

NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



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Fondation Léa-Roback

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VIVA LÉA!

Rebel, fighter, humanist : Léa Roback

A word from the President

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



The Lea Roback Foundation is 25 years old. And there are numerous reasons to celebrate this silver anniversary.

First of all, it's remarkable that such a small foundation, established by a handful of people, without any start-up capital, whose funding relies solely upon donations from individuals and a few institutional partners, has succeeded in such a fashion not only to survive, but to prosper and grow. Year after year, our reputation spreads; we're helping more and more women to realize their dreams by going back to school, or continuing their studies. In 25 years, we have granted \$425,000 in scholarships to 221 women. Look at the path we've travelled: in its first year of existence, the Foundation awarded only one \$3,000 scholarship, while in 2017, 25 scholarships were granted for a total of \$36,000.

Furthermore, it's heartening to see that after a quarter of a century, the Foundation has been able to sustain such dynamism. Some of the pioneers, of course, have retired from the Board of Directors, but worthy successors have taken up the torch, committed, determined, fully capable of giving a fresh impetus to this project, a little wild-eyed at first, that saw the day as a birthday gift to Lea Roback, when she was turning 90 years old.

Finally, because the very vitality of the Foundation provides a way to appropriately keep alive the memory of Lea Roback, an extraordinary woman, who fully deserves to enjoy a special place in our collective memory, in view of her exemplary contribution to the evolution of Quebec society and in view of her persistent battle to defend and promote human rights.

So yes, the reasons to celebrate are numerous. And I personally invite you, on behalf of all my Sisters on the Board of Directors to come celebrate with us. Come see us at the launch of the exhibition VIVA LEA!, which will be taking place next May 3 at 18:00 at the Jewish Public Library, 5151 Côte Sainte-Catherine Road, in Montreal. Or if it's not possible, come by and see the exhibition when the time suits you, prior to May 31. This exhibition, which is being shown in cooperation with the Jewish Public Library, and with the support of the Solstice Foundation, will enable you to get to know Lea Roback a little bit more; it's a wonderful tribute to this unparalleled rebel, humanist, and fighter.

You might also like to go on a bus tour, prepared by Montreal Exploration: Following in Lea Roback's footsteps, you will be able to discover the activist journey she took over a good part of the Twentieth Century. The tour will be taking place on May 27 at 14:00 and leaving from in front of the BANQ, located at 475 de Maisonneuve Street East.

I would be remiss if I didn't pay tribute to the exceptional work done by our 25th Birthday Committee: Karine Hébert, Irène Ellenberger, Rivka Augenfeld, Jennifer Spiegel, Jeanette Biondi, Bernard Vallée from Exploration Montréal, as well as the remarkable collaboration provided to us by the Jewish Public Library team.

As you can easily see, the reasons to celebrate are numerous; the opportunities to do so, are equally abundant. Let's unite together around the work being carried out by the Foundation, the success of our many scholarship recipients, the network of solidarity that has been built around them. And, of course, the memory of Lea, the eternal optimist who knew how to focus on that patch of blue sky that was always visible through the grey clouds.

THANK YOU LEA!



Lorraine Pagé

President

25 years ago, the Lea Roback Foundation was created to mark her 90th birthday.



Every one of us can change the world

The author of these lines, Karine Hébert, I am neither a historian, nor an artist, I am Karine Hébert, the Head of Publishing at the Groupe d'Études et de Recherche en Analyse des Décisions (Decision Analysis Research and Study Group).

My activism was acquired and has matured in women's groups. There, I was able to observe the relationship between popular education, raising awareness and mobilization. More specifically, the Women's Centres milieu and their vocabulary helped make me more aware about many issues regarding which I could and had to take action.

