

NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 8, December 2013

Commitment
Solidarity **20** *Hope*
years



A word from the President

Commitment, solidarity and hope

Lea Roback would have been 110 years old last November 3; the Foundation was thus celebrating its twentieth anniversary. And so, a crazy idea that had germinated amongst a group of friends: why not set up a Foundation to honour a good old outraged and rebellious friend? It took root, began to grow, and over the years has become a wonderful adventure infused with commitment, solidarity and hope.

First of all, commitment.

For 20 years now, women of all ages have volunteered their talent and put their convictions into action to serve a cause that was very close to Lea Roback's heart, namely, a person's right to an education, and particularly, women going through tough times. These women have sat on the Foundation's Board of Directors. They laid the foundation for its operations; they worked to raise awareness about the Foundation and its mission; they solicited donors and benefactors; they organized benefit events and fundraising campaigns. Some of them have been on board since the very beginning; others have taken up various other commitments, but remain loyal to the cause, participating in our activities or playing a role and getting involved occasionally, in one special event or another. Finally, the current members of the Board of Directors don't count the hours they spend helping the Foundation, nor do they hold back on imaginative ideas to drive the Foundation to even greater heights, to

increase awareness about it and to make its action even more effective.

And then, solidarity.

For 20 years now, several hundred people have given generously to the Foundation. We've been able to count upon their generosity each and every year during our fundraising campaigns or at various activities that have been organized over the years: auctions, concerts, cocktails, shows. There's been no shortage of opportunities and our supporters have always carried the torch. For a few years now, our Partners and Major Partners, a majority of whom are organizations, have provided more stable funding to the Foundation by way of substantial annual contributions. There have also been several people whose support has taken the form of bequests, such as Jeannine Chenard, Margaret K. Howes, Thérèse Laliberté, Hélène Pedneault and Madeleine Parent. As one can easily see, quite the solidarity network has seen the day, a genuine safety net for women in need and who are socially engaged has been weaved and nurtured.

And finally, hope.

The Foundation would not be where it is today and what it has become if there wasn't hope to sustain it all. Hope to make things change. Hope to make the cause progress and grow. Hope to give a chance to women

whose needs are real and significant if they are to truly change their lives. But especially, hope to all those women who dream about something better and who need a helping hand to translate this into action. Hope that has inspired all these scholarship recipients and proves today that their lives could and did turn around thanks to the Foundation.

It's important to underline our twentieth anniversary, because we can, in all humility, be very proud of what has been accomplished. It's also indispensable to stay the course, because the needs are immense. Thank you for being there, for carrying on Lea's values and action, shoulder to shoulder with all those women who are counting on us.

During this period of the year, where there is often such abundance, we must cultivate our conviction that true generosity lies in the unselfish gesture. It goes by the name of commitment; is embodied by solidarity; and nurtures hope.

News and activities

2013 Fundraising Campaign

We remind you that our annual fundraising campaign is currently under way.

The Lea Roback Foundation relies upon the generosity of the many people who understand and believe in its mission to continue its activities.

From one year to the next, this financial support helps grow the number of women who benefit from a Lea Roback scholarship. This scholarship provides a genuine boost to women who seek to improve their lot in life, as well as that of their children.

If you wish, you can make your donation via CANADAHELPS.

<https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/9310>

We sincerely thank you for your support.

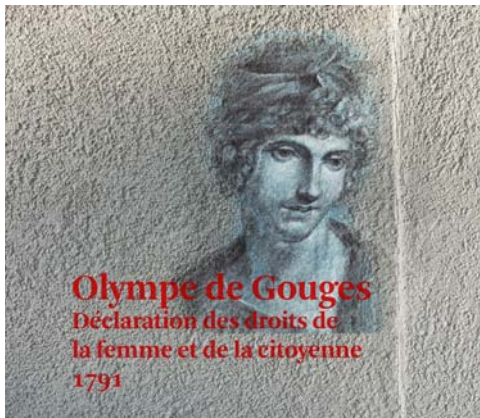
Paroles rebelles

A show to pay tribute to Lea Roback, to mark the Foundation's 20th anniversary

A magnificent show took place last November 3 at the Corona Theatre. Located smack in the heart of the neighbourhood where Lea undertook many valiant struggles, an entirely fitting site to organize just such an event.

