



Making

Connections



The Melissa Institute
For Violence Prevention and Treatment

2013 Report to the Community



Art by Sonicah Sanon
12th grade
Miami Beach Senior High

Front cover: Elementary students attending the Institute's ninth annual bullying prevention conference work on "empathy maps" for their schools.



Connecting Past, Present and Future

We knew we had two choices: to curse the darkness, or to light a candle. The Melissa Institute was that candle.

In the beginning, I pretty much operated The Melissa Institute out of the trunk of my car. Then my son went away to school, and that allowed me to move the whole operation into his room while he was away. Now, of course, we are in our 16th year and are headquartered in a cozy little office at South Miami Hospital.

And while our impact on the community grows from year to year, and our reach and our membership continue to expand, it never stops being personal.

In the months following the tragic murder of Melissa Aptman in 1995, I vividly recall sitting around the Aptmans' kitchen table, talking with her grief-stricken parents and trying to determine the best way to honor their daughter's memory. We knew we had two choices: to curse the darkness, or to light a candle. The Melissa Institute was that candle.

Since 1995, I have been proud to serve the Institute as its President. That position has given me the opportunity to recruit and work with some of the most dedicated, intelligent and inspiring people I've ever known. Our founders have made us what we are. I think of Lynn and Dr. Michael Aptman as the heart of the organization, and Institute Research Director Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., as the brains.

Add to that the expert skills and dedication brought to us by people like Executive Director Frank DeLaurier, Ed.D., Education Director Trish Ramsay, M.A., and the luminaries who make up our Scientific Board and Board of Directors, and you begin to understand why we have enjoyed 16 years of "giving science away." We have a history of doing the right things at the right time for our community.

For me, the time is right to step down as President and take up my new role as President Emeritus. This is a move that allows me to continue working with the Institute in any capacity in which I am needed, while passing the torch of leadership to a younger generation. This is a vital step in the evolution of any great organization, because it alloys wisdom and experience with energy and fresh ideas.

While we treasure all of the individuals who donate their time, talents and money to our cause, our only goal is success. And for us, success will come when no parents ever again have to sit around a kitchen table under such tragic circumstances.

Suzanne L. Keeley, Ph.D.

Melissa Institute President Emeritus

Connecting Past, Present and Future

Most people who endure a tragedy don't have the ability to summon up much optimism. That's because they don't know Dr. Suzanne Keeley.

Her passion and optimism for The Melissa Institute — for everything, really — are contagious. She led the organization brilliantly for 16 years, and has helped guide us to where we are today.

At the outset, Dr. Keeley spent countless hours meeting with influential members of our community, trying to determine which services already existed and which were needed. The goal was to find exactly the right niche, and then to fill that niche in an effective way. She determined that there was a need for research-based methods of violence prevention that could readily be made available to educators, administrators, policymakers and community leaders.

Her overwhelmingly positive nature made it hard for people to say no to her. That's one reason we've been able to attract some of the best minds in the fields of violence prevention, literacy, education and public policy.

We've accomplished so much: bullying prevention programs; Silence the Violence summit meetings; implementation of the ACT Raising Safe Kids program; various literacy initiatives including our newest gem: the Dale Willows *ReadingTeacher.net* literacy website; our annual May Conference; and vital fundraising events like Peace, Harmony and Moonlight.

For all of this and more, we owe a debt to Dr. Keeley that can never be repaid. On a personal level, she helped us channel our despair into positive action. And on a broader level, she helped transform us from a worthwhile idea into an organization with regional — and increasingly, international — impact.

In her new role as President Emeritus, she will continue to offer us the benefit of her wisdom, experience and determination.

In recognition, the Board of Directors has voted to create the Suzanne L. Keeley Community Service Award, to be given to individuals who exemplify her spirit of optimism and community service.

On behalf of all of us, thank you.

Lynn Aptman and Michael Aptman, M.D.

Melissa Institute Founders





Connecting Teachers with Creative Tools

In decades of teaching kids to read, “I haven’t found a child who couldn’t learn,” says Dale Willows, Ph.D., a renowned literacy expert who is a member of the National Reading Panel and The Melissa Institute’s Scientific Board. Dr. Willows and her colleagues at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto have created a website, *readingteacher.net*, which offers teachers a multitude of aids to make teaching reading easier and more successful.

