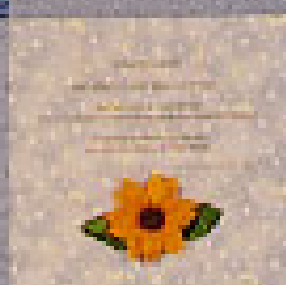
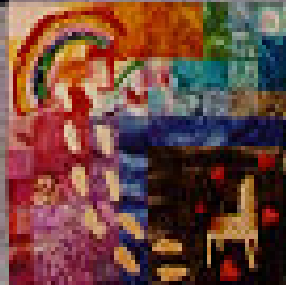
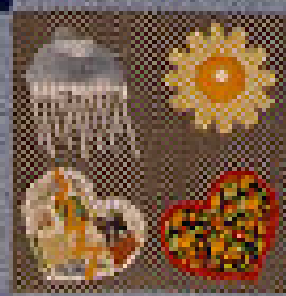
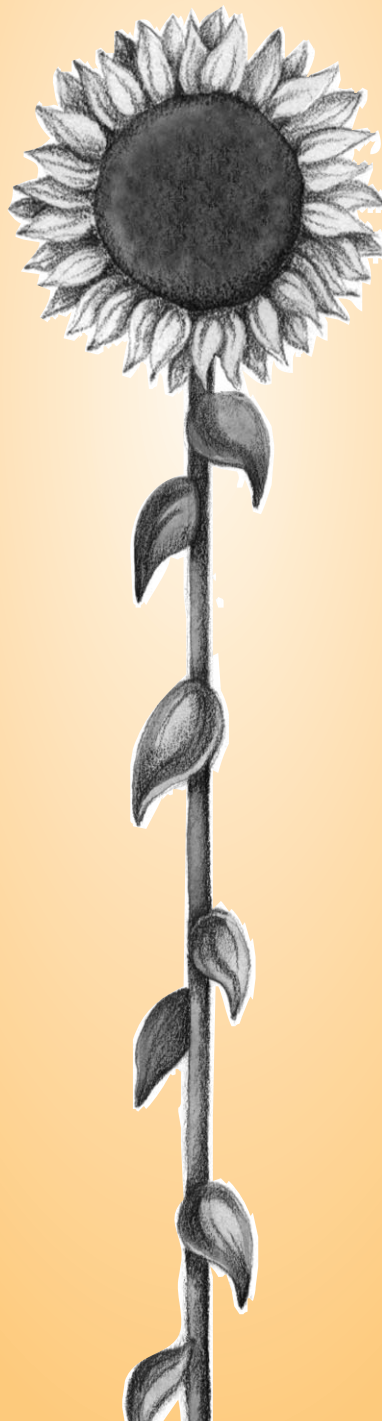


The Melissa Institute

For Violence Prevention and Treatment

Report to the Community 1997-1998





The Melissa Institute

For Violence Prevention and Treatment

What is the Melissa Institute?

The Melissa Institute is a non-profit educational, training and consultative service organization that was established to honor the memory of Melissa Aptman, who was brutally murdered in St. Louis on May 5, 1995. A native of Miami, she was just two weeks away from graduating from Washington University. Melissa's family and friends have established an Institute in her name in order to address the scourge of violence in our society and to help victims and their families.



What is the mission of the Melissa Institute?

The mission of the Melissa Institute is to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public policy, between research findings and direct application in order to reduce violence and to help victims of violence. The need for this mission was recently highlighted by the authors of a major study on Reducing violence: A research agenda. (American Psychological Association, 1997). These experts say:

"Few currently funded community violence activities have evolved out of coordinated planning between researchers, practitioners, or community agency directors. The most up-to-date research findings are rarely translated directly into practice. The potential loss to both sides is enormous and wasteful."



The Melissa Institute was a co-sponsor, with Baptist Health Systems of South Florida, of Gun Safety Day on September 27, 1997. Dozens of guns were turned in, and free gun locks were given away at all four of the Systems hospitals. County Commissioner Katy Sorensen (left), and

How can the Melissa Institute accomplish this ambitious task?