One day, someone spoke to me about Lea Roback. Lea who? I was already 30 something years old and had not yet heard about this woman who had inspired so many, and who today, can count me as part of that gang. Lea Roback personifies, in my mind, the kind of humanism, which puts the individual and human values above and before everything else. A woman who valued and focused upon knowledge and dialogue with people to promote awareness, inspire and mobilize them, and eventually, win them over to the fight against social injustice and for positive change. For Lea Roback, giving up was just not a possibility!

I have gotten to "know" Lea Roback even more through the work related to organizing the exhibition *VIVA LEA! rebel, fighter, humanist*. I have read many of her hand-written texts. I've listened to her voice, her words, her colourful expressions and how she went about trying to change all the things that scandalized her. I have laughed at her irreverence and how she was able to call a spade a spade. I have imagined myself as a friend of this passionate woman, with her infectious charisma. Amongst the many letters that she received from the people close to her and in which one could read requests for her opinion or advice, or passages that recounted a special moment, or a particular discussion, I observed to what extent she was a pillar to her family. Finally, as I read different articles about her, I began to more fully reckon to what extent she had participated in shaping the Quebec of today and that many many people are not yet aware of her.

This exhibition is a tribute to the woman she was and who remains amongst us; it's a summary of her actions and achievements in the work world, it's also a window into her activism and involvement, and of course, a look at the Federation that was created in her name, but above all, this exhibition draws attention to how important it is to believe that each and every one of us can change the world and that it's through taking action that we can effect veritable change.

In solidarity,

Karine Hébert

Director on the Board of Directors of the Lea Roback Foundation since 2013,
and Head of the 25th Birthday Committee

A big Thank You!

THE FUND RAISING CAMPAIGN

The Lea Roback Foundation raised a little more than \$32,000 during its last fund raising campaign, of which over half came from contributions made by our Major Partners and Partners. It's important to draw attention to the donations made by individuals that represent more than one-third of the total amount received and that 66% of all the donations, regardless of their source, are made for amounts of \$100 or less.

Two exceptional donations of \$5,000 were made during this last campaign.

The distinguished social medicine professor and researcher, Louise Potvin, remitted to the Foundation the scholarship that she was awarded by ACFAS. Meanwhile, the Sisters of Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe renewed their \$5,000 donation once again this year.

Year after year, the union milieu remains a pillar of the Foundation's funding, during our campaigns and all throughout the year. The contributions from the big labour federations and 55 Unions or Union Federations totalled nearly \$20,000 of the donations received for all of 2017, where the total amount raised was about \$50,000.

The Foundation thanks you all for your generosity. Thanks to your donations, we are able to provide scholarships to women who are involved and active in their milieus, and who wish to continue their studies.

Maroussia Kishka

Vice-President, Funding

VIVA LÉA!

Rebel, fighter, humanist : Léa Roback

Michelle Lyne Tremblay

2017-18 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

The members of the Board of Directors have too few opportunities to meet the scholarship recipients. This column is one way for us to get to know some of the scholarship recipients and likewise an opportunity to be inspired.

The Foundation has always been drawn towards women who have had to navigate uniquely difficult paths, Michelle is one of those people.

Michelle Lyne Tremblay, a 2017 scholarship recipient, hails from the Eastern Townships where she spent her youth in foster families and never got to meet her biological mother. It's not difficult to imagine that her childhood was not an easy one, however, her determination and passion for life enabled her to overcome numerous obstacles. And even though Michelle's professional and academic choices can appear quite diverse, there is certainly a common thread, a continuity and focused passion that drives her.

Agriculture and environment

In 2005, she sold her stake in a goat-raising farm in the Eastern Townships, to become a salaried employee. Whether it's been in her capacity as an environment officer in the Ste-Marie eco-district, an urban re-greening project manager in the Peter McGill eco-district, or an organic farming

certification inspector, her commitment to the environment and ecology is undeniable. Without forgetting the years she spent as an energy efficiency consultant with a consumer association, another job closely tied to her environmental concerns.