In a spirited production directed by Brigitte Poupart, six actresses vividly presented a number of texts penned by rebel women, dating from the 18th Century to today.

Beginning with Olympe de Gouges and her *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791), an appeal from this woman activist who declared, amongst other things, “women have the right to ascend onto the scaffold; they must equally have the right to ascend up onto the rostrum.” This rebel woman was guillotined on November 3, 1793. De Gouges was followed by



the presentation of texts written by Rosa Luxemburg, George Sand, Mary Woolstonecraft, Eva Circé Côté, Adrienne Rich and Hélène Pedneault.



We wish to thank the actresses for their generosity: Madeleine Péloquin, Eve Landry, Violette Chauveau, Johanna Nutter, Brigitte Poupart, Elisapie and Louissette Dussault.





In the second part of the show, presentations by musicians Christine Tassan and Les Imposteurs were likewise much appreciated. In a festive atmosphere and in a gypsy-style Jazz air, their performance was exhilarating to say the least. A big thank you to Christine Tassan, Lise-Ann Ross, Martine Gaumon and Blanche Baillargeon.

And BRAVO to the producer Brigitte Poupart for her volunteer work in staging this show and the quality of what was presented to all those in attendance.



A Prix du Québec

This past October, the Government of Quebec announced that the Marie-Andrée Bertrand Award, one of the more prestigious honours conferred by the Province of Quebec, would be granted to Marguerite Mendell in recognition of her 30 years working in the areas of social economy and community solidarity.

In addition to being a Full Professor at the School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University, Margie is also the Director of the Karl Polanyi Institute of Political Economy, of which she



was one of the founders. For over 30 years, she has also been involved in numerous development and social economy groups. Her commitment likewise drew her to the Lea Roback Foundation, where she sat on the Board of Directors and was President of the Foundation for many years. Our warmest congratulations to Margie for this well deserved honour!

Thank you Madeleine

Madeleine Parent made out a bequest to the Foundation. By so doing, she sought to manifest her profound friendship with Lea, but also to continue supporting a cause in which she firmly believed.

This bequest was disbursed to the Foundation a few weeks ago. It amounts to some \$150,000, a sizeable sum. This amount, in addition to other bequests, has once again expanded our capacity to help women in need, to give shape to their educational aspirations.



Madeleine-Parent Bridge

“The Madeleine-Parent Bridge: a major infrastructure named after an exceptional woman.” These were the words used by the Commission de toponymie du Québec last December 5 to officially name the bridge that crosses the Beauharnois Canal on Highway 30 (the Steel AutoRoute).

The Commission added: “The invaluable role played by Madeleine Parent in the Province of Quebec had to be underlined. The Commission de toponymie hereby recognizes the importance of the participation of women in the development of the Province of Quebec, because few major infrastructures bear the name of women.”



The Lea Roback Foundation had given its support to various du Suroît women’s groups, unions and community groups who had submitted this idea, amongst other gestures, by tabling a petition to this effect in the National Assembly. We applaud the Commission's decision. The exemplary contribution made by Madeleine Parent to trade unionism, to the status of women and to Quebec society in general is thus appropriately and justly recognized, as it should be.

The 2013-2014 Scholarships

This year, the Lea Roback Foundation received 69 scholarship applications from women in 14 regions across the Province of Quebec. 16 candidates were retained.

As we have announced previously, we are henceforth granting two special scholarships created in memory of two exceptional women who have marked the history of women in the Province of Quebec and whose generosity provides us with a way to encourage excellence, as well as an opportunity to keep the memory of their commitment alive.