The Melissa Institute is working to reduce violence and help victims by providing education (e.g., conducting conferences, developing a Website, leading training programs, supporting doctoral and post doctoral research fellows); fostering consultation between service agencies and researchers; and by providing community outreach programs to local service providers (assessment teams, therapists, educators, judges, ministers, policy-makers, etc.).

What has the Melissa Institute accomplished in its first year?

1. It has established three Boards:

Board of Directors. Concerned persons who oversee the day-to-day operations of the Melissa Institute, plan projects, help with fund raising, and participate in community activities on violence prevention.

Scientific Board. International experts in the areas of violence prevention and victimization.

Honorary Board. Distinguished citizens who have lent their support to the Melissa Institute.

All Board members serve voluntarily. Administrative costs are kept to a minimum so that every dollar donated goes to fulfill the mission of the Melissa Institute.

2. The Melissa Institute held its first annual conference entitled Violence and Youth, Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective, on May 2, 1997, which was attended by 250 people. It brought together members of the Scientific Board and a panel of Miami area experts who are involved with the issues of youth and violence.

3. Members of the Scientific Board of the Melissa Institute have consulted with a number of local and national organizations, including the Miami Juvenile Assessment Center, Miami Coalition for Safe Streets and a Drug-Free Community, Informed Families and the Public Defender's Office.

4. The Melissa Institute has been involved in many other projects, including the Miami Handgun Summit, a gun turn-in and gun-lock giveaway, and the Good News Care Center, which provides medical care for the uninsured poor.

What are the plans for the coming year for the Melissa Institute?

1. The Melissa Institute's Second Annual Conference will take place on May 1, 1998. The topic is Overcoming the Odds: Helping At-Risk Youth and Their Families.

2. The Melissa Institute will establish a national scholarship grant supporting graduate students conducting research on prevention of violence and on victims. Annual research awards of \$1,000 each will be established.

3. The Melissa Institute will continue to consult with the Miami Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), and other JAC centers state-wide. The Miami JAC is scheduled to process approximately 18,000 youth between the ages of 7 and 17 who have been apprehended by the police. The Melissa Institute will continue the development and application of a computerized assessment approach that can be used at JAC facilities. The Melissa Institute is playing a key role in a conference for the directors of all Florida JAC facilities, to be held in Miami.

4. The Melissa Institute will release a video designed to tell the story of the Institute and its activities.

5. The Melissa Institute will help develop a television documentary on resilience in at-risk youths and their families.

What additional projects does the Melissa Institute plan for the future?

1. Provide a post doctoral training program for individuals who wish to study with leading researchers in the field of violence prevention and victimology.



The Courage Quilt, created by and for women survivors of violence,

2. Conduct a series of training workshops on varied topics such as:

- How to meet the educational needs of children.
- How to improve literacy. (Approximately 85% of the youth who get into trouble with the law, involving the courts, are functionally illiterate.)
- How to conduct home-visiting programs to help at-risk families.
- How to develop early intervention programs for infants, youngsters and their families.
- How to ensure that treatment programs are more effective.
- How the juvenile justice system can be improved.

3. The Melissa Institute will develop training materials for educators and therapists.

4. The Melissa Institute plans to establish a Web site that will provide information on violence prevention and treatment of victims of violence. The Web site will extend the range of potential consultation and help further bridge the gap between science and practice.

5. The Melissa Institute will sponsor presentations at major mental health conferences on the issues of violence prevention and victimology.

6. The Melissa Institute will provide consultations to individuals, organizations and communities to assist with cost-effective funding decisions in the area of violence prevention and treatment.

7. The Melissa Institute will conduct educational briefings on crime prevention programs.


8. The Melissa Institute will serve as an independent resource and consultation center that will bring together researchers and clinicians with those charged to formulate, implement, and evaluate public policy.

What is the urgency in fulfilling the mandate of the Melissa Institute?

The incidence of serious reported delinquent acts in the U.S. is approximately 1.5 million. Of these, the incidence of violent acts has increased by 156%, and murders have increased by 144% in the last decade. In fact, the incidence of homicides in the U.S. is 4.4 times higher than in other industrialized countries. The leading perpetrators of such criminal acts are youths between the ages of 15 to 24. In the next decade the number of teenagers in the U.S. will increase by 15%. There is an urgent need to establish programs that are fully informed by research and that can be systematically evaluated. The Melissa Institute is dedicated to fulfilling this role.

