

NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 6, December 2012



Photo Louise de Grosbois © Fondation Léa-Roback

Great Partners of the Foundation:

the Confederation of Canadian Unions (CCU);
the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ);
the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN);
the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du Québec (FIQ);
the Syndicat des fonctionnaires municipaux de Montréal (SCFP);
as well as two foundations and one friend who wish to remain anonymous.

Partners of the Foundation:

the Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins;
the Comité de condition féminine of the Syndicat des Métallos (FTQ);
the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement;
the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ);
the Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec (SFPQ);
the Syndicat des conseillères et conseillers de la CSQ, Fonds de solidarité;
Poudrier Bradet, Lawyers;
Ms Laura Alper;
Ms Suzanne Bélanger;
Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond;
Ms Annalee Yassi.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT

2012 is already coming to an end and 2013 will soon be making its appearance. This year saw us losing a very dear friend, Madeleine Parent. And next year, we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Lea Roback Foundation that Madeleine had played such a key role in bringing to life.

2013 will also mark a couple of other anniversaries: the 15th of the Maison Parent-Roback, so named to honour these two great trade unionists, and the 5th marking the passing of H el ene Pedneault, a sharp insightful writer and pamphleteer. So many events that remind us of these remarkable feminists and their lifelong struggles; so many opportunities for us all to nurture and sustain our own commitment.

The members of the Board of Directors are already at work preparing appropriate activities and events to mark these anniversaries. Several special activities are being planned; they will be different and varied, sometimes done in co-operation with other bodies or at times with the help of various individuals who support the Foundation's work or who cherish a special connection with Lea, Madeleine or H el ene. But, they will all be opportunities to express our pride and solidarity. A few of the details will be released in a forthcoming issue of this newsletter. We will keep you informed as soon as the program has been more firmly determined.

But regardless of these different activities that are being prepared, the Foundation, after 20 years of existence, has now reached a stage of development and notoriety that is commendable and makes it all worthwhile. With this in mind, the members of the Board of Directors adopted a document, which traces the general orientations of the Foundation, at their last meeting. This document will be a kind of reference guide; we will henceforth be able to provide new Board members or individual donors who wish to know more about the Foundation with a written summary of our general operations.

The foregoing also gave us all an opportunity to reaffirm that the Foundation plans to stick to the goals that motivated its creation and to the values defended by Lea Roback. The Foundation will continue to take the necessary action to cultivate relationships with the people who support our mission and to make available the most comprehensive information possible on how it's being administered and how it's realizing its mission.

We also reasserted that the Foundation's vocation relies upon the voluntary involvement of the members of its Board of Directors who work together as a team. We also put into writing a few more recent arrangements, including the rental of office space and the hiring of a part-time administrative secretary.

But what was likely the most important proposition was our decision to pay tribute to the individuals who, by way of making a bequest, actualize their commitment in favour of a woman's right to a good education and their support for the Foundation.

Accordingly, to honour the memory of both Madeleine Parent and H el ene Pedneault and to draw attention to their contributions, two scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each, bearing their names have been created. The *Madeleine-Parent Scholarship* will be granted to a candidate who meets the Foundation's general criteria, and who is pursuing her studies in sociology, political science or industrial relations. Meanwhile, the *H el ene-Pedneault Scholarship* will be awarded to a candidate whose academic interests lie in literature, theatre or feminist studies.



Madeleine Parent

The selection committee will also be mandated to recommend granting these scholarships for college-level studies in academic areas deemed relevant. Each of these scholarships could be in addition to or not, whichever is applicable, a scholarship that is awarded by the Foundation in accordance with its customary rules.

Sometimes, the Foundation receives a bequest. We feel that such actions totally merit and enjoin us to remember and recognize these initiatives. This is why our Web site will hence identify these people as *Honorary Friends*.



Hélène Pedneault

The past year has been a busy one; the next twelve months promises to generate its share of surprises, good and bad, projects, sadness and joy. But we can nonetheless immediately proclaim our firm commitment to keep the values that animated Lea Roback alive and well and to celebrate with you a twentieth anniversary that keeps her ever present in our memories and in our hearts.

Lorraine Pagé
Président

2012 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

November is the month of our Foundation's annual fundraising campaign. It's still in progress. So, thanks to everyone who has already sent in their donation and, if it has not yet been done, please, there's still time to show your solidarity by sending it now to help us foster the well-being of economically disadvantaged women.

