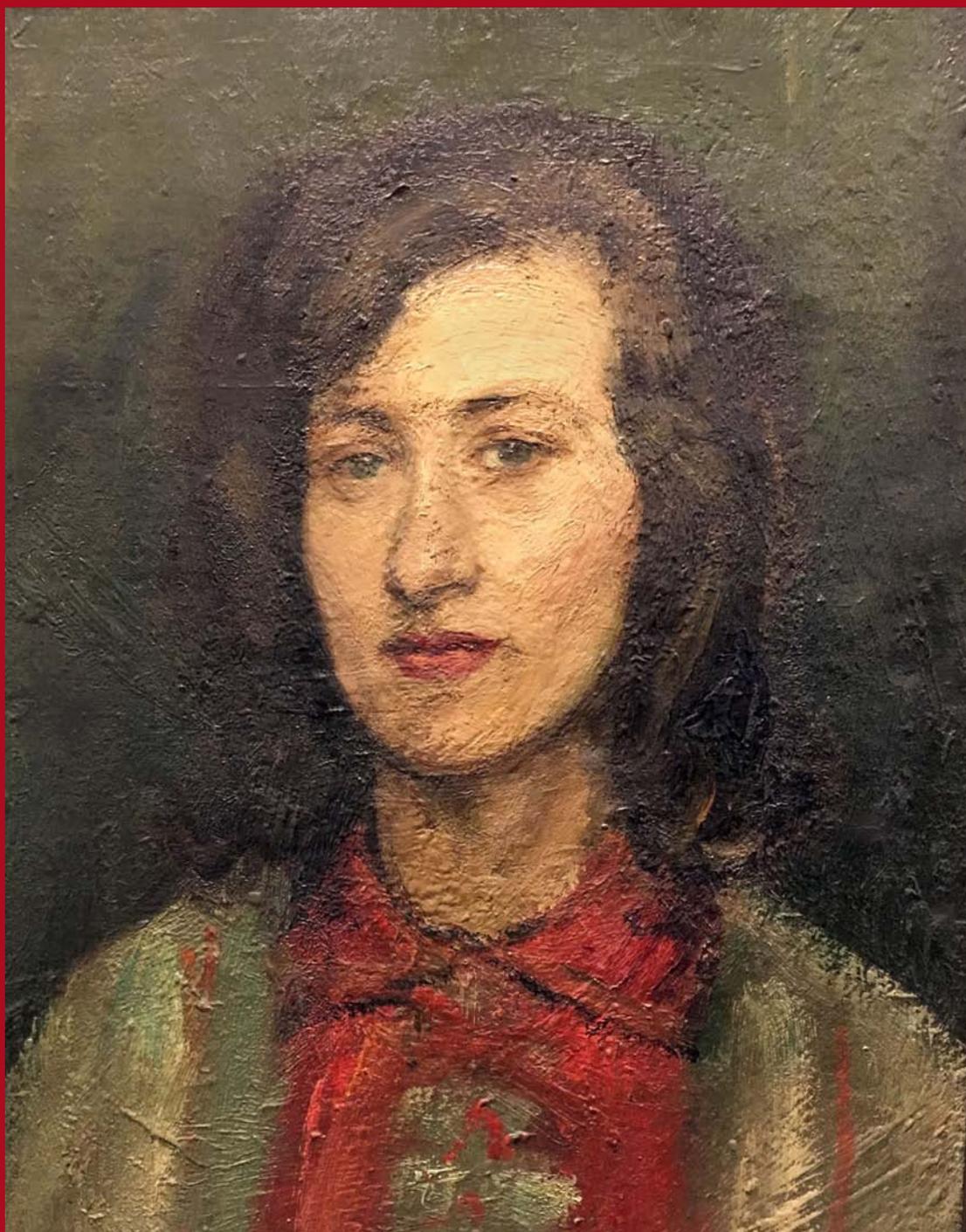


# NEWSLETTER

## LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 16, December 2017



Portrait de Léa Roback, peintre inconnu. Archives de la Bibliothèque publique juive de Montréal.

