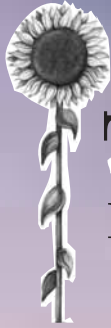


Report to the Community
1999-2000



The Melissa Institute
For Violence Prevention and Treatment





*The Courage Quilt,
created by and for
women survivors of violence,
was displayed at
Melissa Institute functions.*



The Melissa Institute

For Violence Prevention and Treatment

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 the Institute in her name.



The mission of The Melissa Institute is to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public policy, between research findings and direct applications, in order to reduce violence and to help victims of violence and their family members. The goal of The Melissa Institute is to ensure that decisions concerning violence prevention and treatment are made with full knowledge of the most-up-to-date research findings. Our role is one of consultation, education and direct sponsorship of various projects in the field.

Not-One-More Child Death

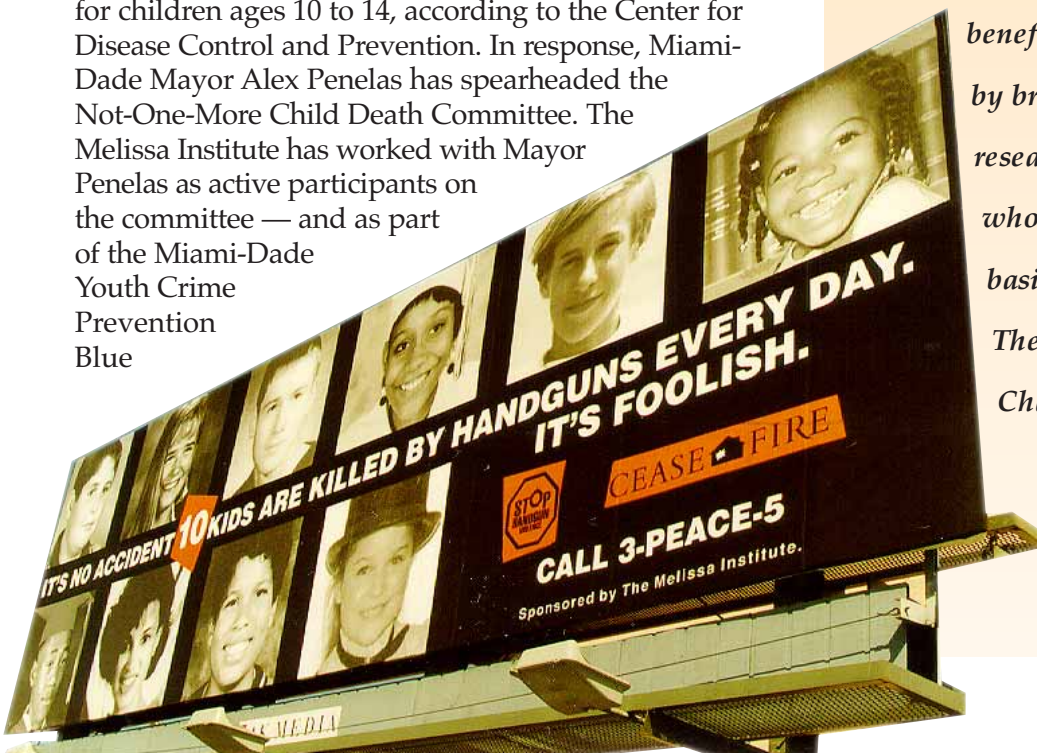
In the past three years, 100 children in Miami-Dade County have died by gunfire. Dozens more have been injured in gun-related accidents. In fact, firearms are the second leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. In response, Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas has spearheaded the Not-One-More Child Death Committee. The Melissa Institute has worked with Mayor Penelas as active participants on the committee — and as part of the Miami-Dade Youth Crime Prevention Blue

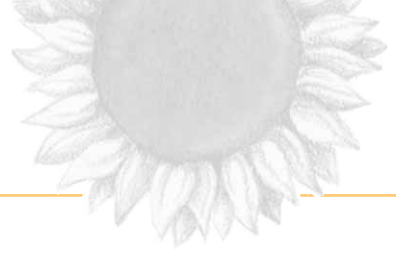
Ribbon Committee — to help reduce juvenile crime and youth gun violence and injury.

In addition to sponsoring a gun safety billboard campaign, The Melissa Institute helped develop a gun accessibility and risk survey to be used at the Juvenile Assessment Center, where more than 25,000 children apprehended for crimes each year are processed. The Melissa Institute has also worked closely with the Miami-Dade County Public Defender's Office, developing assessment and screening tools designed to balance the safety needs of the community with the rehabilitative potential of the offender.

"Our community is blessed to have The Melissa Institute call Miami-Dade County home. The Institute has served as a critical resource to my office by evaluating and participating in the development of policies to prevent youth violence and gun injury. Through its conferences and training sessions for teachers and counselors, The Melissa Institute has benefitted our community as a whole by bridging the gap between scientific research and frontline practitioners who work with our youth on a daily basis. The scientific board and staff of The Melissa Institute are true Champions for our Children."

