human Development and consults to several youth mentoring programs that use his community-peer delinquency prevention model.

**Debra J. Pepler, Ph.D., C.Psych.**, is Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at York University, Toronto, Ontario, and co-director of Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network (PREVNet), Canada's national initiative for bullying prevention. She is an internationally recognized expert on bullying and childhood aggression and an authority on school-based interventions. She speaks widely to professional and community audiences and publishes extensively. Her major research program examines the antisocial behavior of children and adolescents, particularly in the school and peer contexts. She is an author and co-editor of *Understanding and Addressing Bullying: An International Perspective*. She was honored with the Contribution to Knowledge award from the Psychology Foundation of Canada.

**Isaac Prilleltensky, Ph.D.**, is Dean of the School of Education at the University of Miami. Prior to that he was Director of the Doctoral Program in Community Research and Action at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Dr. Prilleltensky is concerned with value-based ways of promoting personal, relational and collective well-being. He is the author, co-author or co-editor of several books, including *Community Psychology: In Pursuit of Liberation and Well-Being*, *Doing Psychology Critically*, *Critical Psychology*, *Promoting Family Wellness and Preventing Child Maltreatment*, and *The Morals and Politics of Psychology*. The book *Promoting Well-Being: Linking Personal, Organizational, and Community Change* was co-authored with his wife, Dr. Ora Prilleltensky.

**Wendy K. Silverman, Ph.D., ABPP**, is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Child and Family Psychosocial Research Center at Florida International University. She is an expert on child anxiety and its disorders. Her research on developing and evaluating evidence-based assessment and treatment procedures for children and adolescents with anxiety disorders has been funded for the past two decades by the National

Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). In addition to conducting research, teaching and mentoring students, she has served as editor of the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, associate editor of the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, past president of the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology (Division 53, American Psychological Association), and chair of the NIMH grant review panel for Child and Adolescent Psychosocial and Psychopharmacological Intervention Research.

**Ron Slaby, Ph.D.**, is a developmental psychologist who serves as a Senior Scientist at the Education Development Center in Newton, Mass., and the Center on Media and Child Health in Children's Hospital Boston/Harvard Medical School. Dr. Slaby has advanced our understanding of media influences on children's health. He has generated and evaluated media literacy programs, investigated remedies for media violence effects on children, and served as the educational advisor for many award-winning family television programs and feature films. His books and programs include: *Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders: Thinking and Acting to Prevent Violence*; *Social Development in Young Children*; *Early Violence Prevention: Tools for Teachers of Young Children*; *Viewpoints: A Guide to Conflict Resolution and Decision Making for Adolescents*; and *Eyes on Bullying: Preventing Bullying in the Lives of Children*.

**Dale Willows, Ph.D.**, is a Professor in the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. She is also a registered psychologist. Dr. Willows is a renowned expert in the teaching of reading and preventing reading and writing difficulties in young children. She has devoted herself to implementing change in early literacy education through in-service professional development for primary grade teachers and school administrators. In addition to publishing extensively in journals and authoring numerous books and book chapters, she is frequently invited to present at academic and professional conferences. In 2001, Dr. Willows was honored as an Outstanding Educator by three Canadian school districts. Dr. Willows serves as the only international member of the National Reading Panel, which was commissioned by the U.S. Congress in 1998. She was invited to attend the White House Assembly on Reading in 2001.

**Marleen Wong, LCSW, Ph.D.**, is Assistant Dean and Clinical Professor of Field Education at the University of Southern California, School of Social Work. She is frequently consulted by the U.S. Department of Education to assist with recovery for schools impacted by violence and disaster. She is the original community partner with RAND Health and the UCLA Health Services Research staff, who developed and evaluated CBITS (Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools), an evidence-based program that uses skill-based, group intervention to relieve symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and general anxiety among children exposed to trauma. She is also one of the authors of Psychological First Aid (PFA) for Students and Teachers: Listen, Protect, Connect (LPC), one of a family of public health strategies available on the public website of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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This board is composed of distinguished citizens and community leaders who lend their support to The Melissa Institute.

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