

NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 20, December 2019





A word from the President



Courage

The theme of our annual fund raising campaign this year was that of courage... But what precisely constitutes courage? We often associate the notion of courage with the exploits of warriors or adventurers, but we like to think that courage often involves a reality that's a bit more complex.

We believe that courage often comes in the form of people who have to deal with the difficulties and challenges that life places in their path: health problems, loss of loved ones, or layoffs. There's also the courage of all those people who engage in different types of action to defend the causes that they hold dear and that take the form of struggles against things like climate change, discrimination and social inequalities. Courage thus sometimes expresses itself in the form of resilience, a fighting spirit, but always a disposition that is deeply entrenched in oneself.

Hence, the many women who decide, notwithstanding difficult living conditions and precarious personal or family situations, to go back to school to improve their lot, and at the same time, to give shape to their social commitment, are clearly courageous individuals. Their courage elicits admiration and stirs a desire to lend them a hand. This is precisely what the Foundation is doing when we award our scholarships or, in partnership with Mother goes to school, when we grant incentive scholarships for women



to complete their education.

The courage of these women should inspire us to be courageous, as well. The courage to give our time to sit on the Board of Directors and participate in the selection of scholarship recipients. The courage to solicit individuals and organizations to ask for donations and thereby increase the number of donors and benefactors. The courage to be generous, particularly in these days which are so often marked by withdrawal, isolation and indifference.

Because, at the end of the day, isn't being courageous the best way for us to change the world? Actions that are simultaneously geared towards making the world... greener, more democratic, more egalitarian. A wonderful thing for us to do as we welcome in the New Year.



Lorraine Pagé
President

Hélène Pedneault honoured



Hélène Pedneault hailed from Jonquière. Her spirit has now set down roots at the Municipal Library of this borough in the city of Saguenay, which now bears her name.

During the naming ceremony and unveiling of the Library's new designation, last August 29, at which I had the honour to represent the Foundation, several personalities addressed the assembled guests: Josée Neron, the Mayoress of Saguenay, Sylvain Gaudreault, the MNA from Jonquière at the National Assembly and Sylvain Pedneault, Hélène's brother, on behalf of the family.

The Foundation contributed to the event, in its own way, by giving the Library copies of books by Hélène for a showcase of objects that had belonged to her, but also, so that the Library could have copies of her work to respond to book loan requests.

In addition to the customary speeches, that highlighted Hélène's gracious personality and diverse multiple commitments, the ceremony struck a genuine chord with the people present via the presentation of a video and the reading of certain excerpts

from her texts. The emotion was palpable when Sylvie Tremblay and Monique Fautoux sang *Inventaire*, a text written by Hélène Pedneault; but it truly reached its peak, when they invited the violinist Bruno Chabot and the cellist Annick Paquet to join them for a spontaneous rendition of *Bread and roses*.



As Daniel Côté, from the newspaper *Le Quotidien*, reported; "...people started to hum, and then everybody, with voices that gradually got louder and louder... It was a form of communion and in between the notes, in the micro-silences, one couldn't help but hear a breathing-like sound that was neither music, nor text. A spirit that was inhaling - exhaling ever so delicately, and gently settling into her new home."

Lorraine Pagé



Scholarships that are always relevant

2019 was quite an exceptional year, because we received a **record number of 116 scholarship requests**. Not only is the figure impressive, but we've observed, once again, that the economic needs of women who want to resume their education are still acute and substantial.

It's difficult to analyze what has caused this jump in the requests for assistance, perhaps it's due to our new online form or to greater awareness about our Foundation. We simply don't know, whether this increase is fleeting or not; the future will surely tell us. One thing is certain however, if this tendency continues, it will be necessary for us to increase our revenues so that the Foundation can adequately respond to the growing number of applications.

Faced with this swell in scholarship requests, the Board of Directors decided to go over our projected budget and to grant **21 scholarships for a total amount of \$37,000**. In addition, \$6,000 was disbursed to *Mother goes to School* (MVE) to provide assistance to 12 mothers to help them get their first diploma.

The Madeleine Parent and Hélène Pedneault scholarships

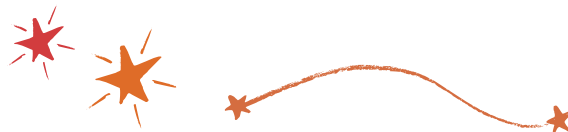
Since 2012, the Foundation has been granting two special scholarships (\$2,000 each) for studies in the fields in which Madeleine and Hélène were respectively active and accomplished.