Alex Penelas, Mayor
Miami-Dade County





Educated Children Commit Fewer Violent Acts

One of the major contributing factors to violent behavior is a youth's failure in school. Approximately 80 percent of crimes are committed by high school drop-outs. Some 85 percent of juvenile offenders are illiterate. Because research has shown that children who read and comprehend well by third grade are likely to graduate from high school and not become perpetrators of violent crimes, The Melissa Institute has taken an active role in literacy promotion.



The America Reads program, a national tutorial project that gives reading instruction to young children, asked The Melissa Institute to consult and critique its program. The Institute hired world-class reading experts, and their advice became part of a report now being implemented throughout the nation. The Institute also sponsored an educational program for college tutors, reading specialists and teachers who work with the Miami-Dade County School System.

In February, 2000, The Institute will hold the Norma Bossard Conference, an all-day reading instruction program led by one of the nation's top reading experts. The conference is named in honor of the late Ms. Bossard, who headed the Miami-Dade Public Schools' language arts and reading program. At the conference, a local reading instructor who best exemplifies "Norma's spirit" will receive a \$500 award from The Melissa Institute that can be used for his or her school's literacy program.

The Melissa Institute helped college students become better reading tutors.

"The Melissa Institute has strengthened our mission for literacy by enlightening our district in pursuing the best possible ways to continue with our efforts to tutor the less proficient readers. The America Reads! Consortium is very grateful."

Alicia Moreyra, Ph.D.
District Director, Division of Language Arts/Reading
Miami-Dade County Public Schools

More Education for the Educators in Our Children's Lives

Following in the footsteps of its successful 1998 "Violence and Youth Conference — Overcoming the Odds: Helping Children and Families at Risk," The Melissa Institute in 1999 sponsored its third annual conference — "Helping Victims of Violence." More than 700 teachers, mental health professionals, social workers, police officers, religious leaders and public policymakers attended two days of seminars, highlighted by a moving address from Dr. Michael Aptman, Melissa's father.

"Melissa demonstrated maturity beyond her years," Dr. Aptman told the crowd. "She was a good person with so much more to give. A beautiful rosebud blossoming into full adulthood. I hate talking about Melissa in the past tense. Her death affords me a window of opportunity to make a difference in her stead."

At the conference, nationally recognized violence prevention experts Joy Osofsky, Ph.D., and Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., demonstrated how a community-



An overflow crowd attended the Institute's third annual conference on "Helping Victims of

based preventive approach can be combined with a clinical therapeutic approach to prevent violence.

The Melissa Institute participates in a number of school programs, including the Miami-Dade County Public School Domestic Violence Committee and the School Violence Prevention Committee. In addition, The Melissa Institute holds workshops for educators on how to identify potentially violent children and how to reduce violence.

Educational efforts by The Melissa Institute are not limited to school professionals, however. As part of a community outreach program, The Institute has given seminars to parents of at-risk youth and to the public on the dangers of guns, and on the factors that contribute to aggressive and violent behaviors.

In fact, The Melissa Institute is prompting caregivers to discover ways to get involved in their communities. For example, The Institute instructed medical school interns about violence. A seminar on preventing violence in the workplace was also given to employees at Family Health Center clinics throughout Miami. Currently in development is a doctor's guide to help detect potential violence and identify victims for treatment. The guide is meant to further discussion between doctors and patients about feelings of safety, access to guns and other weapons, relationships with others and the potential for domestic violence. The Institute also recognizes the importance of faith, and has presented several workshops to local church and synagogue leaders on how they can best prevent youth from becoming offenders.



Keynote speaker
Donald Meichenbaum,

"This conference was extremely informative, well organized, comprehensive and practical."

Conference attendee

"I'm very impressed with your advocacy for those who have been victimized."

Conference attendee

Scholarships to Support Violence Prevention Research

The Melissa Institute is committed to the development of young scientists who will work in areas of violence prevention and treatment of victims. To nurture young scientists, The Institute has established three graduate scholarship awards to support doctoral students' dissertation research. Each award is for \$1,000 to defray costs of conducting the research. Scholarship recipients are invited to attend the annual Melissa Institute conference. The first year's winners were:

- **Sharon Geary**, Boston University, "Violence Prevention, Social Support and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Among Urban Low-Income Children."
- **Richard Van Dorn**, Washington University, St. Louis, "Adolescent Offenders: Understanding the Transition from Nonviolent to Violent Offending."
- **Janine Saunders**, University of Texas at Austin, "Exposure to Chronic Community Violence in African-American Children: Kinship and Spirituality Factors."