We remind you that you can make your donation on-line at:

<http://www.fondationlearoback.org>

We invite you to do so moreover via our Web site, as the Foundation can thus reduce its administrative expenses in terms of the issuing of charitable tax receipts.

THE SCHOLARSHIPS

AN UPDATE OF OUR POLICY FOR AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

Last October 24, the Board of Directors adopted a policy regarding the awarding of scholarships. This policy puts the Foundation's existing practices into writing, but also made a few modifications to the routines we've elaborated over the past few years.

The key changes are as follows :

- The deadline for sending in scholarship applications will now be April 1st, instead of May 1st.
- Candidates who have already received a scholarship will have to send us certificates of the courses they've completed during the year that they receive the scholarship.
- Certain details have been added to the instructions given to the candidates.
- The work that the members of the Board of Directors are to carry out during the scholarship selection process has been spelled out. The pre-selection committee, made up of members of the Board of Directors shall undertake an initial selection from amongst all the candidates, and then the selection committee will make its choices from amongst the candidates retained during the pre-selection process and they will make their recommendations to the Board of Directors.

We will thus be ready to receive 2013-2014 scholarship applications as of February 1.

2012-2013 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

This year, the Foundation has awarded 14 scholarships chosen from amongst 61 qualifying scholarship applicants.

It should be noted that four of the above women had already received scholarships from the Foundation. Their perseverance justified that they be awarded a scholarship once again. Let's recall that the Foundation may give up to three scholarships in all, (one per year) to the same candidate.

Another noteworthy characteristic: a few of the 2012 recipients are pursuing their studies in the field of science, in domains where women have often been less present. Lea Roback would certainly be proud of this trend.

And here are the 2012-2013 scholarship recipients

High school

VALÉRIE LEMARBRE is involved with *l'Envol*, a Longueuil-based organization that works with young mothers. 27 years old, she herself is a mother of a two-year old child. Valérie is tenacious and despite certain difficulties, really wants to finish high school so that she could eventually be qualified to work in a daycare centre. She has been enrolled at the Centre d'éducation aux adultes Antoine-Brossard since 2011.

JACINTHE PELTIER a 50-year old Laval resident, is finishing her schooling at the Centre Le Tremplin, an assisted training centre for adults. She dreams of working as a caregiver. An activist at the *Centre d'implication libre* in Laval, she describes the process that she's embarking on:

"Distance learning could change my life, obviously, it will take a lot of courage and determination for me to get there... I've spent lots of time wasting time... I just don't want to die off as a drop out... There's no way I'm going to give up..."

Career training

CHANTAL PILON, is a 30-year old young woman living in Montreal and the mother of a two-year old. She has devoted a lot of her own time to providing help to senior citizens and is active with an organization that fights cancer.

She is currently enrolled in a Health, Assistance and Nursing program at the Pearson Adult and Career Centre. She would really like to be done by May 2013, so that she could start work in the health care milieu, perhaps as a nursing assistant.

MADELEINE TREMBLAY, 52 years old, boasts lots of experience in several different industries, notably working nights in various factories. After an absence of more than 30 years from any kind of school classroom, she is returning to school in 2011, to perfect her accounting skills. Currently, she is completing an English language immersion office clerk course at the Centre de formation professionnelle in Lennoxville. She lives in Sherbrooke.

She is the mother of two grown up daughters, one of whom has had to battle major health problems.

Since 2009, Madeleine is very active at the *Centre des femmes La Passerelle*, and is a member of their Board of Directors.

College-level general training

MAUDE SINGCASTER is pursuing an ambitious project to do a double DCS (Diploma of Collegial Studies) in the humanities and natural sciences. She is eager to expand her general knowledge, but especially doesn't want to close any doors to her future. Her dream is to become a cardiologist, because she's been dealing with a cardiac problem ever since her birth.

"I offer you my deepest thanks for the attention you paid to my application. This scholarship cannot even describe all the respect that I have for you... May you continue to cultivate the social commitment of women, as you're already doing so very well!"