Marie Anne Fillion, the recipient of the Madeleine Parent scholarship, is studying towards a Bachelor of Sociology at the Université de Montréal, with a Major in Feminist Studies. She's hoping to do a PhD in this area, afterwards. Meanwhile, Marie-Anne is active in groups engaged in the fight against cystic fibrosis and aphasia.

Sanna Mansouri, the recipient of the Hélène-Pedneault scholarship, is also studying at the Université de Montréal, in the field of French Literature. In the course of this program, she has to take certain courses at the Université de la Sorbonne, in France. Sanna has to take care of her financial needs on her own, while also providing assistance to her own family. She's active in the organization RAFIQ (Quebec Action Network for the Equality of Immigrant and Racialized Women). She's also published a few articles in specialized magazines.



Completing High School



Finishing high school is **Rehema Cibalonza** goal. A resident of Victoriaville, she's a single-parent mother of four children. 18 years ago, Ms. Cibalonza had to leave her native Congo in the most difficult of conditions. After living in Rwanda, she emigrated to Canada in 2014. She's currently finishing high school in an Adult Education Centre, while being involved in her own community. Her ambition: go to CEGEP in to become a Childhood Education Technician.

Maude Thérout from Montréal, wants to finish her last year of high school in 2019-2020, while taking hairdressing courses at the des Faubourgs Trades School. Maude has one child and is active in Petit REVDEC, a group that works with very young mothers and is active in the fight against dropping out of school.



Learning a trade

A resident of the Beauce, **Améli Alain** decided to take an administrative assistant course at the Marie-Rollet Vocational Training Centre in Quebec City. She will thus have to move there and provide for her own needs. The purpose of her studies is to *"have a better quality of life and to be happy in my future job"*. She's involved in the extra-curricular activities in her school in the Beauce, and she wants to be even more involved in the future.

Yuping Cao opted for a non-traditional trade; she's now enrolled in carpentry and woodworking at the Montreal Construction Trades School. At the school, she's an active participant in the women's committee that seeks to build a network and to share resources for all the women who work in non-traditional trades. She has two sons who are proud of their mother and who, along with Yuping, thank the Foundation.

Preparing to go to University

Alzubra Sheikh va will be finishing her DCS in Health Sciences at Vanier CEGEP in Montreal, in 2020. She's planning to do a Bachelor of Science and medicine after that. She's passionate about science, a passion that she inherited from her parents. Alzubra is active in a number of community groups, notably, Women on the Rise, a group that helps mothers, and Écoquartier.

Becoming a technician



Two of the 2019 scholarship recipients are doing their studies in the social services domain.



Cindy Hébert hopes to get her DCS from the CEGEP de Lanaudière in 2020, and after that, she'd like to get a university degree in the social sphere. Several groups and organizations in her neighbourhood have benefited from Cindy's volunteer work: sports groups, socio-economic organizations, the *Young Peoples' Home*. Cindy shares custody of her three children.

Sylvianne Roussel will also be completing her social services program at the CEGEP de Rimouski in 2020. She lives in Mont-Joli. Once she graduates, she wants to "*devote herself to the causes that she holds dear, violence against women, hypersexualization and the importance of healthy relationships.*" Sylvianne is a single-parent mother of two children.

Nathalie Locas, who has a DCS in childcare, went back to school after a 20-year hiatus. She's preparing for a DCS in furniture engineering and woodworking. This course, which is part of the CEGEP de Victoriaville program is fortunately being given in Montreal, given that Nathalie lives in Repentigny. She's very actively involved in raising awareness about the woodworking profession, enhancing the standing of women in non-traditional trades and also in advocating for improvements to the curriculum. Nathalie has two children in her care.



Nassima Derfouf, who has a law degree from Algeria, and who arrived in the Province of Quebec a few years ago, recently decided to make a career change. She would have liked to complete a university certificate at the HEC, but following some unforeseen personal events, she reoriented herself towards a shorter program. She's currently enrolled in the CEI in residential real estate brokerage techniques. Nassima has three children and is very engaged in St-Léonard community bodies, notably, helping women and newly arrived immigrants.



Sabrina Rivière, is “proud to be the eighth woman in the Province of Quebec to work on assembling concrete frames and one of the first on expressway closures”. Unfortunately, illness forced her to leave this job that she liked so very much. She’s gone back to school to finish her high school courses this fall, after which she’ll begin her studies in Water Management at the CEGEP St-Laurent. She has two children for whom she has sole custody.