# A Word from the President

## A BIT OF BLUE IN OUR LIVES...



Our newsletter, which appears twice a year, provides a way for the Board of Directors to forge a connection with the people and organizations who sustain the Foundation's mission with their donations by presenting the recipients of our scholarships, by reporting on the Foundation's various activities and major orientations. You'll find all of the foregoing in this issue.

This newsletter is also a medium that permits us to preserve the memory of Lea Roback and the values that she defended throughout her life. You're all surely aware of her devotion to the right to a good education and the equality of women, causes that she held dear and that constitute the fundamental mission of the Foundation.

I would like, this time around, to draw attention to another ideal that she passionately advocated over the years, and right up till the very end of her life: namely, the promotion of peace between all peoples.

Lea spent many years in Europe at the end of the 1920s and into the early 1930s, thus witnessing the rise of fascism in Italy, Spain and National Socialism in Germany. She saw first hand what gave rise to World War II. She heard the populist rhetoric that generated intolerance, hatred of the other and conflict. From this period of her life, she retained the sense of urgency to combat the ignorance of people "who prefer not to acknowledge what's going on".

Why raise this matter here and now? Because, over the past few years, we can sense that that these attitudes of close-mindedness and opprobrium are thriving more than ever before. Armed conflicts, terrorism, migratory movements, an increase in exclusion and isolation, all of these phenomena put Lea's concerns about promoting peace and the dignity of all people back on the agenda.

The year that is now coming to a close has brought us a cascade of horrors in front of which we might often feel very powerless. Here again, Lea's wisdom can inspire us. Witness her remark in an interview where she affirmed that she never felt that the struggle "wasn't worth it". Lea was not one to be discouraged and would steadfastly declare:

**“ Look up at the sky: there’s lots of grey, no? But also some blue.  
Well me, I like to focus on the blue.”**

**So for 2018, let’s hope we can learn how to  
see the blue, to put lots of blue into our lives  
in order to build, as Lea so ardently desired,  
a better world for everyone.**



Lorraine Pagé  
Présidente



# Our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

## AN EXHIBITION FEATURING LEA ROBACK AND THE FOUNDATION

In 2018, the Lea Roback Foundation will be celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Created to mark the occasion of Lea's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Foundation was established to honour this strong-willed, compassionate and action-oriented woman by offering scholarships to women engaged in their communities who might need a helping hand to help them with their plans to improve their education.

As a way to underline this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and in co-operation with the archives of the Jewish Public Library, we will be organizing an exhibition featuring Lea Roback and the 25-year existence of the Foundation.

To evoke Lea Roback's life and her impact upon Quebec society, the exhibition, Viva Lea! will be presenting heretofore unpublished historical documents, testimonies, objects that belonged to Lea, works of art, an overview of her union activities, her political involvement, as well as her participation in the women's movement and peace movement.

*Montreal Explorations* will be taking advantage of the occasion to offer a tour through a few Montreal working class neighbourhoods to tell the story of this unflinching activist, as well as of the social and progressive movements that sought to change their communities through solidarity and joint action.

This exhibition will be held from May 3 to 31, 2018 in the Entrance Hall of the Jewish Public Library, where the Lea Roback archives are currently housed. Special activities will be organized on the evening of May 3, 2018, beginning at 18:00, when the exhibition is to be inaugurated. Everyone is cordially invited to join us there.

# VIVA LÉA!

Indignée, battante, humaniste : Léa Roback

Follow us at: [www.fondationlearoback.org](http://www.fondationlearoback.org) and on Facebook for more information.

# The Scholarships

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2017 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

This year, the Foundation awarded scholarships to 15 compassionate women who are continuing their education so as to improve their lot in life, but above all, so that they may practise a trade or a profession that will make them happy.

Their areas of study are diverse, as you will see for yourselves as you read on.

All these women are active and engaged socially in their communities, their schools, their neighbourhoods or villages. Bravo to all of them.

### LITERACY STUDIES

#### **Diane Sagala**

Diane Sagala is a highly motivated woman; notwithstanding some learning difficulties she's encountered, she won't turn her back to her literacy studies, nor to her dream to improve her ability to integrate into the community.