Maude Singcaster

Notwithstanding her tender age, 17 years old, Maude is involved in her community: a student radio host for some three years, acting in a play for autistic children, cooking at the local *Robin des Bois* soup kitchen. She lives on the South Shore of Montreal

College-level technical training

DONNA MARIA BRATHWAITE EDWARDS, a Foundation scholarship recipient in 2010, she has come a long way since then. With the help of the *Desta Lion Wolf School*, she finished her high school in 2012 and is currently a student at Vanier CEGEP in

Special Care Counselling, (a three-year course). After a bit of hesitation in choosing from amongst several career options, she opted for this program because, as she says, “... I want to provide a voice to the voiceless, give hope to people who have lost all hope.”

21 years old, she is notably an activist with LOVE (Leave Out Violence/Vivre sans violence), an organization dedicated to reducing violence in the community. Donna lives in Montreal.

SYLVIE FORTIN, from Péribonka in the Saguenay region, is a mere two inches, more like two years, from realizing her dream: at 55 years old, she will most certainly become a social service worker. A Foundation scholarship recipient in 2011, Sylvie tells us: “I’ll soon be finishing my first year, my chest bursting with pride. I’ve had to lift mountains to get through my courses. I hope I can get another helping hand from you, as your support is so valuable to a woman in my financial situation.”

We hope that this helping hand will help her reach her goal. Various family and professional affairs have not always made her life very easy. However, she has shown the determination necessary to pursue her studies, notwithstanding the obstacles standing between her and her goal.

MÉLANIE MORISSETTE lives with her two children at the *Maison Dorimène Desjardins* in St-Jean Iberville. The organization, *Jeunes mères en action* provides transition social housing to single-parent mothers who want to go back to school. As soon as she arrived there, Mélanie got involved in various committees at the Maison and now sits on the Board of Directors, while being very active in numerous community tasks.

After completing one year in biomedical analytical techniques, she is changing direction and going into the Cégep de St-Jean nursing program in order to give shape to her empathetic and social instincts. Mélanie is 35 years old.

MARGUERITE NYANDWI, a 2011 Foundation scholarship recipient, is continuing along her path and should soon be receiving her Diploma of Collegial Studies (DCS in nursing) from the Cégep St-Laurent. Moreover, she will have to pass the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec* exam in the spring 2013.

Let’s recall that Marguerite, 35 years old, a native of Burundi, spent nearly six years in a Kenyan refugee camp before coming to Montreal as a refugee in 2008. She was a *Red Cross* volunteer in Kenya.

“ You gave me hope when I was down. As a woman overcome by all kinds of problems, I didn’t know if I could ever be someone with a project to pursue or a dream. I am very proud to tell you that I will be graduating in January 2013 as a nurse, because you made it possible for me, by providing me with financial assistance...”

Thank you once again for the great work you’re doing in changing the living conditions of several women.”

Marguerite Nyandwi

On the path to a Bachelors Degree

LAURENCE ARPIN, 20 years old, has already several achievements to her credit. She is very proud to have participated in the *Action nationale à vélo* event, where she bicycled from Montreal to Quebec City, in February 2008. At the time, she was the *Environnement Jeunesse* spokesperson vis-à-vis the media and elected officials. At her cégep, she was the representative of the students in her program.

Since 2008, she has volunteered on farms dedicated to local agriculture and that are rooted in their communities. It therefore comes as no surprise that she’s been enrolled in the veterinary medicine doctoral program since September (as an undergraduate). She says she wants to “*exercise her profession in rural areas with farmers whose every day work is oriented towards feeding the local population.*”

AGNÈS BOISSARD, a permanent resident from France has had an unusual career path. For over 30 thirty years, she has worked in restaurants as a chef, stylist pastry cook and much much more. A few years ago, an accident forced her to put an end to her career as a kitchen chef. In 2011, she returned to school to do a Bachelor of Vocation and Technical Training.

She is very concerned about the situation in the restaurant milieu: physically and mentally challenging working conditions, low levels of education and precarious conditions. This has motivated her plan to teach, in order to help young people and immigrants learn a trade. She has done some occasional volunteer training at *Resto Plateau*. She has also worked at *Centro de Apoyo Patricia Perez* in St-Rémi (QC), a support centre for Mexican agricultural workers.

BEQUESTS

MÉLANIE HÉBERT, a 34-year old Longueuil resident, was a Foundation scholarship recipient in 1999 and in 2011. She has already earned a DCS in Visual Arts, and has been enrolled at the Université du Québec since 2010. Her goal is to earn a Bachelor of Arts Education by 2013.

