

# NEWSLETTER

LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION



Number 24,  
December 2022



**All about the Scholarships  
of the LeaRoback Foundation**



# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Over the past few weeks, I've been invited, a few times, to give a talk about Lea Roback and Madeleine Parent. Revisiting the lives of these bigger-than-life activists evokes my admiration: each and every time: two exceptional women who took an inspiring path.**

Again and again, I wonder: what would have been their thoughts and their actions faced with the great challenges that we all face in today's world?

How would Lea, who witnessed first hand the rise of Nazism in Germany, react to the growth of right-wing, indeed neo-fascist parties, in Italy, in Hungary and in so many other countries? How would Madeleine, who led many difficult working class struggles and who was a weaver of solidarity, try to breathe new life into collective action? How would the two of them, ardent pacifists who were active in the *Voice of Women* during the Cold War, help us navigate more lucidly the questions raised by Russia's war in Ukraine??

We sometimes have the impression that History repeats itself and drags us along paths that humanity has already trod. Our ideals of equality, freedom and solidarity are being subverted, indeed beaten back, by armed conflicts, triumphant "Elon Musk-style" capitalism and wild unbridled conspiracy die-hards. And it's true that we're now confronted with a challenge unlike any other, given the relentless advance of climate change and the decline in the planet's bio-diversity. .

It's thus no surprise that so many people feel powerless, apprehensive and discouraged. The women whom we help, thanks to your donations, to continue with their education don't give up, notwithstanding the adversity around them. Their ambition to build a better life for themselves and for their next of kin inspires them and nurtures their hope. It's also why we're committed to supporting them and demonstrating our solidarity with them.

**Lea and Madeleine: their tenacity, their beliefs and their battles still constitute a source of inspiration and hope. Would they not be saying to us "one has to focus upon the blue patches in the sky"<sup>1</sup> and that "nothing is lost forever"<sup>2</sup>.?**

As this year comes to an end, all the members of the Board of Directors join me in wishing you all an inspiring and promising Holiday Season for a new year, marked by optimism. Can renewed solidarity permit us to envisage a better world?

1 Léa Roback  
2 Madeleine Parent



*Lorraine Pagé*  
President



In 1952, Angèle Chagnon was the President of the JOCF. 70 years later, she spoke to the former members of the JOC, at the last general meeting. Archives du journal *Le Front Ouvrier*.

# Breaking News

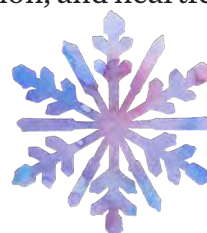
Major news for our Foundation. On Saturday, November 19, 2022, the general meeting of the Jeunesse ouvrière catholique (JOC) Foundation (*Young Catholic Workers*) voted to disband itself and accordingly decided on how to distribute its remaining assets.

A Partnership Agreement with our Foundation was ratified, where the agreement stipulated a donation of \$100,000. The foregoing monies will hence provide support, via our scholarship grants, to even more courageous women in need, who are engaged in their communities and who wish to further their education.

Lea Roback was a trade unionist who was committed to the furthering the education of working class women. A very clear link exists between the values defended by Lea Roback, the JOC's mission since its inception and the role that our Foundation plays: education is an crucial instrument that

enables people to improve their working and living conditions. t enables people to improve their working and living conditions.

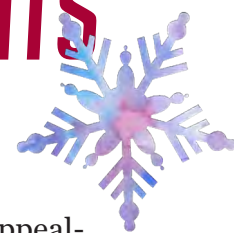
We'd like to draw attention to the exceptional contribution made by Ghislaine Patry-Buisson, a former member of the Lea Roback Foundation Board of Directors, who was the initiator of the collaboration protocol plan between the JOC and our Foundation. Without her unwavering commitment in favour of education, her determination to see the JOC's work live on by seeking out new avenues and her attachment to our Foundation, such a protocol would have never seen the light of day. On behalf of all the women who will benefit from the foregoing in the future, I'd like to express our very profound gratitude, recognition, and heartfelt friendship.



*Lorraine Pagé*  
President



# THE 2022 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



“More work, less school”, ran the headline in the *Le Devoir* newspaper last October 22. Indeed, in this era of severe labour shortages, job offers are plentiful and often times appealing. Yet, in spite of everything, several women persist in their back to school undertakings, to prepare themselves for a better future and to hopefully land more stimulating jobs.

Let’s recall that the Lea Roback Foundation grants scholarships to women who are experiencing financial difficulties and who are actively engaged in their communities. The Foundation is one of the rare bodies that grants scholarships to women in literacy programs and who are trying to finish high school. Indeed, the Government of Quebec Loans and Bursaries system does not offer individual scholarships to people enrolled in these two educational pursuits .

This year, the Foundation awarded 23 scholarships and we’ve funded 11 education incentive scholarships to *Maman va à l’école* (Mother goes to school).