Since the website was launched in early 2012, more than 25,500 teachers and others have viewed the 442 lesson plans, 505 brief how-to videos and 16 virtual tours of actual classrooms. Diane Bernstein, a pre-kindergarten teacher in Marin County, California, said one of the website’s ideas that she particularly likes is “the weekly poem of rhyming words that I can put up at circle time. My favorite is ‘I Made a Mistake’ as kids really love the silliness of that rhyming story. I love the idea of putting the story up on the board and replacing key words.”

It’s tips like this that The Melissa Institute believes will help harried educators teach



Teacher Lynette Estrada says the website gives her new ideas.

reading more effectively. The Institute provides the website’s vast array of teaching aids and ideas as a free service. The Institute has long known that illiteracy is a major contributing factor in violent behavior: about 85 percent of juvenile offenders cannot read. The website was three years in development, cost more than \$1 million (of which \$300,000 was contributed by The Melissa Institute), and involved teachers from around the country.

Dr. Willows’ literacy program, which she calls the Balanced Literacy Diet and which, like a cookbook, offers lots of recipes, has been successfully implemented in Miami-Dade

Connecting Teachers with Creative Tools

County Schools and elsewhere. Natalie Wagner, Hialeah Elementary School's reading coach, says that Dr. Willows worked with teachers in Hialeah for three years, and moved the school from a D to an A school.

Patrice Brookins, also at Hialeah Elementary, teaches an intervention class with children who are in the lowest quartile of reading. She said she uses the Dale Willows techniques often, incorporating reading and writing in whatever subject is being taught. For example, in a social studies class about the Inuit people, she asked the children to read a word or phrase they didn't understand.

"You have to push them," Ms. Brookins said. "I push kids with humor. When a child does something well, I start dancing." The 25-year teacher was thrilled this spring when she learned all but two of her students were reading on grade level.

Kindergarten teacher Evelina Richardson is another Hialeah teacher who can attest to

Dr. Willows' teaching methods. She gives her students weekly spelling tests of five words. Each child makes a booklet to record his/her results. They get letter grades such as E for Excellent (or Good, Marginal or Unsatisfactory). She notes that the letter grades suffice — at the end of the school year last May, there was no money left for stickers or other rewards.

"All of my students are reading — even a special needs child," Ms. Richardson said proudly. The developmentally delayed student promptly demonstrated to a visitor that he certainly could read.

"You have to find ways to be creative.

I think the website's great.

It gives you new twists you might not have thought of before."

Lynette Estrada



Kindergarten teacher Evelina Richardson is proud that all of her students are reading.



Howard Drive Elementary students use computers to increase reading skills.

Lynette Estrada teaches a first grade gifted class at Howard Drive Elementary. A teacher for 14 years, she said, “You have to stay on your toes. You have to find ways to be creative. I think the website’s great. It gives you new twists you might not have thought of before.”

One idea from the website was having the students add prefixes or suffixes to words, and then use the word in a sentence. “They loved doing it,” Ms. Estrada said. A wall covered with the students’ sentences showcased their skills. “My dad is unuseful,” one child wrote. “But my mom is thoughtful.”

The *readingteacher.net* website is anything but “unuseful.” It is the product of years of research, and applies creative, evidence-based methods to help teachers use limited resources to effectively teach reading and writing.



Patrice Brookins’ students take turns reading aloud.



Teacher Lynette Estrada helps a student with a writing assignment.

Connecting Bullying Prevention with Safer Schools

Bullying affects us all. You may never have been a target of bullying, but chances are you've witnessed it. It can take many forms, from subtle, psychological abuse to physical violence. It can be perpetrated face to face or via emails or social media.

What you may not see as a bystander is how relentless bullying can be. Those who are victimized can suffer severe psychological — even physical — distress, which can affect them for the rest of their lives. And those who victimize others often engage in more violent behavior as they grow up. One out of every four elementary-school children who bully will have a criminal record by the time he or she is 30.

The Melissa Institute raises awareness about the link between bullying and school violence, and addresses school bullying through workshops, community education programs and teacher seminars.