What can people do to help the Melissa Institute fulfill its mission?

Individuals can help the Melissa Institute by providing financial support through general contributions to the Melissa Institute, or by earmarking their contributions to support a specific project. Donors are encouraged to become involved in specific projects. Whether it is by means of a donation, or personal involvement, your participation is invited and greatly appreciated. Those who have provided us with "special" support throughout our first year, including our Board members, are named later in this report.



Lynn Aptman played two original compositions, a Precious Jewel and Echoes of the Soul, in memory of her daughter, Melissa. The music was part of An Evening of Peace and Harmony: Music for a Better World, a fundraiser for The Melissa Institute. Enjoying the moment are Dr. Michael Aptman and Suzanne Keeley, Ph.D., president of The Melissa Institute.

Summary of the Conference on Violence and Youth Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective

One of the most exciting events in The Melissa Institute's first year was the Conference on Violence and Youth, Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective. Held May 2, 1997, the conference brought together renowned experts in the field of violence (the Melissa Institute Scientific Board) and South Florida community, business and school leaders.

The group discussed the rise in violence in our youth, and proposed interventions for at-risk youth. **Dr. Donald Meichenbaum** noted that homicide is the second leading cause of death for persons 15-24 years of age, and is the leading cause of death for African-American and Hispanic youth. In addition, 5 to 10% of children account for 50% of all arrests and for the majority of violent acts.

Although violence tends to run through generations of families, and risk factors include poverty, being raised by a single parent, domestic violence in the

household, academic failure and poor peer relationships, some children brought up in the same environment do not develop delinquent behaviors. Why? Dr. Meichenbaum noted protective features, such as the youth's intelligence, affability and specific talents; familial factors or an attachment relationship; the presence of a "guardian angel;" and neighborhood support systems.

Members of the Scientific Board presented state-of-the-art interventions, including school-based (**Debra Pepler, Ph.D.**, and **James Larson, Ph.D.**), home-visiting (**Barbara Wasik, Ph.D.**) and community-based (**Cliff O'Donnell, Ph.D.**) interventions.

Concurrent break-out sessions explored intervention techniques further. These included school-based interventions: small group training programs on anger/aggression control and problem solving, led by **James Larson, Ph.D.**; Home-visiting programs: A problem-solving perspective, led by **Barbara Wasik, Ph.D.**; and A community Perspective: Strategies for assessment, prevention and intervention, led by **Cliff O'Donnell, Ph.D.**

The afternoon featured regional experts who gave the Miami perspective on youth violence. The discussion was moderated by **Circuit Court Judge Norman Gerstein**. Panel members



Suzanne Keeley, Ph.D., greets those who attended the conference on Violence and Youth -Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective.



Panelists included members of the Melissa Institute's Scientific Board, as well as local



Attendees learned how communities can help stem violence and aggression in their

Summary of the Conference on Violence and Youth Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective

were: **Emilio Fox**, director of the Division of Student Services for the Dade County Public Schools; **David Lawrence, Jr.**, publisher of The Miami Herald and chairman of The Miami Herald Publishing Company; the **Rev. Dr. Walter Richardson**, pastor of Sweethome Baptist Church and an adjunct professor of religion at St. Thomas University in Miami, Fl.; **Marie Osborne**, chief of the Juvenile Justice Division of the Dade County Public Defender's Office; **Calvin Ross**, secretary of the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice; and **Chet Zerlin**, Deputy Chief Assistant State Attorney for Dade County.

The day concluded with the panel of experts and the Scientific Board of the Melissa Institute exploring how the research findings on youth and violence can be applied to local programs. The session was moderated by **Howard Greenstein**, former director of the Department of Justice System Support, Metro-Dade County. Critical issues for the prevention and treatment of youth violence were identified, and include:

- Early interventions focused on the needs of the family and children are key to success, especially in the first three years.
- School readiness skills should be developed since academic difficulties often accompany the presence of violent-aggressive behaviors.
- Schools, communities, and court systems must integrate their respective intervention programs.
- Neighborhood-based programs that work face-to-face with at-risk youth and their families should be supported and evaluated.