## SIX PIERRE-LAURIER-BARIBEAU SCHOLARSHIPS

Let’s recall that these scholarships are entirely funded by the Pierre-Laurier-Baribeau Foundation . Recipients have to be under 25 years old



**Roxanne Fleury** is a very young woman, a mother of a two-year old girl. Her goal is to finish high school at the Adult Education Centre in order to enrol in a dental technician program. She’s very active in the *Envol* project, a group that provides assistance to young mothers. Amongst other things, she volunteers in the group’s thrift shop.

*“I’m motivated to continue my schooling as long as necessary in order to enjoy a better future for me and my daughter.”*

**Kathryne Jalbert** is a young woman from Abitibi-Témiscamingue, a single-parent mother of a four-year old child. She’s currently finishing her high school diploma, but her ultimate goal is to study visual arts in CEGEP. She already boasts a number of artistic achievements. In 2020, she co-created a mural for the city of La Sarre, as well as a mural for the Centre des R.O.S.É.S de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue, in Rouyn-Noranda, a nonprofit group that works with people with HIV/AIDS. She’s currently developing another volunteer mural for the Rouyn-Noranda Adult Training Centre library. She’s also a member of the Board of Directors of the Rouyn-Noranda *Grands Frères et Grandes Sœurs* group. «

*“After my DCS, I’m hoping to study in the social sciences field. As my ultimate goal, if I could work with young people with special needs or other people and get them engaged in doing street art with me, I believe that it could liberate some young folks and adults, just like it ended up liberating me, from my own demons.”*

Kathryne also received a scholarship from Maman va à l’école (Mother goes to school), which was funded by our Foundation.

**Amélie** \* lives in Sherbrooke. She’s very active in her milieu, notwithstanding her very young age. In co-operation with the Sherbrooke Municipal Housing Office (SMHO), she launched the *Rassembleur* project; which paved the way for building a park, as well as fitting up the living spaces in the SMHO’ apartments. She’s also participated in the Lavigerie project to fit-up a low-rent housing building located in another sector. She’s currently studying health sciences at the CEGEP de Sherbrooke and wants to become a doctor.



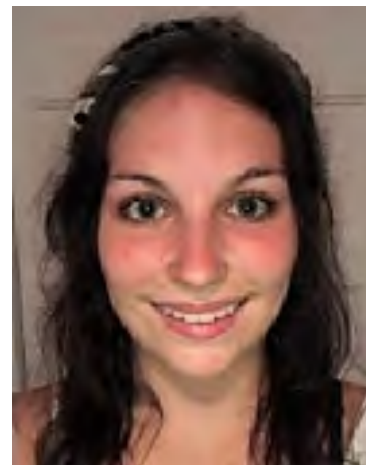
**Zoé Duchesneau** was brusquely turned upside down when both her father and her mother passed away two years apart. Her first years in high school were very difficult, but with the help of teachers and thanks to her remarkable perseverance, she did finish high school. Moreover, she’s very grateful to her professors who helped her and prevented her from dropping out. She was very engaged in the *Remembrance* project, an event organized for the high school graduating class, where she was responsible for all the technical aspects.

*“I learned how to apply my interest in technical things to learning to control sound for musicians, speakers and presentations. I learned that absolutely love it.”*

She had discovered her trade, she says. Accordingly, she recently enrolled in the John-Abbott CEGEP *Live Entertainment Design and Productions*.

**Josiane Loof** is very active in the women’s shelter, where she is currently living. She participates in all the activities and is there to help others. She’s currently enrolled in a social services technician program at the CEGEP de Lanaudière. She confides that this isn’t her first attempt at going back to school, but this time, she’s very determined to succeed and get her diploma.

*“My experience at the shelter made me aware of many things and I’d really like to help other women. I’d like to work in groups such as those that have helped me.”*



**Brigitte\*** and her mother were housed for two years at the *Foyer du Monde*; this shelter accommodates refugees and asylum seekers. Brigitte fit in very well and was very active in the shelter's community life, as a babysitter, translator, and even as a participant in various fund raising activities. Since March, she's living in an apartment with her mother, and her financial needs have thus grown, which is why she applied for a scholarship. She's continuing her studies in a social work technician program at Dawson College in Montreal.

## LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

### Career Training

**Céline\***, a native of Baie-Comeau, now lives in Longueuil. She had a difficult childhood and adolescence, and had to leave school at 16 to become "her mother's mother". She got her high school diploma at the Adult Education Centre. She's now 26 years old, and is enrolled in a cosmetics program, which will give her a DVS. Céline has always been involved in the community life of the various schools she's attended.



**Maryse Boutin**, who was a 2021 Foundation scholarship recipient, is continuing her education. A mother of two teenagers, she strikes a fine balance between her studies, family responsibilities and participation in the life of her community. While still working, Maryse is continuing her studies towards a DVS in Health, Assistance and Nursing Care at the Charlotte-Tassé career training centre in Longueuil. Maryse is a member of the Board of Directors of her Housing Co-op and likewise participates in various student activities in her training centre.