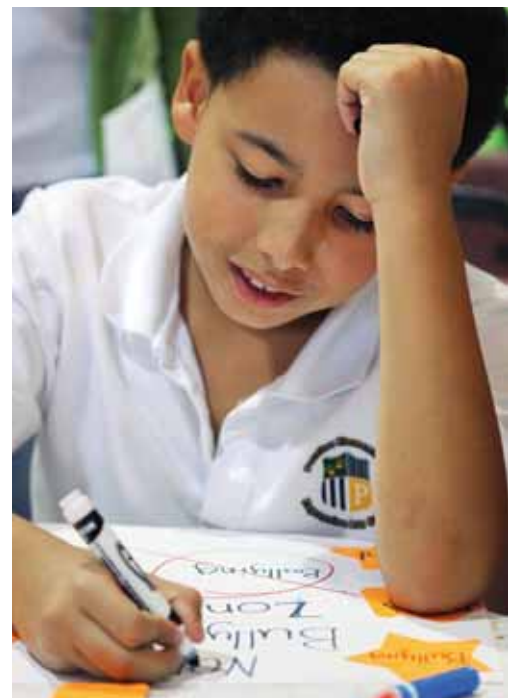
Most recently, Institute Scientific Board members Drs. Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig (co-directors of Canada's national bullying prevention initiative, PREVnet.ca) were invited by Gulliver Schools to conduct a



Education Director Trish Ramsay directs the Institute's Bullying Prevention Programs.



A counselor and students participate in an Institute youth conference.





Youth Conference on Bullying Prevention for fifth graders. The conference was a learning experience for all — including the high school leaders from Gulliver Preparatory who assisted as role models and mentors.

The fifth graders viewed videos about bullying, created posters, poems and songs and shared their personal stories in a safe, supportive environment.

The conference was just one in an ongoing Bullying Education series. Another was hosted by Institute Education Director Trish Ramsay and Palmetto Elementary counselor Julie Astuto, with assistance from peer mediators from Miami Killian Senior High School. The Institute also gives presentations by request throughout the year.

And we've also established a presence at the annual Children's Health Fair at Baptist Children's Hospital, where we spread the word by distributing nearly 1,000 "No Bullying Buddies" — stuffed animals with a no-bullying message.

Connecting with World-class Experts



Drs. Pepler and Craig interact with the audience about bullying and victimization issues at the "Wonders of Learning" event sponsored by Books & Books.

May Conference: Helping Families

The Melissa Institute's 16th annual May conference, "Family-based Interventions With Children and Adolescents," attracted a large audience of psychologists, teachers, counselors and child development specialists to South Miami Hospital on May 4, 2012.

The meeting addressed treatment options for children and adolescents who exhibit behaviors such as conduct disorders, substance abuse, antisocial behavior, anxiety and depression. Discussions and demonstrations detailed ways to include parents in treatment in a culturally and ethnically sensitive way. Experts also discussed ways that schools can effectively engage parents.

Discussions and demonstrations detailed ways to include parents in treatment in a culturally and ethnically sensitive way.

The conference, co-sponsored by Baptist Children's Hospital, was presented by Dr. Donald Meichenbaum and Scientific Board member Jim Larson, Ph.D. Wansley Walters, Secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, gave the keynote address. Dr. Keeley served as conference director.

Improving Parenting Skills

A child's earliest and most influential teacher is his or her parent. When parents learn critical thinking and communication skills, they can improve their relationships with their children and refrain from using violence as a means to control them.

ACT (Adults and Children Together) Raising Safe Kids is a research-based violence prevention program for parents and caregivers of young children. The goal is to help these adults learn to cope with anger, practice positive discipline without harsh punishment and monitor their children's exposure to violence in the media — including video games, TV, news and movies.

In November 2011, Melissa Institute Education Director and ACT Southeast Regional Director Trish Ramsay partnered with Brandeis University's Dr. Howard Baker, ACT Northeast Regional Director, to conduct a three-hour workshop at the National Association for the Education of Young Children annual conference in Orlando, Florida. The audience included preschool teachers from around the U.S. and South America.

The Institute also partnered with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida and Dunbar Elementary School in Overtown to sponsor an eight-week training program for parents.



There were more than 200 attendees at the Institute's Annual Conference.



Founding Board Members are pictured with conference faculty and Baptist Children's Hospital CEO, Randy Lee.

Research Awards

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 Scholars Award for Dissertation Research. This year, the following individuals received \$2,000 each:

Sarah A. O. Gray, M.A. • University of Massachusetts, Boston, “The Role of Parent Insight in Young Children’s Trauma Exposure: Testing a Relational Model of Risk and Resilience.”

Mrinalini Aroor Rao, M.A., M.S. • University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, “Peer Victimization and Substance Use in Early Adolescence: An Examination of Risk and Protective Factors.”