Lisa-Marie Roy, a 2018 Foundation scholarship recipient, is continuing her studies in Special Education at the Abitibi Témiscamingue CEGEP. She’s ultimately planning to complete her university studies in education for children with special needs. Lisa is a single-parent mother of three children, one of whom requires special care. She’s been successful in balancing her studies and family responsibilities, but also in finding time to be socially involved in various groups that help children.



Future Bachelors

Samia Benabess, who is currently a first-year student in biomedical sciences at the Université de Montréal, would like to go into medicine. Indeed, she regularly volunteers at the CHUM and has been very active in the CEGEP Maisonneuve community. Samia believes that “a diploma and the knowledge that comes with it are important linchpins that underlie a person’s independence, particularly in the case of women”.

Marie-Pier Caouette-Lampron is studying in Lévis (UQÀR) to complete her Bachelors degree in teaching academic and social adjustment. Marie-Pier is keenly aware of the problems related to perseverance and adaptation in school, because she herself returned to school

by way of running, when she participated in CTR (*Cours ta réussite - Run for success*). She currently sits on a committee at GRIS (a group that raises people’s awareness about sexual and gender diversity)



Cassandra Le Breton a young woman who went through a difficult childhood “decided to go back to school in order to show my mother that all those sacrifices were worthwhile in the end”. She’s doing a Bachelor in Industrial Relations at the Université de Montréal. “My goal is to foster workplace environments that are respectful, ethical and egalitarian for everyone”. She’s involved in groups that are present in her milieu, senior citizen homes, childcare centres and L’Accueil Bonneau. Cassandra has to pay all her school-related expenses on her own.

Two scholarship recipients are receiving their third and final scholarship from the Foundation this year (the limit is three).

Kathy Nodzynski had to leave Montreal to fulfil her dream: getting into medicine. She's now studying at the Université de Sherbrooke in Saguenay. Another challenge that Kathy faces is to do her studies in French, because all her previous schooling was done in English. Since high school, Kathy has always been very active in her community, and her commitment hasn't ceased, because she's now participating in IFMSA-Québec, the International Federation of Medical Students.

Janie Poirier is doing her third year of social work at the Université du Québec, in Rouyn Noranda. She sees her future profession as a way to *“give power back to the most vulnerable and to show them all the potential they really have”*. It's no small feat for Janie to balance her studies, family responsibilities and commitment to her community. Her blended family is made up of five children, but she nonetheless finds the time to help mothers who are breast-feeding and she sits on the Board of Directors of the *Maison de la Famille* (A Home for Families).

A university certificate to improve her skills

Émilie Bellemare, who already has a DCS in special education, decided that she wanted to do a certificate in human resources. She declares *“I want to go beyond the status of doing what others decide what I have to do and become the person who will make a difference everywhere I go.”* Going back to school is quite the challenge for Émilie. She lives in Sept-Îles and goes to school in Saguenay. She has shared custody of three children, so every three weeks, she has to go back to Sept-Îles to bring the children to their father. Active in her community since forever, particularly in women's groups, once her studies are completed, she'd like to work in this area.

Susana Navarrete Vasquez left Chile for security reasons. She has university degrees in social work and psychology from Chile, but they're not recognized in the Province of Quebec. She would like to have them recognized here. However, there's one major prerequisite, namely, mastery of the French language. This is why she enrolled in studies to get a French as a Second Language Certificate at the Université de Montréal. The mother of a very young child, she's active in two Côte-des-Neiges community groups.

Fanny Saucier decided to remake her life by going back to school. As is often said, Fanny's life was *“not a piece of cake”*. She has had several jobs a little bit all over the Province of Quebec and has run into numerous personal difficulties. She's now enrolled at the Université Laval to complete a certificate and is now heading in the direction of marketing, encouraged by people who know her well and who assert that she's a *“great salesperson”*.

Céline Lamontagne

Mother goes to school: 2019 Winners



Since 2016, the Foundation has partnered with *Maman va à l'école* (MVE) (Mother goes to school). MVE's mission is to "help single-parent family mothers to acquire their first diploma." Thanks to the support of several bodies, particularly outside of the metropolitan areas, MVE is able to grant several scholarships of \$250 or \$500 to many young women.