Diane Sagala wants to learn and she's always game to try new experiences.

Enrolled in the *Maison des mots* in the Lower Laurentians since 1996, Diane sits on their Board of Directors, as the latter's Treasurer and representative of the participants.

Appreciated for her perseverance and the interest she shows in the well being of others, she has volunteered in several community groups where her team spirit and respect for the values of others are valuable assets.

Diane Sagala can take pride in the path she's travelled. We're happy to participate in helping her to achieve her goals and we heartily congratulate her.

### HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES

#### **Kim Beaulieu**

At 21 years old, with a child born prematurely that she's raising on her own, Kim Beaulieu is very determined to earn her high school diploma and to enrol in a Forestry career-training program.

A resident of Dégelis, in the Lower-Saint-Laurent region, Kim has made some sober choices and will succeed in achieving her goals. She henceforth has the tools to learn, to succeed in her studies and to continue her training, so as to give herself a better life.

Kim has demonstrated lots of courage and resilience by overcoming numerous obstacles and providing the care required following the premature birth of her son. Notwithstanding her demanding family responsibilities, she nonetheless manages to remain socially engaged and participate actively in the area's Community Kitchens.

## **Julie Masson**

Julie Masson is a very active woman, a mother of three children, one of whom has significant health problems. She boasts several years of experience in a variety of community and cultural groups.

Enrolled in the Windsor Adult Education Centre, she is finishing her high school diploma and wants to specialize in childhood education, so that she can work with special needs children. Motivated by her ambition, Julie Masson feels that her return to school is truly a stroke of good luck in her life.

We're happy to support her in achieving her goals.

## **CAREER TRAINING**

### **Mihaela Budnar**

After a chaotic period that led Mihaela to take stock of her life and her goals, Mihaela decided to take her situation in hand.

Having not completed her third year of high school, she'd have to terminate the latter and then choose a training program that could enable her to find a job quickly.

Attracted by the nontraditional trades, she enrolled herself in a welding program, after which she'd like to work in the construction industry.

At 36 years old, Mihaela is well aware that time is of the essence, and so she's very motivated and is a hard working student. She realizes that this is a key turning point in her life, and she's full of hope:

"I'm looking forward for a better me with a lot of beautiful achievements."

We believe that she'll succeed in achieving her goals by dint of her hard work and determination.

## **COLLEGE STUDIES**

### **Dézy Guimont**

Dézy Guimont is an artist. She's knows that art can save people. Indeed, it's through art and especially dance that she aspires to help others and her dream is a bold one: create a Residential Centre, where art will be up front and centre.

Dézy Guimont was previously one of our scholarship recipients in 2016. We salute her perseverance, determination and resilience. Notwithstanding a precarious financial situation, her volunteer commitment is a very personal one: she gives conferences on the difficult path she's navigated and is active with Narcotics Anonymous.

We hope that she will complete her training and, capitalizing on her wealth of experience, that she can help others as she so desires.



### **Martine Sarazin Paradis**

Very active in her community, a mother of a young boy that she's raising alone, Martine wants to finish high school so that she can continue her studies at the CEGEP de l'Outaouais.

She's involved in the women's' movement, for example, the FFQ summit on feminist action and analysis, as well as in different community groups that focus upon things like the importance of social housing. Martine volunteers to provide help to different families in her community and participates in numerous community events in her neighbourhood as a volunteer artist. She's recognized as a natural, dynamic and engaged leader.

### **Nancy Tremblay**

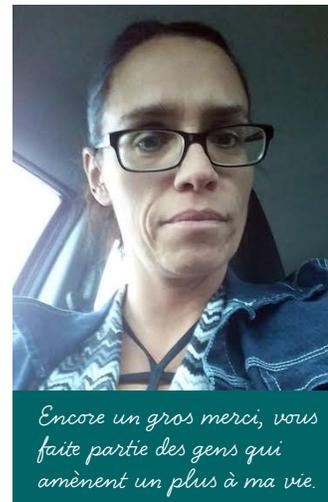
Nancy Tremblay, from St-Isidore de Laprairie, is a mother of two children 6 and 9 years old.