In addition to the national scholarships, The Melissa Institute has initiated a Florida-based graduate student research scholarship.



Two of The Melissa Institute's scholarship winners, Sharon Geary and Richard Van Dorn, are pictured with Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., who heads the

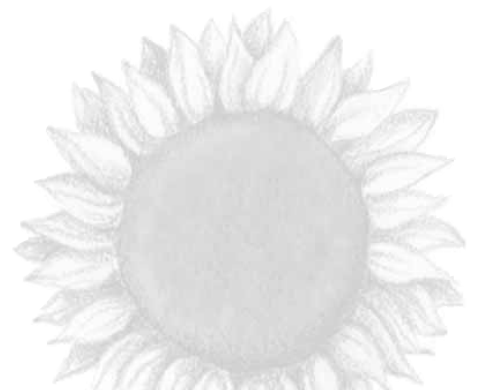
How You Can Help

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 welcome to become involved in specific projects. We welcome contributions in memory of, or in honor of, individuals, and will send an acknowledgment of the donation. Whether it is by means of a donation, or personal involvement, your participation is invited and greatly appreciated.

"While there are many who desire to reach out to help crime victims, The Melissa Institute aims to blend the face of humanity and the intelligence of science in a way that will create a legacy of hope to replace a potential heritage of pain and despair. I am proud to be a part of such an endeavor."

Year 2000 Conferences

- **Prevention of Violence: Lessons from Littleton and Beyond** — May 4, 2000
- **School Violence: Prevention and Intervention Strategies** — May 5, 2000 - for school principals and teachers



Our Volunteer Boards

With the exception of part-time secretarial help, the entire Melissa Institute organization is a volunteer effort. Members of our three Boards give tirelessly of themselves without compensation. What that means for our donors is that nearly every dollar of your contributions goes directly to fund the special projects of The Melissa Institute. Our Boards include:

- **Board of Directors** - Committed 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 treatment of victims.
- **Honorary Board** - Distinguished citizens who have lent their support to The Melissa Institute.



Scientific Board members met with participants at the Third Annual Melissa Institute Conference. Board members are (left to right): James Larson, Ph.D., Joy Osofsky, Ph.D., Clifford O'Donnell, Ph.D., Debra Pepler, Ph.D., and far right, Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D. Judge Cindy Lederman, second from right, shared her thoughts on helping victims

"A big thumbs up for all the great work being done by The Melissa Institute to reduce violence and to help victims of violence."

James Brady
former White House Press Secretary
Founder, Handgun Control, Inc.
Board member

Peace and Harmony

The Melissa Institute's third annual fund-raising event, "An Evening of Peace and Harmony: Music for a Better World," raised \$25,000. Latin jazz artist Roberto Perera wowed the 200 attendees with a lush kaleidoscope of Latin jazz, Afro-Caribbean and New Age music. Lynn Aptman, Melissa's mother, led the evening's program with two original piano compositions she wrote in memory of her daughter: "A Precious Jewel" and "Echoes of the Soul."



Susan Keeley, Ph.D., president of The Melissa Institute (above), introduced an evening of Peace and Harmony featuring Roberto Perera (right.)



Honorary Board member Cynthia Wolman (left) and Lynn Aptman, Melissa's mother, at "Peace and Harmony."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Suzanne Keeley, Ph.D., is President and a founding member of The Melissa Institute. She is a psychologist in private practice and has had extensive clinical experience treating victims and perpetrators of violence.

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Clinical Psychologist, research director and a founding member of The Melissa Institute.

Lynn Aptman, M.Ed., 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, Baptist Health Systems of South Florida.

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SCIENTIFIC BOARD OF THE MELISSA INSTITUTE

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., is Distinguished 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 train-

ing manuals and materials have been widely used. He is also an expert in parent management training programs.

Clifford 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.

Joy D. Osofsky, Ph.D., is Professor of Pediatrics and Psychology at Louisiana State University Medical Center, Professor of Public Health, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry at Louisiana State University, and adjunct Professor of Psychology at the University of New Orleans. For the past 25 years she has been involved with preventive intervention research with adolescent mothers and their infants, and, more recently, with children and families exposed to violence. Dr. Osofsky has consulted extensively regarding infant mental health issues in Europe, Asia and South America. Dr. Osofsky is the editor of *Children in a Violent Society*. She directs the Violence Intervention Program for children and families in New Orleans.

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.

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

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- \$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 by donating stocks, property, or other assets.

- 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:

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"The Aptman family is a sign of strength and love. You have created an incredible institute in Melissa's honor."

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* Denotes contributions of \$1,000-4,999.

** Denotes contributions of \$5,000 and above.

All contributions are cumulative through 8/1/99.

We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please inform us if we inadvertently omitted your name.



*A billboard on South Dixie
highway reminds parents of
the danger of guns.*



The Melissa Institute

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