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

More Education for the Educators in Our Children’s Lives


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

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.

An overflow crowd attended the Institute’s third annual conference on “Helping Victims of Violence.”

“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.

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

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

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.”

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

Honorary Board member Cynthia Wolman (left) and Lynn Aptman, Melissa’s mother, at “Peace and Harmony.”
Distinguished Professor Emeritus, 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., Secretary of The Melissa Institute.

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

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

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

Judge Norman Gerstein, Circuit Court Judge, Miami-Dade County, Florida.

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

Herbert Greene, M.D., retired physician.

Antonia Williams-Gary, consultant, Toni Gary & Associates.


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

Ron Esserman, President, Esserman Automotive Group.

Adolfo Henriques, President and CEO, Union Planters Bank.

David Lawrence, Jr., President, The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation.

Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Miami-Dade County State Attorney.

Daryl Jones, Florida State Senator.

Khambril R. Marshall, News anchor, KPRC - TV, Houston.

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

Carrie Meek, United States Representative.

Sister Jeanne O’Laughlin, President, Barry University.

Alex Penelas, Miami-Dade County Mayor.

Leonard Pitts, Syndicated columnist.

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

Cynthia Wolman, M.Ed., former early childhood educator and board member, Aranon Corp.

MELISSA INSTITUTE

BROAD AND CASSEL.

Alvaro Codina, Chairman and CEO, Codina Group.

Richard Dailey, Executive Vice President, Hemisphere Bank.

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

MELISSA INSTITUTE HONORARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Evelyn Adelson, producer and videographer.

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.

Aranon Corp.

South Miami Hospital Medical Guild

Denise Leede Winston

THE MELISSA INSTITUTE DONORS

Dr. & Mrs. Michael Abels

 cáo Abels

Aranon Corp.

Council of the Americas

Baptist Health Systems of South Florida

Bentley’s Luggage and Gifts

The Biltmore Hotel

Bentley’s Luggage and Gifts

Baptist Health Systems of South Florida

American Airlines

Baptist Health Systems of South Florida

Bentley’s Luggage and Gifts

The Biltmore Hotel

Dade County AHEC

Bentley’s Luggage and Gifts

Baptist Health Systems of South Florida

American Airlines

Baptist Health Systems of South Florida

Bentley’s Luggage and Gifts

The Biltmore Hotel

Dade County AHEC

First Impression Graphics

Julie Fisher

Friends who faithfully volunteer

Stan Heiblum, Integrated Solutions Partners

Jay Musman, Panagos & Salvar, P.A.

The Miami Coalition

Peace and Harmony Committee

Present Perfect

South Miami Hospital Medical Guild

Denise Leede Winston

THE MELISSA INSTITUTE DONORS

Dr. & Mrs. Michael Abels
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 by donating stocks, property, or other assets.

☐ Payment enclosed. Please make check payable to: The Melissa Institute
  or
☐ Bill the full amount of my contribution or
☐ Bill me in the following manner:

