

# NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 13, April 2016



# A word from the President



*New  
avenues  
of  
solidarity*

## Over the past few months,

new forms of collaboration between the Lea Roback Foundation and various other organizations have arisen thanks to the political and economic context. The Foundation thus decided to become more involved in the *Collectif des fondations québécoises* (*Quebec Foundations Coalition*), which was established last year. At the time, the Foundation was amongst several signatories of an open letter that laid out the role for foundations in a context of government budget austerity. On the heels of this initiative, we actively participated in a symposium, which took place on April 22, 2015. All the people who participated in the event, on behalf of the Foundation, gave it very positive reviews. Meanwhile, in the course of public consultations on the development of the third *Government action plan to fight against poverty and social exclusion*, the Foundation signed a position paper with the other members, which was presented to the Government.

**This partnership is still going strong** and the possibility of organizing a second symposium is on the table. This project is taking place at the same time as the public debate regarding public-private philanthropy partnerships is resurfacing, following the announcement of the Chagnon Foundation's withdrawal from two major projects.

The various foundations that are part of the Coalition have different missions, resources and practices. They do not all have the same position on this issue. But they have succeeded in publicly raising the question about the impact of the Government of Quebec's policies seeking to reform public finances upon inequality. The Board of Directors sees potential in this partnership for developing new avenues of collaboration, for increasing the notoriety of the Foundation and for strengthening its action.

This situation provides us with an opportunity to **cultivate new avenues of solidarity** for promoting and advancing, within Quebec society, the values that Lea Roback defended throughout her life. Of course, all this must be done while exercising a certain degree of vigilance, taking our means into consideration and in line with our fundamental orientations.

**Another such opportunity** has presented itself to us. From 2010 to 2012, a collaboration agreement was made linking the Foundation with *Maman va à l'école*.

This organization seeks primarily to promote access to a first diploma for single-parent mothers, notwithstanding their age. Its approach includes fostering research in education, which identifies the obstacles confronted by single-parent mothers, facilitating their entrance into learning institutions, their integration, their initiation into learning, guidance and providing them with the means to sustain their motivation and to help them persevere. With all this in mind, the organization has developed, over the past few years, a scholarship program that is administered by regional chapters.

We can now **go even further** by establishing a genuine partnership. As part of the protocol that would bind us, the Foundation would remit a sum of money to *Maman va à l'école* annually that would enable them to award a \$500 scholarship in each of the regions where the organization is active. These scholarships would be called the *Lea Roback Encouragement Scholarships* and would be granted to single-parent mothers who are socially involved and who seek to acquire their high school diploma (HSD) or a vocational diploma (DEP), women who, under current circumstances, the Foundation has had less direct contact. By pooling our efforts and networks, we will be making our actions designed to favour the women in our society who are amongst the most impoverished more effective.

**Lea Roback** was firmly convinced that access to education was the wisest path to take to foster the economic autonomy of women and, in so doing, to help them achieve equality and freedom. She was also profoundly convinced, and her entire life testifies to this axiom, about the power of solidarity to change the world. Without a shadow of a doubt, she would be thrilled to see our two organizations collaborating so closely together to boost and broaden the values that she believed in so unequivocally.

Lorraine Pagé

# Tania Sousa:



## Foundation Scholarship Recipient

At the Lea Roback Foundation, we like receiving news about our scholarship recipients. This enables us to stay abreast of the successes of the women that we know and that we admire even when we never get the chance to meet them.

It thus always gives us great pride to share their stories with you.

We recently received a letter from Tania Sousa that prompts us to present this young woman who inspires so much courage, perseverance and dynamism to you.

As an adolescent, like so many young girls, Tania would ask herself many questions about her future. Her daily routine was a difficult one; depressed, she no longer saw any value in continuing her studies and didn't know what really interested her. But in the face of adversity, Tania accepted to seek help.

Her family doctor helped her embark upon the path of courage, not with drugs, but by talking to her, by listening to her and by encouraging her to try to discover what she really liked and what she would like to do with the rest of her life.

Tania affirms: "He was the person who helped me discover a zest for life."

Notwithstanding a number of family and personal difficulties, Tania got back on her feet.

After dropping out of school at 16 years old, she remained determined and realistic: she consulted with other people, asked for help, and began working to achieve her autonomy.

When she decided to move into an apartment on her own, she received support from her boyfriend and valuable advice from Carrefour jeunesse emploi. She had to learn everything, even how to manage her home and her budget.

In 2009 she enrolled in Félix-Antoine School to get her high school diploma and training on selling cosmetics; she then went to work in a pharmacy.

Benefiting from greater stability and keenly determined to build a better life, she decided to continue her education and enrolled in a program for a vocational diploma in the general maintenance of immovables. This led her to apply for a scholarship from the Lea Roback Foundation, which enabled her to earn a certificate in hygiene and sanitation.

The scholarship helped her continue her training without too many worries. Tania worked hard to do well in her courses, but still found time to get involved socially and especially to take hands-on care of her mother, who had many health problems.