Connecting for a Cause



The Melissa Institute’s Young Professionals held “Network for a Cause” on September 6, 2012, at Cafe Avanti in Miami Beach. Attendees had a chance to mingle, participate in a silent auction and enjoy great food provided by Jessica Fuentes’ Cafe Avanti with beverages from Southern Wine & Spirits. Proceeds from the event support the Institute’s bullying prevention programs.

Event committee members included (left to right) Megan Cunningham, Maggie Snyder, Jessica Fuentes, Grace Carricarte, Karyn Cunningham and Lisa Goldberg. Not pictured is Jessi Berrin.



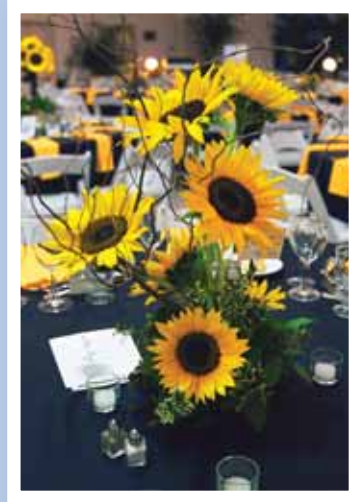
Connecting with Education



The Institute was honored by the School Board of Miami-Dade County for its long-standing “commitment to the welfare and well-being of students, parents and families.” Left to right, The Melissa Institute Board member Karyn Cunningham, staff members Janine Armstrong, Trish Ramsay, Frank DeLaurier, and Superintendent Alberto Carvalho.

Peace, Harmony and Moonlight

The Melissa Institute hosted its annual garden party and fundraising event last March. “Peace, Harmony and Moonlight” was exactly as delightful as the name implies, featuring live music, a tram ride through a moonlit Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, and the company of good friends. The gala event was chaired by Jo and Mike Baxter and Dr. Barbara and Kenneth Bloom. Grace Carricarte chaired the silent auction, which offered abundant opportunities for trips, jewelry, event tickets and other fabulous merchandise. Overall, the evening grossed more than \$80,000 for Melissa Institute programs.



Melissa Institute Board members Ana Ojeda (far left) and Kristy Nuñez (second from right) are pictured with Dr. Flor Mayoral, Baptist Health CEO Brian E. Keeley and Court Keeley.



Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho



Melissa Institute Board member and Auction Chair Grace Carricarte with Jessi Berrin



Melissa Institute Board members Lisa Goldberg, Dr. Michael and Lynn Aptman, and Remi Kajogbola



Robin DeLaurier, School Board member Larry Feldman, and Melissa Institute Board member Karyn Cunningham



Susan and Lawrence Kahn, Melissa Institute founder and President Emeritus Suzanne Keeley, and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman

Save the Date!

March 14, 2013, is the date for "Peace, Harmony and Moonlight." Don't miss it!



Peace and Harmony Co-Chairs Mike and Jo Baxter and Dr. Barbara and Ken Bloom



Roberta Stokes and George Foyo



OUR VOLUNTEER BOARDS

Without the participation, expertise and leadership of our volunteer boards, the Institute could not accomplish its goals. These 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.

Lynn Aptman, M.Ed., President of the Institute, Melissa's mother and one of the founders of The Melissa Institute.

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

Jo Baxter, MBA, Vice President of the Institute, retired marketing executive.

Kenneth Bloom, Esq., Attorney at Law, Bloom & Minsker, P.L.

Grace L. Carricarte, M.S.Ed., Executive Director, Ganley Foundation, and Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

Penn B. Chabrow, Esq., Attorney at Law.

Karyn I. Cunningham, B.A., Government Action Specialist, United Teachers of Dade.

Lisa M. Goldberg, Esq., Secretary of the Institute, Office of General Counsel, Internal Revenue Service.

Remi J. Kajogbola, MBA, Healthcare Consultant, Objective Health, a McKinsey & Company unit for Healthcare Providers.

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

Philipp N. Ludwig, M.S., MBA, Treasurer of the Institute, Vice President, Baptist Health Medical Group.

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

Kristy M. Nunez, Esq., Assistant State Attorney, 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida.

Ana M. Ojeda, Psy.D., Assistant Professor, Doctoral (Psy.D.) Program at Carlos Albizu University; Co-Founder & Co-Executive Director of Programs at UrbanPromise Miami; on medical staff of Miami Children's Hospital, Department of Psychiatry.