The Lea Roback Foundation disbursed \$6,000 to MVE, which was divided into twelve \$500 scholarships. MVE selects its scholarship recipients, but for the twelve scholarship recipients funded by our Foundation, the MVE selection committee pays special attention to the applicants' commitment to their communities.(1)



Laurentians Chapter:

Alisson Lagros is studying at the des Cimes Centre, an Adult General Education Centre. As a representative of her fellow students, she has shown a knack for effectively defending her peers.

Abitibi Chapter:

Ève Simoneau-L'Heureux is enrolled in Industrial Design at the Val-d'Or Vocational Training Centre. She doesn't hesitate to help her colleagues. In fact, she's the one who takes on the responsibility of organizing various classroom activities on special occasions and she always volunteers to help in open house activities to promote the school's study program.





Val Maska Chapter:

Sarah Morissette-Marsan has gone back to school to complete her high school studies and following that, to attend CEGEP in their special education program. Besides her volunteer work over the past several years in various activities in her community, her personality and experience have very naturally led Sarah to discover and embrace the role of teacher-assistant.



Eastern Townships Chapter:

Liana McCormick decided, with the help of Emploi-Québec, to go back to the classroom to get her high school diploma and afterwards, to do whatever was necessary to complete a diploma in delinquency response techniques. Liana is active in her milieu, yet still finds the time and energy necessary to participate in coffee-chat events with senior citizens from her milieu and to work on an entrepreneurial project, Zone Zen.

Lanaudière Chapter

Amélie Poudrier will be receiving her high school diploma very soon and is already enrolled in a CEGEP special education program. Yet, she finds the time to do volunteer work and is notably the Vice-President of the *Maison des Jeunes* (Young People's Home) in her neighbourhood; she belongs to the Student Council in her Centre and also volunteers at the *Cible Famille Brandon* family home!



Haut-Richelieu Chapter

Lori Gobeille-Valenzuela is very active in various volunteer activities: working with young people a camp and taking care of animals, volunteering at the food drive action centre, entertaining senior citizens in a CHSLD and participating in the school's community garden.





Victoriaville Chapter

Rehema Cibalonza is also a Foundation scholarship recipient. Her story is summarized above.

Gaspésie Chapter

Marie-Claude Labonté wants to complete a DPS in secretarial skills and eventually work as a secretary in her Centre. She can lay claim to numerous volunteer and community activities: School Board, Student Council, participant in the

Maman-détente group (CLSC), participant in the *Grand Défi* Competition: Build my region; member of the Board of Directors of the Rocher Percé de Chandler CJE Job Option initiative.



Beauce Chapter

Monia Marquis hopes to eventually do a Bachelors degree in agronomy and take back her family's business. Monia stands out thanks to her commitment to her education and her social involvement in the centre.

Repentigny Chapter



Vanessa Perras has encountered numerous obstacles in her life, but has always found a way to meet the challenges head on. She's now proud to be in a position to help children do their homework and to participate in parents meetings. She's always ready to help others, and is there to assist people in need and all the personnel really admire her.

Jonquière Chapter

Mélissa Laprise has not had an easy life, but today, at 37 years old, she has overcome her difficulties and gone back to school to get a vocational diploma in institutional cooking. She's thinking about specializing in market cuisine in order to become a chef in a restaurant. Mélissa has been volunteering for a few years now in her parish.



National

Lucy Nowra lives in Nunavik. She registered for a professional cooking course that she finished in May. She was thus pursuing both a personal goal, namely, that her three children would eat home cooked food, and a professional goal, to become a cook in Nunavik. To get there, she was able to overcome many obstacles that could have made it almost impossible, thanks to the support, she says, of her family, classroom colleagues, her teacher Sylvain and all the personnel in her school.

(1) The information about these winners comes to us via *Mother goes to school (MVE)*

Céline Lamontagne

Lea, Madeleine and Hélène at the museum



Recently, I had the opportunity to visit the exhibit *Têtes d'affiche* (Headliners) that was being held at the *Odyssée des Bâtisseurs d'Alma*. The Kamouraska Regional Museum was responsible for curating this exhibit.

The exhibit was characterized by a playful approach, bringing together a presentation of hats, with an educational dimension that exposed befitting information on women who have marked, in one way or another, the evolution of Quebec society.

Amongst the women thus honoured, there was Lea Roback, Madeleine Parent and Hélène Pedneault. It was very touching to see, in

this duty of remembrance, these three exceptional women who are so closely linked to our Foundation being celebrated at the same time.