It is with great pride that we are granting for the first time this year: the Madeleine-Parent Scholarship and the Hélène-Pedneault Scholarship.

Here is thus a short look at each of our scholarship recipients.

Teaching literacy

Judith Morrison was, not too long ago, a somewhat timid and withdrawn woman, however, slowly but surely she has evolved by attending a community literacy group, *l'Ardoise*, and her warm and generous nature has not stopped blossoming since then. Ms. Morrison has been doing volunteer work for a long time with people with intellectual disabilities, and has also been a host family for adults with intellectual disabilities. An active member of the *l'Ardoise* Board of Directors, she is likewise one of seven people who represent the participants in 80 literacy groups from across the Province of Quebec, the RGPAQ (Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec).

Her scholarship will thus help her continue improving her French and her living conditions.

High School: General Education

Mylène Chevrier is a mother of three children, one of whom lives with her. This young mother left school at 16 years old; after going through some serious family difficulties, she decided to take her future into her own hands and finish high school, so as to improve her life and that of her children, thereby becoming an example of perseverance to them.

Mylène is a conscientious and diligent volunteer at *l'Envol* and her daycare *les Couscous*. She is also part of the *l'Escale* project under the auspices of the Antoine-Brossard Adult Education Centre, and is recognized as a responsible, active young woman, who is very motivated to pursue and successfully complete her high school diploma.

Tonya Isaac, a single mother with a three-year old child, is a student with considerable determination. Very socially involved, Tonya made a breakthrough that responded to her interests in the DESTA Leadership Program and has become involved as a participant in the Race

I wish to thank you for the Lea Roback Foundation Scholarship.

Tonya Isaac

Risks and Resilience Program research project. She is now doing a DEC in radiology at Dawson College.

A very motivated individual, she wants to prove that success is possible in a marginalized community and hopes to become a model for young single-parent women in her community, who have no choice but to deal with the same challenges as she does.

Chantal Perron, to date, does not have any diplomas and her living conditions are not easy. Nonetheless, this mother of four children is very active in a number of community groups in her hometown, Mont-Tremblant.

She participates in various fundraising drives, is working at setting up a Women's Services Centre, *La Colombe*, and is involved in *l'Élan*, a sexual assault support centre; she has even worked on designing and forging a park in a rundown neighbourhood in Mont-Tremblant. At 42 years old, she remains determined and enthusiastic, proud of her decision to return to school to go even further and to increase her credibility.

Merci à Madame Léa Roback pour tous ses gestes posés qui ont amélioré la vie de beaucoup de femmes...

Chantal Perron

her studies as a nursing assistant so that she can realize this long cherished dream. In order to continue her education at the Lennoxville Career Training Centre, she had to leave her job, thereby depriving her family of much needed income. The scholarship that she will receive will thus enable her to pay for her studies, without excessively penalizing her family.

Line Pratte was a stay-at-home mom by choice devoting her time and energy to the well being of her four children, including a diabetic son and

another one with Asperger Syndrome (AS) who still lives with her. Concerned about getting some assistance and sharing her

experience, she got involved as a volunteer in the Drummondville autism association, the ATEDCQ, and was a director at the Centre-du-Québec parents of disabled children association. She thus discovered some of her talents and decided to turn towards doing a job that she enjoys and that would enable her to improve her lot. At 48 years old, she will be enrolling in a secretarial and accounting program at Paul Rousseau Career Training Centre in Drummondville.

This scholarship arrives at just the right time, because, as she herself says: "My dream was to study, now I can go even further."

... J'ai des projets à réaliser!
J'ai confiance en mon avenir!

Line Pratte

High School: Professional Ed.

Nancy Stella Molina was born in Colombia, a refugee to Canada with her family since 2011 and today lives in Sherbrooke.

...ça va m'aider énormément à atteindre mes mes objectifs professionnels...