Raising her children alone, the Foundation's scholarship thus arrives at just the right time.

Nancy is engaged in suicide prevention and mental health. She already has a certificate in mental health from the Université de Montréal.

A few years ago, she decided to reorient her career, and is now in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year of early childhood education at the CEGEP de Valleyfield.

We wish her lots of success in her new career.



*Encore un gros merci, vous  
faites partie des gens qui  
amènent un plus à ma vie.*

## **UNIVERSITY STUDIES**

### **Sammy Jo Baran**

Sammy Jo already has a high school and a vocational studies diploma, but she's really passionate about getting into social work. So she enrolled in a social work diploma program at the CEGEP de Lévis Lauzon, as well as in a cultural diversity microprogram at the Université Laval.

What she wants is unequivocal: to continue her university education in social work. Although she receives a bit of financial assistance from her son's father, Sammy Jo still has to juggle her responsibilities as a single-parent mother, without any close relatives in a position to help her.

The people around her appreciate her availability and her openness towards others, qualities that will undoubtedly inform her professional career.

### **Kavitha Culasingam**



Kavitha's journey has been remarkable; originally from Sri Lanka, she arrived in Canada with her mother and sister after spending some seven years in the camps. Today a Canadian citizen, Kavitha remains attached to her origins, but is keenly interested in her adopted country.

Her volunteer work is aligned towards helping others integrate into their communities.

She's a member of *Women of the World* and the Quebec branch of the *Tamil Development Association*. She's also active in movements dedicated to the defence of women's rights. While taking her courses, she also works part-time to support herself.

Her goal is unambiguous: “struggle against oppressive systems with the right tools.” This is precisely why she enrolled at UQÀM to earn a social work certificate.

*Je suis très reconnaissante à la Fondation.. Encore une fois un gros merci pour votre temps!*

### **Allyah-Jade Hunte**

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year, the Foundation is awarding the Madeleine Parent scholarship to Allyah-Jade Hunte. In 2018, she will be completing her 3<sup>rd</sup> year in Sociology and Spanish translation at Concordia University.

Very active in her community ever since she was a teenager, she started a campaign last year to collect warm clothes for homeless people. She’s also involved in a new NGO. She lives in Châteauguay

She wants to continue her university studies, in order to earn a Masters degree in community work with young people. Her many years as a volunteer and involvement in her community will be very valuable assets moving forward.

### **Kathy Nodzynski**

Kathy lives in Montreal, and even as a very young girl, in high school, she was an activist. She was likewise very active when going to John Abbott CEGEP: in her student association, in international development, but also in various sports. Amongst many other accomplishments, she worked as a volunteer in Peru in 2016.

She was recently accepted into McGill University, where she wants to get a Bachelor of Science degree (B.Sc. in Rehabilitation Science; with a Major in Physical Therapy). Her dream is to become a doctor. Her commitment has undoubtedly laid the groundwork for her to exercise this noble profession.

### **Janie Poirier**



Hailing from Barraute in the Abitibi region, Janie Poirier is the mother of three children aged 3 to 6 years old, who she is largely raising all on her own. A founding member of the *Les Matinées des P’tits Loups*, a community organization that provides support to local families, she’s been the group’s Director General for the past three years.

Janie has an animal health technician diploma and hence worked in this field prior to getting more involved in her community. *“I worked at this trade for some nine years, but something was missing for me to be totally happy ... I still feel this need to be involved in my community to help people, so going back to school is sort of a stepping stone for me to make my dreams come true.”*

Since this past fall, she is pursuing her social work studies at the UQÀT (Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue). We hope her studies make her very happy.

### **Violeta Saavedra**

Originally from Mexico and a resident of Montreal, Violeta has a daughter who she’s raising entirely on her own. Since her arrival, she’s worked hard to fit in and to continue her education. She learned French and then English, with community organizations, and later completed her college studies in accounting and management.

But today, she has even greater ambitions. As a student at the Université de Montréal, she wants to complete her studies in Arts and Sciences so as to acquire the prerequisites needed to enable her to get a health care-related university degree.