A single-parent mother of three children (11, 10 and 14 years old), she is socially involved notably at *La Cigogne*, a student parent association.

FATMA OUDJEDI, a Terrebonne resident enrolled at the Cégep du Vieux Montréal, Fatma has been an active member of the environmental committee, as well as the *Jardin Terrasse* committee throughout her college studies. A tutor in mechanical physics and French, she has shared her talents with students who have a little bit more difficulty.

Currently, she is enrolled at McGill University in a Bachelor of Science program, physics option. She is passionate about this discipline and explains:

“studying the fundamental principles that govern the Universe provides me with avenues worth exploring and understanding regarding how humanity evolves in a scientific context.” Fatma is 20-years old.

MÉLISSA POMERLEAU has been very active at the *Centre Entre-femmes* in Rouyn Noranda, since 2007. She is a 33-year old mother of two children, a four-year old and a one-year old. et un an.

Mélicca already has a Diploma of Collegial Studies in social services work, and is continuing along this path, enrolling this fall in a Bachelor of Social Work at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue:

“ My main goal is to work at improving living conditions for women. To perpetuate the dreams and work of Ms. Lea Roback, who left her mark on her era through her determination and her perseverance, would be an honour for me.”

The Foundation’s mission is supported by your donations. Year after year, individuals and organizations renew their support during our annual fundraising campaign, or when we organize special activities.

Sometimes people decide to actualize their commitment in favour of a woman’s right to a good education and their support of the Foundation’s mission by making a bequest.

A few weeks ago, a good friend of the Foundation, Ms. Thérèse Laliberté, falling seriously ill, decided to bequeath a substantial amount of money to the Foundation. As she indicated in the letter that she sent to us, during her studies she received “*a similar scholarship*” and she wanted to “*give back to the community, so that other women could gain access to an education.*”

The members of the Board of Directors were profoundly touched, by both her message infused with solidarity and hope, and her overwhelming generosity. She passed away last November 24, but she will continue, as she so wished “*to participate even after [her] passing in this great march of women moving towards a more humane society.*”

20th ANNIVERSARY

AN EVENT THAT WILL BE UNDERLINED IN THE COURSE OF 2013

We should celebrate the success of the FLR that, over these past 20 years, has earned its stripes and acquired a fine reputation by distributing some 200 scholarships that have enabled economically disadvantaged women to improve their situation and that of their children.

Notwithstanding its modest means and especially thanks to the hard work of its pioneers and successive members of its Board of Directors, the Foundation has not stopped growing and moving forward.

A number of activities are being planned throughout the year, including a meeting with the founders, the women who have sat on the Board of Directors during these 20 years and the scholarship recipients. A big public event will be organized in November 2013, the month during which the foundation was created. The organizers of this event are hard at work to make it a worthy reminder of the indignation dissident women everywhere should be acting upon, in the steps of Lea Roback. Léa Roback. We will keep you informed regarding these various activities and we hope that many of you will be able to participate in them.

NEWS FLASHES

INAUGURATION OF L'ESPACE MADELEINE PARENT

On Monday November 26, the *Espace Madeleine Parent* was inaugurated in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, right in the heart of the old Montreal Cottons lot, where Madeleine Parent and Kent Rowley organized a workers' union and struggled with them to win the signature of a first collective agreement in 1946, after long and bitter strike that has marked Quebec's labour history.



The Valleyfield strike, 1946

In the presence of the Beauharnois MLA, the Mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield, representatives from various union and community bodies in the region and several friends of Madeleine, a plaque in her memory was unveiled.

Invited to say a few words on the occasion, Lorraine Pagé, President of the Lea Roback Foundation, evoked the memory of Madeleine Parent and her association with Lea Roback, and then recalled the role that this great activist has played in our History:

“Throughout her life, Madeleine was always precisely where people expected her to be: on the side of justice, human rights and equality. Throughout her life, despite the difficulties, adversity, accusations, imprisonment, old age and illness, she remained



Lorraine Pagé unveils the plaque.