Nancy Stella Molina

At 41 years old, Ms. Molina is beginning a new life in her adoptive country; building on her own experience, she participates in the activities of her church to help newly arrived immigrants. She feels

it's important to give more to Quebec society, which also enables her to even better integrate into her new environment. Always convinced that her calling was to work in the health care field, she wants to complete

College: General Education

Carla Marouche emigrated from Lebanon with her family two years ago.

Notwithstanding her young age, she's only 19 years old, she has to work to take care of her family's needs while she pursues her studies. Carla Marouche clearly demonstrates determination and a boundless desire to integrate.

She's very involved with the children at the *Centre Lunis*, and as a student at Vanier College, where she enthusiastically participates in several extra-curricular activities, notably the student newspaper *The Insider*, because she believes that writing articles is a way for her to communicate her belief that one should never abandon one's dreams.

She is enrolled at Vanier College in mathematics and social science. Her primary goal is to demonstrate that nothing can stop people who are determined.

Kabisha Velauthapillai is a very earnest 20 year old woman who gets excellent marks in school. She lives with her parents, but her father is sick and is unable to provide for the family's needs, and so they are on social assistance.

Kabisha volunteers at a hospital, as well as at a clinic for exotic animals, and is very much appreciated by people in her milieu. She is likewise involved in various DESTA activities, an organization that she actively supports.

Her childhood and adolescence have been difficult; she was harassed owing to the colour of her skin and lives in a milieu that has difficulty accepting gender equality. She wants to pursue her studies and work in the neuroscience domain, so as to help people deal with mental health problems, as well as provide support to victims of violence.

"My desire is to diminish pain and suffering in the world, because everyone deserves to have someone fight for them."

College: Technical Education

Sylvie Fortin, a perseverant and determined resident of Péribonka, refuses to allow distance to be an obstacle, nor certain health issues. She is presently studying at the Cégep de Jonquière, where she is

pursuing her plans: namely, to become a social work technician.

A single mom with three daughters, one of whom still lives with her, 54 years old, she nonetheless finds the time and energy needed to get involved in different community groups; secretary of the Board of Directors at the Centre des femmes Quatre-Temps in Alma, she has also been a responder at *Solitude apprivoisée* for several years.

Completing her studies, enjoying a less precarious financial situation and especially showing her daughters that one must never give up, is what motivates her and keeps her going. She is receiving a Foundation scholarship for the third time now.

Brigitte Lafortune lives in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu with her three children who require special attention owing to their disabilities.

...Since been named one of the recipients of the Lea Roback Scholarship, my dream is becoming a reality. This opportunity will enable me to earn skills that will help me to better serve the community following graduation...

Brigitte Lafortune

This single-parent mom, 44 years old, dug down deep to find the motivation and energy to enrol in a three year training program: Special Care Counselling. She is now studying full-time, and wants to make use of her own personal experiences to devote herself to defending the rights of people with mental health problems or physical disabilities.

For several years now she has been very active in associations that fight harassment (bullying). She knows, from her own experience, that she can have an impact in the lives of other people.

As a separated mother of three children with different developmental disabilities, I have had the opportunity to experience what it means to be resilient through difficult times and situations. I have seen first hand and I am amazed how one person can impact so many lives in a positive way.

Sophie Tremblay is a student at Cegep du Vieux-Montréal where she is pursuing a DCS in nursing care. Her marks are excellent and she is single-mindedly determined to complete her studies so as to provide more comfort and security for her family. While still a student, she has nonetheless been active at the Centre des femmes in Verdun for several years now and has been engaged, along with others, in some major social battles; involving health care, the environment, access to education, as well as gender equality. This single-parent mother of an eight year old adeptly manages both her commitments and her limited budget to devote as much time as possible and be the best she possibly can be for her son, who is her Number One priority.