Please specify

Name

Address

City State Zip

Telephone
Mr. Joel Levy
Mr. Robert Levy
Mr. Robert M. Levy
Dr. & Mrs. Alan Lewin
Ms. Cathy Liberto
Mr. Dempsey Limbaugh
Ms. Judy Loft
Mr. Joe Lombardo
Dr. & Mrs. Leo Lopez
Dr. Gary Lubell
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Maisel
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Margulies
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Markowiak
Ms. Toby Marmorstein
Mr. & Mrs. Leo Martin*
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Marx
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Mazloff
Ms. Janet McClalley
Dr. & Mrs. Robert McCune*
Dr. & Mrs. Francisco Medina
Dr. & Mrs. Donald Meichenbaum*
Mr. & Mrs. George Mendelson
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Messing
Ms. Maureen Meyers
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Mezey
Dr. & Mrs. Allan Michaelson
Ms. Jennifer Miller
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Miller**
Mr. Richard Milstein
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Mittentag
Ms. Terri Moret Lazarus
Mr. Tom Murphy, Jr.
Dr. & Mrs. Michel Nahmad
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Nash
Dr. H. Richard Nateman
Dr. & Mrs. Ian Nisonson
Dr. Gabriel Novoa
Dr. Clifford O’Donnell
Ms. Rita Okun
Ms. Marie Osborne
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Pacin
Ms. Judy Paige
Dr. & Mrs. Andres Palomo
Mr. Paul Panagos
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Parsons
Dr. & Mrs. Philip Paul
Mr. & Mrs. David Pena*
Dr. Debra Pepler
Dr. Hugo Perez
Mr. Aaron Perlman
Ms. Shirley Perlman
Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Pertnoy
Ms. Sylvia Polk
Ms. Sharon Polk-Sadownik
Dr. & Mrs. Francisco Pons
Ms. Vivian Posada
Dr. Antonio Prats
Ms. Plia Dees Preston
Mr. & Mrs. David Quick
Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Racher
Dr. & Mrs. Anis Racy
Radiology Association of South Florida*
Dr. & Mrs. Sanford Rakofsky
Dr. & Mrs. Emit Ray
Dr. & Mrs. Terry Reisman
Dr. Trevor Resnick
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Rice
Dr. & Mrs. Victor Richards**
Dr. Ana Rivas-Vazquez
Dr. Ralph Rivas-Vazquez
Dr. Ronald Rohan
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Rosasco
Dr. & Mrs. Seth Rosen
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Rosenberg
Dr. & Mrs. Jules Ross
Dr. & Mrs. Martin Rothberg
Dr. & Mrs. S. Lawrence Rothman
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Rubin
Mr. & Mrs. Julian Rubin
Ms. Carol Skelley Rumble
Dr. Fleur Sack
Dr. & Mrs. Glenn Salkind
Mrs. Marion Salkind
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Salzman
Dr. William Samek
Dr. & Mrs. Richard Sandrow
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Sanders
Mr. & Mrs. Neil Sapp
Dr. Melvyn Sarnow
Mr. Paul Saxon
Mr. & Mrs. John Schaeffer
Ms. Maxine Schaffran
Mr. J. David Scheiner
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Schenkan
Mrs. Randy & Joel Schenkan
Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon Schlessinger
Ms. Wendy Schotland
Ms. Marge Schrader
Dr. & Mrs. Bernard Schrager
Ms. Thelma Schreit
Dr. & Mrs. James Schwade*
Dr. & Mrs. Howard Schwartz
Ms. Bonnie Scienza
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Sclar
Dr. & Mrs. James Segal
Dr. & Mrs. Morris Shechter
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Sheer
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Shiffrin
Dr. Judy Siefring
Dr. Wayne Siegel
Ms. Cecily Silberman
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Silverman
Mr. Arnold Singal
Ms. Barbara Singer
SmithKline Beecham
Ms. Sharon Sokol
Mr. Seymour Sokol
South Florida Surgical Group
Dr. & Mrs. Frank Spektor
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Spiegelman
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Stein
Ms. Mildred Steinbook
Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Steiner
Ms. Priscilla Stevens
Mr. & Mrs. Al Stoker*
Mr. & Mrs. Seth Stopek
Mr. Robert Strauss
Dr. Ellen Strot*
Mr. Charles B. Stuzin*
Ms. Midge Sucher
Mr. & Mrs. John Sumberg
Ms. Rae Szwarc
Ms. Jacqueline Sweeney
Ms. June Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Teitelbaum
Judge & Mrs. Moie Tendrich
Dr. Jose Maria Teran
Mr. Don Tescher
Ms. Anita H. Thiede
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Thiron
Mr. Ted Thornburg
Mr. Henry Tie Shue
Mr. Michael Tilton
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen D. Toback
Dr. & Mrs. Wayne Tobin*
Mr. & Mrs. Esen Tokay
Dr. & Mrs. Henry Trattler
Dr. & Mrs. Michael Troner
Ms. Susan Tryson Rodin
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Tulloch
Dr. & Mrs. Bernard Tumarkin
Union Planters Bank*
Ms. Thomasina Vacca
Dr. & Mrs. Jason Vanden Bosch
Ms. Elizabeth Varet*
Dr. & Mrs. George Vergara
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel E. Verrall
Dr. & Mrs. Randy & Wallach
Wampler, Buchanan & Breen P.A.*
Dr. Grace Wang &
Dr. Steve Pabalon
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Warren
Ms. Deborah Weil
Ms. Doris Weinberg
Dr. & Mrs. Malvin Weinberger
Ms. Babette Weiser &
Mr. Sid Kantor
Dr. & Mrs. Peter Weissman
Ms. Kristine Wenzel
Ms. Vivianne Wicker
Strausbaugh
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Wilkins
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Williams
Dr. & Mrs. Warren Witus
Dr. & Mrs. Carlos Wolf
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Wolfson
Dr. & Mrs. Philip Wolman*
Mr. Richard Woolf
Dr. & Mrs. Lloyd Wruble
Dr. & Mrs. Jack Yafia
Mr. & Mrs. Mitchell Yelen
Ms. & Mrs. Kenneth Young
Mr. Dean Ziffer
Dr. Jack Ziffer
Mr. Steven Zimet
Dr. & Mrs. Howard Zwibel*
* 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.

Design and printing of this report courtesy of Baptist Health Systems of South Florida.
A billboard on South Dixie highway reminds parents of the danger of guns.