Marguerite R. Snyder, Esq., Attorney at Law, Weil Quaranta, 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 Dunsbaugh-Dalton Community and Educational Well-Being Research Center, and an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Miami. His 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 Emeritus of Psychology and former Director of the School Psychology Training Program at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater. He has more than 35 years' experience in 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 of *Helping School Children Cope with Anger: A Cognitive-behavioral Intervention*, 2nd Ed. 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 Professor Emeritus, University of Waterloo, Ontario. He has served as Distinguished Visiting Professor at 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 presented in all 50 United States and internationally. He has published extensively and his most recent book is *Roadmap to Resilience*. Other books include *Treatment of Individuals with Anger-control Problems and Aggressive Behavior*, *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 University of Miami School of Education. As a multicultural (Haitian American) and multilingual (English, Spanish, French and Haitian Creole) psychologist, she 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 Emeritus of Psychology, founding Director of the Community and Culture Psychology Graduate Program at the University of Hawaii, and Honorary International Fellow of the Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research at Victoria University in New Zealand. He is a past president of the Society for Community Research and Action (APA Division 27) and has published on topics such as delinquency prevention, school violence, firearms deaths among children and youth, cultural-community psychology, and education and employment in community

psychology. His most recent work is a theoretical integration of community and cultural psychology and a 35-year follow-up of a youth mentoring program. He currently 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 Clinical Science Training Program at Florida International University (FIU). An expert in child anxiety and its disorders, Dr. Silverman directs the Child Anxiety and Phobia Program housed in the Center for Children and Families at FIU. Her research on developing and evaluating evidence-based assessment and treatment procedures for children with anxiety disorders has been funded for the past two decades by the National Institute of Mental Health. She has published extensively in the area of childhood anxiety disorders, including

five books. She is current Co-Editor of *Clinical Psychology Review* and past Editor of *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, Associate Editor of *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, President of the Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, and past Chair of a NIMH grant review panel.

Ron Slaby, Ph.D., is a developmental psychologist, research scientist and educator who serves as senior scientist at both the Education Development Center (EDC) and the Center on Media and Child Health. Through his innovative research, teaching and program development at EDC, Children's Hospital, Boston, and Harvard University, Dr. Slaby has helped to shape national and global strategies for preventing youth violence and bullying. Known for introducing a "bystander strategy" into the field of bullying prevention, Dr. Slaby has co-authored the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's first national plan for preventing violence in America; the World Health Organization's global program for preventing violence in schools; the American Psychological Association's National Reports on Violence and Youth; *Early Violence Prevention: Tools for Teachers of Young Children*; *Aggressors, Victims & Bystanders*, an evidence-based program for middle school students; and a multimedia bullying prevention program, *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. She is the only international member of the National Reading Panel, commissioned by the U.S. Congress in 1998, and was invited to attend the White House Assembly on Reading in 2001.

Marleen Wong, LCSW, Ph.D., is Assistant Dean, Clinical Professor and Director of Field Education at the University of Southern California, School of Social Work. Her research projects include the Trauma

Services Adaptation Center for Resiliency, Hope and Wellness in Schools, funded by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network; the USC Institute for Creative Technology's Army-funded grant, SimCoach, to develop virtual physical and mental health education for military personnel and families; and a Department of Defense/Educational Activities grant on Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools to create supportive environments for military children. Dr. Wong is a U.S. Department of Education (DOE) consultant who assists schools impacted by violence and disaster. She helped develop and evaluate Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) for children exposed to trauma. She co-authored *Psychological First Aid for Students and Teachers: Listen, Protect, Connect (LPC)*, available on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. DOE websites. Dr. Wong was recently appointed to the National Advisory Council of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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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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Art by Cristina Vidal
10th grade
Miami Beach Senior High



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10th grade
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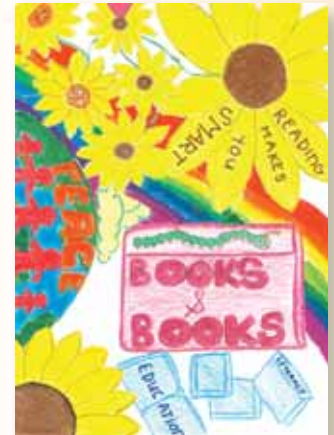
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