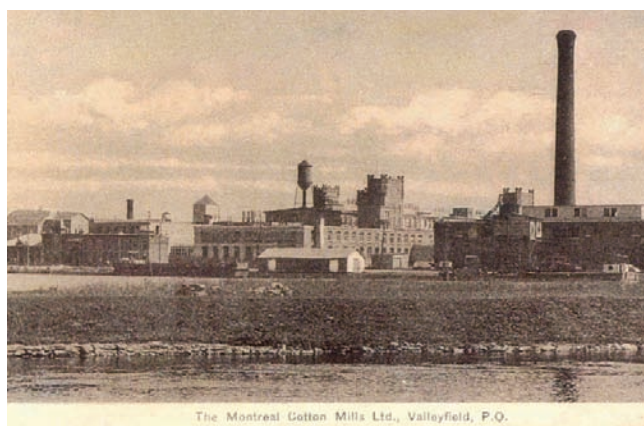
a dedicated activist in her heart and in her mind...

She struggled alongside working people against injustice, exploitation and humiliation. She was determined, committed, unafraid and unfailing in her stamina, to improve their working and living conditions. She fought during a period where women were pushed into the background. Yet, she was at the forefront of so many struggles to help advance the situation of women and that have marked the evolution of Quebec society.

Valleyfield always had a special place in Madeleine's heart and memories. This plaque, which is being inaugurated today, reminds us that the causes survive the people who have borne them. It calls upon us to remember Madeleine, and the struggle that was carried on here. It invites us to remain committed to the values that she defended so relentlessly. Madeleine had every reason to be proud of what she achieved; and we have every reason to be proud of who she was.”



The Montreal Cotton Mills chimney, still standing, right next to the Espace-Madeleine-Parent.



BECOME A FRIEND OF THE FOUNDATION ON FACEBOOK

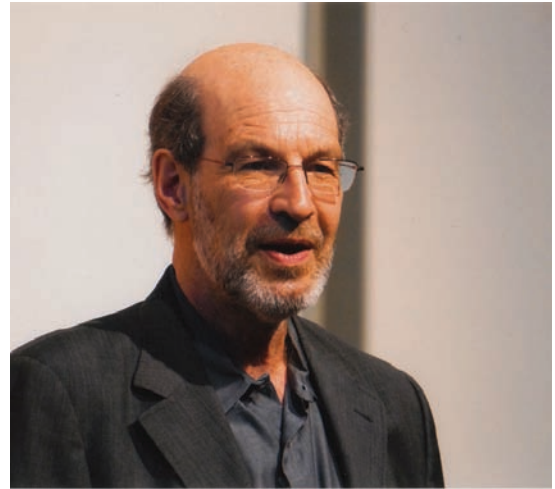
<http://www.facebook.com/fondationlearoback>

VOICES FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE: SONGS OF STRUGGLE AND THE MUSIC FROM PAUL ROBESON

Last May 5, friends of the Foundation and lovers of good music were invited to attend a benefit concert featuring the well-known singers and musicians Thomas Fox, Andrew Cowan, Kathy Kennedy and friends.

In the lovely Unitarian Church hall, more than a hundred people were treated to Thomas Fox's splendid voice, accompanied by the blues guitarist Andrew Cowan, singing songs from the repertoire of Paul Robeson, the great American singer and activist. Kathy Kennedy and her friends in the *Life Stories Choir* rounded out this wonderful evening singing songs of struggle from around the world. At the end of the show, everyone present joined together in a stirring rendition of *Bread and Roses* the James Oppenheim and Mimi Fariña classic.

The Foundation once again expresses its gratitude to the singers and musicians for their generosity.



Thomas Fox sings Paul Robeson



Kathy Kennedy



The Life Stories Choir

A MEETING OF 2 GREAT INDIVIDUALS AND 2 ANNIVERSAIRES

It was well known that Hélène Pedneault greatly admired Lea Roback. And so, how nice it is that these two great activists will soon be reunited through the magic of theatre.

The play *La Déposition*, written by Hélène Pedneault, which will have been completed exactly 25 years ago next January, shall be staged next March in Quebec City, performed by *Le Théâtre L'Essence des Mots*. Following an agreement with the producer, the March 21 performance will be a benefit evening to support the Foundation. What a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Foundation's 20th anniversary and to link the names of Hélène Pedneault and Lea Roback!

We will be providing you with more details about this event after the Holiday Season, but the invitation is now made to all the *Friends of Lea* in the Quebec City area. A date to write into one's agenda for all those people who support the Foundation's activities and who wish to discover or savour once again this landmark text, written by Hélène Pedneault.



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