All throughout her studies, she took the time to get involved in the *Halte des Femmes*, at the CHSLD Marie Claret.

She'd like her daughter to have a life that would be easier than what she's had to go through.

### **Amélie Séguin-Gougeon**

Amélie Séguin-Gougeon is very proud to be a 2017 Foundation scholarship recipient, as she wrote to us recently. A mother of two children, she is active in her community, Ste-Agathe de Lotbinière, particularly in activities geared towards improving the lot of families and senior citizens. She's likewise involved in the struggle against shale gas development.



*"I'm writing to you today to thank you for your generous scholarship... I'm very touched and grateful to learn that I've been chosen to receive this scholarship. (Hélène Pedneault Scholarship)*

*I'm currently doing a Bachelor of Communications in human relations ... I'm planning to continue after I get this*

*degree to do a Masters in psychosocial practices at the Université du Québec à Rimouski."*

We wish her lots of success in her very exciting projects.

### **Michelle Lyne Tremblay**

Michelle Lyne Tremblay splits her time between the Gaspé and Montreal. She went back to school a few years ago and is now majoring in anthropology at the Université de Montréal. She hopes to earn a Bachelor degree by accumulating certificates.

She's very involved with aboriginal communities in the water conservation movement. She's a co-founder of the *Les Valoristes* solidarity cooperative. The latter's mission is notably to promote the recovery of refundable, recyclable and reusable materials, in solidarity with the most needy citizens who can exploit these materials to make a little bit of money.

She hopes to become an anthropologist so as to work at making life easier for all women.



*Je voudrais profiter de l'occasion afin de vous remercier chaleureusement de m'avoir remis cette bourse. Grâce à vous, j'ai pu régler certaines dettes et surtout avoir eu l'honneur de participer à la « Water Walk 2017 ». Cette marche pour l'Eau vise à sensibiliser les populations de l'importance de l'eau, des dangers réels qui y sont reliés... Personnellement, cette riche expérience de vie me donne tout le courage nécessaire afin de poursuivre mes études et ainsi contribuer à la sauvegarde de l'eau avec les femmes autochtones.*

# Maman va à l'école

## EDUCATION INCENTIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

For the past few years now, the Lea Roback Foundation has been collaborating with *Mother goes to school* (MVL- *Maman va à l'école*). MVL's mission is also that of awarding scholarships to women with financial needs. MVL primarily focuses its efforts upon single parent women who don't have a diploma.

This year, the Foundation granted 10 education incentive scholarships of \$500 each, as part of this collaboration.

Last June 6, in Joliette, Irène Ellenberger, the Foundation's General Secretary presented a scholarship to **Rose Otenga-Tshikenondo**. Rose is originally from the Congo. She had to seek refuge in Canada when she was pregnant. She's currently enrolled in a francization class and hopes to enrol later on in a career training program. Rose is active in the *Maison Pauline Bonin*, where she is currently living.



Unfortunately, no representatives from the Foundation were able to attend any of the other scholarship presentations, however, that doesn't prevent us from presenting them to you.

**Karine Fleury** from the Abitibi, is a single-parent mother of three children. She wants to finish high school. She's involved in *La voix des parents du Témiscamingue*, a group that provides assistance to families with young children.

**Erika Emond**, from the Beauce, is a young widow with three children who are under 5 years old and who all have special needs (ADHD, deafness and heart problems). She's enrolled in a nontraditional trades training program on electricity at the de la Chaudière Integrated Industrial Mechanics Centre. She's active at *Le Berceau*, and since 2016, she's been similarly involved in the Léony Hébert Movement.



**Pamela Boivin-Petiquay** is the Trois-Rivières recipient. A young aboriginal woman originally from the Wemotaci community, who is raising her 13 year old daughter on her own. She went back to school in October 2014 to complete her high school diploma. Since this fall, she's been enrolled in a special education (AEC) Kiuna Odanak program in Pierreville. After graduation, she's hoping to go back to her community in order to help young people and women.