James Brady (left), former Presidential Press Secretary and founder of Handgun Control, talks with Suzanne Keeley, Ph.D. (center), and Lynn and Michael Aptman about the Institute's anti-violence programs.

- More dialogue between researchers and community leaders is necessary, and a leading role in calling for accountability data could be played by the media.

Conference attendees gave the program an excellent evaluation, calling the workshop "comprehensive," "inspiring and energizing," and "extremely relevant to anyone working with youth." "The symposium was excellent, the speakers were fabulous. This should be mandatory for all principals and assistant principals, teachers and counselors," said one person who attended. Said another, "To hear such distinguished professionals express so much dedication to the effort of prevention gives me the strength to continue my own efforts."



Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., presented compelling data about youth vio-



Calvin Ross (left), and David Lawrence, Jr., gave a Miami perspective on vio-

CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

Suzanne Keeley, Ph.D., is President and a founding member of the Melissa Institute. She is a psychologist in private practice, affiliated with Baptist Health Systems of South Florida. She has had extensive clinical experience treating victims and perpetrators of violence.

GUEST FACULTY/ SCIENTIFIC BOARD OF THE MELISSA INSTITUTE

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and one of the founders of cognitive behavior modification. He has lectured worldwide on the impact of violence and has published the Clinical Handbook on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In a recent survey reported in the American Psychologist, he was voted "one of the 10 most influential psycho-therapists of the century." He is a founding member of the Melissa Institute.

James Larson, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and Coordinator of the School Psychology Training Program. He is a leader in violence prevention in the schools and has developed videotape training programs for children and adolescents. His training manuals and materials have been widely used. He is also an expert in parent management training programs.

Cliff O'Donnell, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at the University of Hawaii and Director of the Community Studies Program. He is an authority on childhood aggression and violence. He has addressed the issue of gun control and youth. He brings an international perspective to the meeting, having developed culturally sensitive community programs for youth and their families.

Debra Pepler, Ph.D., is Professor of Psychology at York University, Toronto, Ontario, and the Director of the Judy LaMarsh Center for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution. She is a leader in the area of the developmental correlates of childhood aggression, victimization/bullying and an expert on school-based interventions. She has also studied domestic violence.

Barbara Hanna Wasik, Ph.D., is Professor of Education at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Director of the UNC Center for Home Visiting. She is a pioneer and leading authority in the area of home visiting. Her book on Home visiting: Procedures for helping families (Sage Publishers) is a classic in the field. She has consulted internationally on home visiting and early intervention programs.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lynn Aptman, MEd., Melissa's mother, one of the founders and corresponding secretary of the Melissa Institute.

Michael Aptman, M.D., Neurologist, father of Melissa, one of the founders of the Melissa Institute.

Jo Baxter, APR, MBA, Corporate Vice President/Systems Communications for Baptist Health Systems of South Florida.

Robyn Cassel, Esq., Treasurer of the Melissa Institute.

Penn Chabrow, Esq., Director, Wampler Buchanan & Breen, P.A.

The Honorable Judge Norman Gerstein, Circuit Court Judge, Dade County, Florida.

Josie Goytisolo, Executive Producer/News Special Programming, WPLG Channel 10.

Howard Greenstein, M.A., MBA, former Director of Department of Justice Support, Metro-Dade County, Florida.

Suzanne L. Keeley, Ph.D., Psychologist, one of the founders and President of the Melissa Institute.

Khambrel Marshall, News anchor and reporter, WFOR - TV.

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Clinical Psychologist, one of the founders of the Melissa Institute.

Atlee Wampler, Esq., President, Wampler Buchanan & Breen, P.A., Former U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Florida, Recording Secretary of The Melissa Institute.

MELISSA INSTITUTE HONORARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Brady, former Presidential Press Secretary for President Reagan and founder of Handgun Control, Inc.

Alvin Cassel, Esq., Co-founder of Broad and Cassel.

Alvah H. Chapman, Jr., Retired Chairman and Director/CEO, Knight-Ridder, Inc.

Armando Codina, Chairman and CEO, Codina Group.

Richard Dailey, President, Dadeland Group, Colonial Bank.

William H. Danforth, Chairman of the Board, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

Ron Esserman, President, Esserman Automotive Group.