The Foundation, which was created on the occasion of Lea Roback's 90th birthday, was supported by Madeleine Parent, one of Lea Roback's good friends, and who was amongst the founding members of the Foundation. Moreover, she pursued her commitment to action by making the Foundation the sole beneficiary of her will, as did Hélène Pedneault. Through their bequests, both women remained committed to a women' right to a good education and to the advancement of women, causes that they both shared with Lea.

Lorraine Pagé



An exceptional donation

A few months ago, the Foundation received an exceptional donation from Mr. Philippe Dubé, a professor of museology at the Université Laval and a well known art collector. The donation consisted of some 40 works by the artist Jeannette Roback: paintings, drawings and prints.

Mr. Dubé had acquired all these pieces of art in the early 1990s in a public second-hand shop in Sainte-Foy. The salesman had explained to Mr. Dubé that he had found them in Beauport, the town Lea Roback had spent her childhood.

Mr. Dubé told us about how he had discovered this artist: “On that fateful day, I had the impression that I had acquired an exotic treasure, made up of many disparate elements from a visual standpoint, but oh so rich in so many other ways. The soul of an artist that illustrated, in some 40 pieces, a perspective that pleased me, from alpha to omega. As I left the premises, with these cryptic works in hand, I would now have to decipher them. At that time, I knew of Lea Roback by reputation, but the artist, Jeannette, did not ring a bell for me. I nonetheless recognized a compendium of family values in them and a path to pursue that led me, 20 years later, to the Foundation.”

Jeannette Wales Roback (1916-1999) was the wife of Leo Roback, one of Lea Roback’s brothers and thus her sister-in-law. Jeannette Roback studied painting at the Montreal School of Fine Arts and at the Fine Arts Museum Arts School. She was also a book illustrator and taught art to children.

The Foundation will be putting these works up for sale at some point in the course of an upcoming activity. You may also contact us directly, if you’re interested. All of the profits that will be realized from the foregoing will be put into our scholarship fund.

Irène Ellenberger



VIVA LÉA!

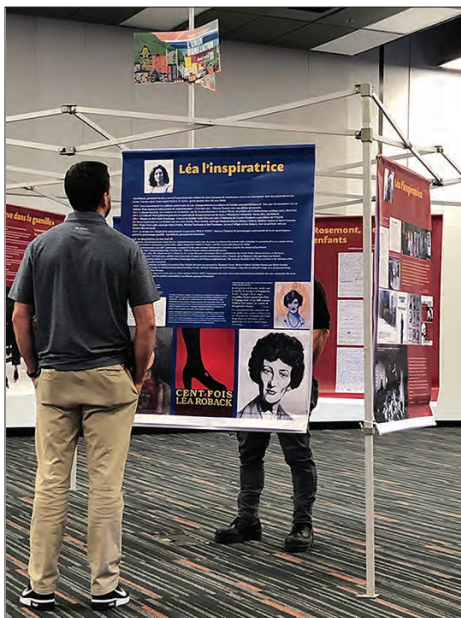


The VIVA LEA! exhibit has been re-assembled and shown again this year by two groups. This exhibition about Lea Roback's life and work, was curated by our Foundation.

The Metropolitan Montreal Central Council (CSN) presented the VIVA LEA! Exhibit in the course of their 37th convention, at the Montreal Convention Centre, in June. Several hundred people were thus able to become more familiar with Lea Roback's life and work. Many people discovered a page from the history of the trade union movement that they were unaware of up to that point.

In November, participants in the *"Mother goes to school: the challenges of going back into a classroom"* symposium were able to get to know Lea Roback, a little bit about her life and work by going around the exhibit. This presentation incarnates the partnership that links our two organizations that are jointly committed to awarding scholarships to assist women in their studies.

Irène Ellenberger



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;
Montréal Explorations;
the Soeurs de Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe (comité solidarité SJSH);
Mr Philippe Dubé,
Mr André Joffe;
Ms Pauline Lantz;
Ms Louise Potvin;
Ms Nicole Ranger;
Ms Arlene Zimmerman
and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.



Partners of the de 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 Maison générale des Ursulines de Québec;
le Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Ouest de Montréal (FAE);
the Syndicat des professionnelles et des professionnels du milieu de l'éducation de Montréal (CSQ);
Ms Laura Alper;
Ms Jacqueline Bassini;
Ms Donna Mergler;
Ms Monique Simard;
Ms Lorraine Pagé;
Ms Lucille Panet-Raymond;
Ms Katherine Roback,
Ms Annalee Yassi,
Mr. William Dawson
and a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

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