You will see, as you read her letter, that she now works in a hospital setting and is proud of her accomplishments. We heartily congratulate and salute her.

Tania Sousa will not stop there, however.

Her financial stability now opens the door to new possibilities.

Moving forward, she wants to continue her studies in order to enrol in a technique that would enable her to do even more and to achieve new goals. She wants to continue working in a hospital setting. In order to do this, she wants to get some guidance counselling to identify what would be most suitable for her.

Her achievements and perseverance speak volumes; there's no doubt that Tania will manage to fulfil her dreams and build a better life.

Madame,

Depuis votre lettre du 29 mai 2014, j'ai beaucoup étudié, exploré, travaillé pour finalement obtenir, en juin 2015, une Attestation d'études professionnelles en hygiène et salubrité en milieux de soins. Il me fait grand plaisir de vous joindre une copie de ce document.

Je puis vous assurer que votre bourse m'a permis de continuer mes nombreuses démarches pour améliorer ma qualité de vie. Celle-ci s'annonce dorénavant plus claire et plus encourageante.

Ainsi, depuis la fin des cours, j'ai postulé et obtenu un emploi, entre autres, à l'hôpital Fleury. Je désire aussi vous dire mon intention sérieuse de continuer mes études à l'École Félix-Antoine pour terminer mon secondaire 5. Elles se feront en tenant compte de mes horaires de travail mais je suis vraiment décidée de poursuivre.

Encore une fois, je veux vous remercier pour l'aide financière que vous m'avez offerte. La sélection de mon dossier a solidifié mon estime de moi. Depuis, ma vie est un peu plus légère et je commence enfin à croire que je pourrai la bâtir comme j'ai toujours rêvé.

Veuillez transmettre mes remerciements aux membres du Conseil d'administration et accepter ma profonde gratitude.

Tania Sousa

# 2015

## Annual Fundraising Campaign

The Lea Roback Foundation held its annual fundraising campaign in the fall 2015. The generosity of the many people and organizations who answered our appeal enabled us to raise \$30,824.59. Of this amount, \$13,674.59 came from individuals and associations, while \$17,150.00 came from our patrons and new Partners and Major Partners.

The members of the Board of Directors wish to heartily thank all our loyal donors, as well as our new supporters who have recently joined with us, for their indispensable and indefatigable support to ensure the success of our mission.

During this campaign, we most appreciate the contribution of our new Major Partners, who have added themselves to our list of benefactors, after receiving prestigious awards. Please allow us to draw attention to Ms. Micheline Dumont, a historian recognized for her contributions to women's history, the recipient of the Gérard-Parizeau Award, Mr. Martin Duckworth, filmmaker, who was given the Albert-Tessier Award, as well as Ms. Nicole Ranger, the recipient of the Desjardins Foundation Award for volunteer work and social commitment. We sincerely thank them for sharing some of the proceeds of their awards with the Foundation.

We would also like to draw attention to the indispensable contributions of the trade union movement and the educational milieu. Over the years, we have received substantial donations from teachers when they retire. They thereby show their deeply felt sensitivity to the importance of education for securing a decent standard of living.

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### Thanks to Ms Pauline Lantz

Pauline Lantz has just joined the Foundation as a GREAT PARTNER. As a retired educator, Ms Lantz recognizes that education “changes you, even in small ways”. Ms Lantz grew up with the importance of education instilled in her, even when there was no money for it. As a result, she wanted to provide the opportunity to others in need.

What also motivated her to give to the Foundation was the importance of giving back to society. Ms Lantz grew up seeing her parents give. When there was no money, the giving of clothes, food and time were offered. She wants to continue this tradition.

Moreover, what's interesting about Ms Lantz's donation, is that she donated stocks to the Foundation. Through Canada Helps (canadahelps.org), a simple transfer was done with the support of her financial broker. Ms Lantz benefitted from not paying capital gains on her donation and the Foundation secured a larger donation than if it had been given after taxes had been paid. There are thus a thousand and one ways to show your support to the Lea Roback Foundation: a bequest, a donation to celebrate a birthday or to mark someone's passing, when one is given an award or by becoming a Partner.

You can become a **PARTNER**  
by donating between \$500 and \$1,000

or a **GREAT PARTNER**  
by donating \$1,000 or more.

### **CANADAHELPS**

You can make your donation directly by way of CANADAHELPS  
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/lea-robback-foundation/>

### **THE MONTHLY DONATION**

An effective payment method. It can be cancelled at any time.

# Departure of Louise Lacroix, our secretary



“What is remarkable is the broad diversity of the scholarship recipients, single-parent moms, young women who believe in their future, people who want to go back to school... here, one can see all the potential that women have.”

In June 2010, the Lea Roback Foundation decided to hire Louise Lacroix as a part-time secretary, to make our operations more effective and professional. Since 2010, Louise has systematized our administrative operations, organized our archives, taken care of our mailings and our correspondence, in addition to participating in most of our activities.

Last March, Louise decided to retire.