University

Moqadesa Adel A young woman, 26 years old, originally from Afghanistan, who arrived in Quebec with her family as a refugee, when she was 15 years old, didn't speak a word of French, and had barely any formal education, having only completed Grade two in elementary school. Enrolled in a "classe d'accueil", she managed to make up her missing grades and earn her high school diploma in 2009, and then a college diploma in social science, which under the

circumstances, is quite the accomplishment. All this led her to enrol in a Multidisciplinary Certificate at the Université de Sherbrooke.

She wants to continue her studies in the Humanities. While still doing volunteer work with new immigrants, she works at the Assistance Service for new Canadians. and helps her parents who have six children and with whom she still lives. This young woman undertakes everything she does with fervour and dynamism.

Jessica Jalbert is 20 years old. An anglophone, originally from Chandler in the Gaspésie, she lives in Sherbrooke where she is pursuing her university education. Enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Work program, she has completed her first year and plans to get her degree in 2015.

Her goal is to help others reach their full potential in life and she believes that thanks to her training she will be better equipped to get things to move forward in the milieus where she works. This young woman is unswerving in her interests, which she demonstrates in her volunteering, her work and her studies; she has often received awards for her excellent marks.

When asked what is the most important wish she could make, she replies: *Making a difference in my community.*

No doubt Jessica will succeed in making a difference in her milieu.

Valentina Solkin at 25 years old, has already many very rich and varied experiences to her credit. She is passionate about issues regarding social commitment and community group activities, and very much concerned about expanding her knowledge, Valentina got up and toured all across Canada when she was 18 years old. This eventually led her to get involved as a volunteer in a large number of community groups with a marked interest in food issues.

Returning back to the Province of Quebec, she set down roots in Montreal devoting her time and volunteer activity to community food banks.

She is enrolled at Concordia University in social science, with a major in counselling and a minor in psychology; being able to go to school full-time will thus enable her to finish her degree more quickly. She's a very mature young woman, who thanks to her experiences is ready to play an important role in our society.

The first recipients of the Madeleine-Parent and Hélène-Pedneault Scholarships are respectively, Julie Durand and Marie-Claude Garneau.

The Madeleine-Parent Scholarship

is awarded to a candidate who is pursuing her studies in sociology, political science or industrial relations.

Julie Durand has a background and ambitions that correspond precisely to the definition of this scholarship. This 23 year old young woman is already, and for a long time now, very involved in her community in social development and political groups in her region. After a social work technician DCS and a certificate in community intervention, she enrolled in the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi in order to do a Bachelor of Political Science. There's no doubt that Julie Durand will achieve her goals.

I chose a community and collective orientation, because I profoundly believe in the values [..]: social justice, solidarity, equity, empowerment and democracy.

The Hélène-Pedneault Scholarship

is awarded to a candidate who is pursuing her studies in literature, theatre or women's studies.

Marie Claude Garneau, the first recipient of the Hélène-Pedneault scholarship, is following precisely the path of other committed artists who see life and their art as intimately linked.

With two college diplomas, one in Theatre-Acting and the other in Literature and Arts, Marie-Claude is completing her training at Concordia University in an undergraduate women's studies and political science program. This young woman's social commitment is focused upon disseminating information about social policies, feminism, and lesbian identity. She does volunteer work on a help line at the Centre 2110 against all kinds of oppression and is also the editor of the Newspaper *Subversions* that comes out of the Concordia University Women's Studies program.

She wants to complete her studies so that she can "*continue integrating feminist analyses into the community and artistic milieus in which I live.*"

Bravo to all the scholarship recipients

To know more about the Foundation and our scholarship program log on our website

<http://www.fondationlearoback.org>

or our Facebook page

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

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);
la Congrégation des Sœurs de Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe;
as well as one friend who wishes 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 des conseillères et conseillers de la CSQ, Fonds de solidarité;
the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du milieu de l'éducation de Montréal
Ms Laura Alper;
Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond;
as well as one foundation who wishes to remain anonymous.



All the texts presented at
PAROLES REBELLES
are on our website

<http://www.fondationlearoback.org/newslett.htm>

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