**Marie-Claude Dupuis-Bisson**, who left school at a very early age, is the mother of a young 4 year old boy who she's raising on her own. In the fall 2016, after a period in her life that was marked by many difficulties and hardships, she decided to go get her high school leaving certificate, to enable her to then go on to do a career training program. Marie Claude is very engaged in her community, participating in various fundraising campaigns and volunteer work with addicts, as well as at the *Maison de la famille*. At school, she's very involved in all kinds of things; helping her colleagues.

**Karine Pinsonneault**, from the Haut Richelieu, is in the process of finishing her high school diploma in order to go on to a DEP in secretarial work. Since 2006, she's been involved in several social initiatives and does volunteer work. In 2016, she volunteered for the Christmas dinner at the *St-Jean Volunteer Action Centre*. Karine is the mother of a 2 year old boy.



**Marie-Claude Thériault** is raising her son on her own. She's trying to realize her dream of becoming a committed nurse. She's very generous with her time, car pooling with another mother who has gone back to school, supporting her goddaughter by assisting her with her homework and especially, getting involved to help other families in need and volunteering her time at *Regard en Elle*, a group that helps women and children whose milieu has been marked by conjugal violence.

**Jany-Ève Lapointe** from the Val-Maska region, is a single-parent mother of three children, who hopes to finish her second year high school and eventually earn her high school leaving certificate. Jany-Eve volunteers at *Urgence Vie*, a group that provides assistance to people in need (donations of clothes, toys, school supplies, etc...).



**Mariam Fonfana** is taking francization classes. She spent 14 years

as a refugee in Guinea. Notwithstanding the fact that she had to leave her young daughter far away, she took over raising her deceased sister's three children (8, 11 and 14 years old) all alone, as well as taking care of her own mother. In addition, she volunteers at the *Bois-Francs International Reception Committee*. She lives in Victoriaville.



**Karine Ouellette** is a mother of five children, who range in age from 4 to 12 years old. In 2016, she went back to school and is currently studying special education at the CEGEP de St-Jérôme. Notwithstanding this heavy burden, she's involved in the school activities of her children.



**Congratulations to all of you, the Lea Roback Foundation is proud to have the opportunity to support you in your endeavours.**

# Fundraising Campaign

## TWO LOVELY SURPRISES

### A GREAT START

Two lovely surprises kicked off the Foundation's fundraising campaign this fall. The distinguished social medicine professor and researcher, Louise Potvin, urged ACFAS to remit to the Foundation the \$5,000 scholarship that she had just received as part of the Pierre-Dansereau Award given to her last November 8. Recently named as the Director of the Public Health Research Institute at the Université de Montréal, Louise Potvin, who is also the Research Director at the Lea-Roback Research Centre, is investigating the long term impact of social inequalities on people's health. In her letter of thanks, the President of the Foundation, Lorraine Pagé, wrote that this gesture is eloquent testimony to her attachment to the equality of opportunity in education and her commitment towards the defence and promotion of women's rights

A few days later, some more good news. The Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe sent us a second cheque of \$5,000. Earlier this year, in March, they had donated the same amount to us in order to fund the Foundation's scholarships to women who are involved in their milieu and who want to continue with their studies. The Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe are already one of the Foundation's Major Partners, and with her donation, Ms. Potvin joins the club. We hope that others will see fit to follow their example.

### A LEA-INSPIRED HAPPY HOUR

Over \$24,000 has been collected during the campaign's first month. This awesome generosity and sharing initiative will hopefully continue. Some 500 solicitation letters were sent out to our donors, various groups and Unions. Motivated by going the extra mile this year, one donor had the wonderful idea of organizing an event. In order to get some of her peers to make a donation, she organized a Happy Hour and was able to raise \$545. An initiative that others might like to imitate in their own workplaces, with friends or family during the Holiday Season or other kinds of end-of-the-year reunions.

In 2017, the Foundation distributed some \$36,000 in scholarships. Out of this amount, \$31,000 went to 15 women and \$5,000 to ten recipients under the auspices of the MVL Foundation. These women, who we support, stand out thanks to their social commitment. And notwithstanding the obstacles and financial difficulties they face, they want to further their education. The Foundation's scholarships are there to assist them in their endeavours.

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