But all this was brusquely upended when she was a victim of a workplace sexual assault, an assault that left her with permanent after-effects, which were ultimately recognized by the CSST. But the path is a long and difficult one, before the consequences of such assaults and traumas that mark the rest of one's life are properly recognized. This event and others *“produced a dizzying disintegration of*

her relatively tranquil life at that point in time, however, her recovery and rebound was nothing short of a miracle.”

Education

Going back to school full-time, at over 40 years old, requires careful thought and lots of determination. Michelle's return to the school benches was a lifesaver.

In 2016, she earned a certificate in the History of Religion at UQÀM. Her goal was to better understand faith and spirituality, as well as to prepare herself to work with people in end-of-life situations.

Since then, she has been studying anthropology at the Université de Montréal. *“This choice has enabled me to move a lot closer to the field of aboriginal studies.”*



She is still proud of her choice and she's working very hard to earn her Bachelors Degree.

Social Commitment, another lifesaver

In 2015 and 2017, Michelle participated in the Water Walk, an event organized by the aboriginal nations. Joséphine Mandamin, the Elder of the Anishinaabe Nation, began this campaign in 2003. The purpose of this march was to promote awareness regarding the importance of water preservation and water problems in general, and more particularly, in aboriginal territories, where several nations do not have access to drinking water. In 2017, 5,000 kilometres were clocked from Lake Superior in Minnesota all the way to Matane, where the marchers arrived on July 27. (1)

“Personally, she says, this rich life experience provided me with all the courage necessary to continue my studies and accordingly contribute to the fight to safeguard water, alongside aboriginal women.”

But this is not the only cause to which she is committed. “All over the world, there are people who live on other people's waste, whether by reusing it, or by reselling it.” (2) In 2009-2011, a powerful lobby wanted to put an end to the consignment of bottles and cans. Aware that many people depended upon the revenue they could muster from collecting the foregoing to survive, Michelle co-founded LES VALORISTES COOPÉRATIVE DE SOLIDARITÉ (the Cooperative of Solidarity Reclaimers), a social economy enterprise. This cooperative primarily provides two services: a depot for and collection of containers for businesses. The mobile depots enable people who collect refundable containers to sell them and thereby receive a fair price for the foregoing. In addition, companies

can also donate containers, whereby the cooperative will go collect them and sell them for recycling purposes. The cooperative has received several awards and financing, but is nevertheless experiencing certain difficulties these days.

And the Gaspésie

Her studies and her social commitment have enabled her to “bounce back,” but Michelle can also lay claim to another source of succour and inspiration, namely, her home near the St Lawrence River in the Gaspésie. When things are going well, she'll go off to the Gaspésie, but when things are going badly, she runs there. Since her first trip there a long time ago, she often “feels” the urge to partake in this lovely region of Québec.

Her dreams and plans

Michelle would like to continue her studies towards a Masters in Anthropology, but not just any old one; a Masters at the University of Waterloo, in a Department directed by members of the First Nations. And her ultimate objective, once her studies are completed, would be to work in her dear Gaspésie with aboriginal nations, in particular with the Micmac Nation, a nation that one doesn't hear a lot about. She's also very attached to grandmothers, one has to get them to speak up, she says. But she's open to the whole world, since she is planning to take some intensive Portuguese language training courses, in order to return to the Brazilian Amazon.

With such energy, with such determination, let's all wish Michèle that all her dreams come true.

(1) <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1047423/matane-destination-mother-earth-water-walk-grand-mere-josephine>
In English : <http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com/>

(2) <http://www.cooplesvaloristes.ca/>

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 Fondation Solstice;
the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe (comité solidarité SJSJH);
Ms Pauline Lantz;
Ms Louise Potvin;
Ms Nicole Ranger
and a donor who wishes 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;
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the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ);
the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNÉE-Q-CSN);
the Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université (FQPPU);
the Maison générale des Ursulines de Québec;
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Ms Donna Mergler;
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Ms Lorraine Pagé;
Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond;
Ms Katherine Roback
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