Adolfo Henriques, President, NationsBank.

Dante F. Fascell, Former United States Representative.

Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Dade County State Attorney.

Daryl Jones, Florida State Senator.

Janet McAiley, Former Chairwoman of the Board, Dade County Public Schools.

Carrie Meek, United States Representative.

Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin, President, Barry University.

Leonard Pitts, Syndicated columnist.

Arthur Teitelbaum, Southern Area Director, Anti-Defamation League.

Ana Veciana-Suarez, Miami Herald columnist.

OUR SUPPORTERS

A special thank-you to the many supporters of the Melissa Institute. Your contributions, both financial and in services provided, made it possible for us to have a successful first year. Your involvement is much appreciated.

Evelyn Adelson
American Airlines
Awards Incorporated
Bob and Ruth Baal
Baptist Health Systems of South Florida
Barnett Bank
Kenneth Bloom
Victor E. Clarke
Colonial Bank
Cordis Corporation
William H. Danforth
Ron Esserman
The Garner Foundation
First Impressions Graphics, Inc.
Friends who continue to volunteer
Impact Communications, Inc.
Jonathan and Tina Kislak
Harry Kramer Memorial Fund
Andrea Loeb
The family of Edith Maisel
The Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community
Northern Trust Bank
Peace and Harmony Event Committee
South Miami Hospital Medical Guild
Mimi Southerland
Wampler Buchanan & Breen
Denise Winston

FIRST YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

The Melissa Institute incorporated - July 25, 1996.
The Melissa Institute introductory reception and dinner at the home of John and Robyn Cassel - September 6, 1996.
The Melissa Institute granted 501(c)3 tax status by I.R.S.
The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment entered in the Congressional Record (March 10, 1997) by U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen.
Melissa Institute Day (May 2, 1997)
Proclamation from Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas.
Participated in Mayor Penelas' and James Brady's Handgun Control Summit - August 15, 1997.
Co-sponsor, Baptist Health Systems' Gun Safety Day - September 27, 1997.

Provided domestic violence services to The Good News Care Center.

CONFERENCES

May 2, 1997 - Violence and Youth, Treatment and Prevention: A Miami Perspective

January 8 and 9, 1998 - Juvenile Assessment Center Conference

May 1, 1998 - Overcoming the Odds: A Risk and Resilience Perspective

CONSULTATIONS

The Miami Coalition for a Safe and Drug-Free Community
Dade County Public Defender's Office
Dade Juvenile Assessment Center
Informed Families of Dade

PRESENTATIONS

Appearance and presentation on Michael Putney's "This Week in South Florida" television program with James Brady, Mayor Alex Penelas, State Rep. Kendrick Meek and Daniel Gross.

Appearance and presentation on "Despierta America," Univision.
Presented the Courage Quilt, created in honor and memory of female victims.
Presented at Florida State University's "Stop Rape Week."
Presented at workshops on "Children: The Forgotten Grievors."
Presented at workshops on "Sudden Death: Care of Survivors."

FUND-RAISING EVENTS

Peace and Harmony: Music for a Better World
October 30, 1996
November 21, 1997
Reception, Northern Trust Bank
February 11, 1998

Design and printing of this report courtesy of Baptist Health Systems of South Florida.



Thank you

for supporting The Melissa Institute and for your commitment to the reduction of violence and the treatment of victims and their families.

Yes! I want to help support The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$_____ or

I would like to pledge the following amount:

- \$10,000+ to be a founder.
 \$5,000 - \$9,999 to be a fellow.
 \$2,500 - \$4,999 to be a patron.
 \$1,000 - \$2,499 to be a benefactor.
 \$500 - \$999 to be a sponsor.
 Other: \$_____ to be a friend.
 I am interested in helping in other ways.

Please specify

- Payment enclosed. Please make check payable to:
The Melissa Institute
c/o South Miami Hospital
6200 SW 73 Street
Miami, FL 33143
or
 Bill the full amount of my contribution
or
 Bill me in the following manner: _____

Please specify

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone





The Melissa Institute

For Violence Prevention and Treatment

6200 SW 73 Street • Miami, FL 33143

Phone 305-668-5210 • Fax 305-668-5211

E-mail: dmeich@watarts.uwaterloo.ca