Before leaving, Louise confided in us how much she has enjoyed her experience and the fact that she was able to put her skills at the service of an important cause, education, while rubbing shoulders with people who were involved in their communities. She is moreover planning to continue to stay abreast of the Foundation's activities. She believes that it is vital to contribute to our fundraising campaigns because “The Foundation's action seeks to provide women with the opportunity to be better prepared for entering the job market, and to be able to complete their education. What is remarkable is the broad diversity of the scholarship recipients, single-parent moms, young women who believe in their future, people who want to go back to school... here, one can see all the potential that women have.”

**Thank you Louise** for all these years at the service of the Foundation.

# Lea Roback and the arts

Last October, the **Pack Light** project was launched, giving shape to an idea shared by Haley Firkser, Michael Yashinsky and Zoë Freedman, to create bags sporting the image of a personality from the Jewish community, with the collaboration of young artists.

The first bag, in the series, was dedicated to Lea, with a very beautiful portrait created by **Noa Ne'eman**.

We asked Noa a few questions to find out more about this project and its creator.



Noa Ne'eman, Haley Firkser, Zoë Freedman and Michael Yashinsky

*Hello Noa, You recently made the beautiful portrait of Lea Roback for the project Pack Light activist bags. Did you know Lea before? Had you heard of Lea before?*

Perhaps I had learnt about her when I was younger, but when I was asked to participate, her name didn't ring any bells. Learning about who she was and the life she leads was so inspiring to me, and I am so honoured to have been part of this amazing initiative.

*Do you feel a common ground as a young artist with an activist like Lea?*

I'd like to say yes, but my artwork at the moment is not very much motivated by activism. I am very passionate about social justice, but I am nowhere near as present and brave as Lea was. At the same time, this project was an amazing way to bridge the gap between art and activism, and an opportunity to use art as a vessel to inspire social change.

*How did you meet the authors of this project?*

The Pack Light team consists of 3 amazing and dedicated young people, Haley Yael Firkser, Zoë Freedman and Michael Yashinsky. We corresponded by email until the event!

Strangely enough, I coincidentally bumped into Haley at an unrelated protest in Montreal, and while we were speaking, and learnt each others names, (and perhaps had recognized each other's faces from Facebook) I realized that she was Haley from Pack Light, and she realized I was Noa, the artist. We got very excited in that moment.

*How did you proceed for this project?*

So, the 3 of us began corresponding by email. After discussing technical issues, it was suggested that I meet with Shannon Hodge, a wonderful archivist and a big fan of Lea's, who works at the

Jewish Public Library. Shannon brought me to the archive room and gave me several books of original photos of Lea and her friends and family to sift through. This was intriguing because these pictures only existed right here, in the JPL, and nowhere else. I picked out about 50 photos which could be good for a portrait, and Shannon scanned them. After that, I drew about twenty sample portraits. These twenty included portraits of Lea ranging from her younger years up until her 90's, all in different styles and colours. After receiving feedback on that, I made about 14 more images, and two finals. *I know that you made many portraits of Lea, who chose the final one?* Zoë, Haley and Michael decided. I left it up to them completely.



Noa Ne'eman is very pleased with this collaboration. She believes that a large part of her training as an artist was nurtured by Concordia University and Dawson College, where she studied illustration and design. In her opinion, school set her out on the path of the arts and provided her with the space that she needed to create. It was the very act of going to school and getting involved in different projects that opened her eyes to the arts. The young artist is particularly fond of contemporary portraiture and the artists who excel in this domain, such as Chuck Close and Denis Peterson. She also adores the dynamic and lively figurative art of Liu Xiaodong and Lucian Freud, the comic strip realm,

American comic strips of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as Dr. Seuss. Urban art intrigues her, particularly the work of the European artist Horfee.



A very dynamic artist, she's involved in numerous projects: on-the-spot portraits done at various kinds of events in Montreal, primarily for birthdays, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, fundraising campaigns, commissioned works and promotional art for musicians. She goes with her inspirations and her head is brimming with new ideas for innovative creations. Lately, several of her portraits were on display at the *Chez Boris* café, where the Pack Light event honouring Lea Roback was held!

Noa Ne'eman, *Snow Bramj*

You can get one of these bags for \$20 (postage fees not included) by going to the project's Web site at:

<http://shlepwithpride.com>

Or, by e-mail at: [packlightbags@gmail.com](mailto:packlightbags@gmail.com)

Noa Ne'eman's Website: <http://www.noaskate.com>

## Great Partners of the Foundation

The Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ);  
the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN);  
the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ);  
the Sœurs Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe;  
the Syndicat des conseillères et conseillers de la CSQ, Fonds de solidarité;  
Ms Micheline Dumont;  
Ms Nicole Ranger  
and two donors who wish to remain anonymous.

## Partners of the Foundation

The Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux (APTS);  
the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins;  
the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE);  
the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ);  
the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN);  
the Organisation des retraité-es de la CSN (OR-CSN);  
the Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Ouest de Montréal;  
the Syndicat des professionnelles et des professionnels du milieu de l'éducation de Montréal (CSQ);  
Mr Martin Duckworth;  
Ms Anna Marie Labelle;  
Ms Donna Mergler;  
and Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond.

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