*"It's quite an honour to once again be a recipient of a Lea Roback scholarship. You've made an enormous difference in my life and that of my children. I'm very moved."*

### College

**Danielle\*** is going back to school, after a few years in the job market working as an orderly and as a teaching assistant. She's currently enrolled in a special education technician program in a CEGEP. She's a single-parent mom of two very young children. Danielle nonetheless finds the time to do volunteer work in a CHSLD, and more recently, she's been active in the community group *Mères avec pouvoir*, that supports female heads of households.



## University



**Arianne Beaulac**, from Montreal, actively participates in the YMCA's Projet C-Vert. The latter encompasses varied activities: distributing food to homeless people, collecting clothes for newcomers, greening alleys and cleaning initiatives. Arianne recently enrolled in the Bachelor of Anthropology program at the Université de Montréal

*"because I want to be able to help the communities around me in various ways and in several areas".*

**Marine Coeurdassier** lives in Montreal. Since high school, Marine lives her life in accordance with her ideals. The list of her social activities is long and fascinating. Marine has participated in several YMCA committees: the Civil Society Collective, the

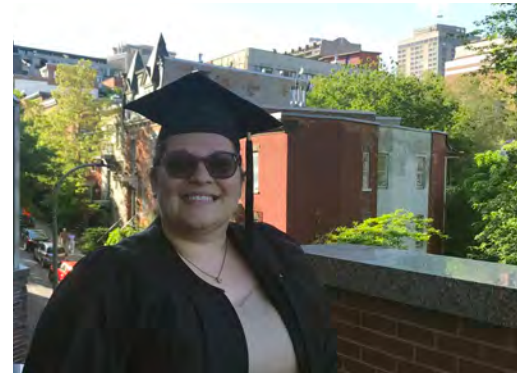
*"It's totally accurate to affirm that education is a enfranchization tool, and I thank you for having created a program to specifically support Quebec women in their education undertakings, in order to build a more representative and equitable world."*

Youth Strategy Advisory Committee, the *Force des filles-force du monde* project, the Youth Commitment Summit. Marine is also interested in young people's political involvement. Accordingly, she was a delegate to the francophone UN simulation conference at Université Laval, to the *La Colline* newspaper, to the Quebec Youth Parliament; she was likewise a delegate from Outremont to the *À Voix Égales* Suffrage Heiresses. Marine is currently enrolled at the Université du Québec à Montréal in a Bachelor of Cultural Action program, with a major in Aboriginal Studies.



**Meggy Constantineau** is in her early thirties and lives in Rouyn-Noranda. She has some very serious health problems, such that she's never been able to work. Her life has simply been full of obstacles. Notwithstanding all this, in 2022, she earned her high school diploma and was accepted at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) in the Bachelor of Social Work program. Her health issues have not prevented her from supporting many others, more vulnerable than she: accompanying people and conducting leisure activities for senior citizens and people with intellectual disabilities, accompanying people nearing the end-of-life, phone calls to senior citizens to provide them with some human contact. What determination!

**Annick Desrochers**, who was a 2021 Foundation scholarship recipient, was then completing a CEGEP childhood education technician program. This fall, she began a Bachelor of Educational Rehabilitation program at the Université de Montréal. Her love and devotion to children are undeniable. A volunteer at her children's school, she accompanies students and participates in various projects. She's likewise active in numerous community groups. She's the mother of two children.



**Élaine\*** left the beautiful Saguenay region – temporarily – to do a Bachelor of Neuroscience at the Université de Montréal, last year. This year, she decided to change course, and is now studying in the field of psychology. She's hoping to acquire a PhD in this domain. The catalyst of this change was her grandmother being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and her desire to be of assistance. Moreover, she's collaborating in writing a guide for the next of kin who care for people with Alzheimer's. In addition, Élaine's been active on her school's Amnesty International committee and likewise, made a humanitarian trip to Costa Rica. Finally, her work as a French and English languages tutor was very appreciated, when she was in CEGEP.



**Marie-Josée Gagné** found the courage to go back to school to realize her dream, after 20 years as an educator in a daycare centre. Courage, also, because she has sole custody of three children. And to realize her dream, she had to first complete a pre university diploma in CEGEP, which she finished in 2022. This fall, she thus began three more years of studies in order to earn a Bachelor of Visual arts at Université Laval. She'd really like to do public art and work with an artists collective. These days, she actively participates in the activities of her Housing Co-op.

**Francine\*** lost her bearings when her family was forced to move to Montreal. Encouraged by a teacher, she got involved in high school in the *Tablée des chefs*, which aims to feed and educate young people in good lifestyle habits. She continued her commitment to Cégep Rosemont, in-

cluding in the student association, and by representing students on various committees. This fall, Francine began a bachelor's degree in public management at UQAM.



*"I was lost when I arrived in Montreal, I never managed to find myself and that's normal because I'm not the same 15-year-old girl anymore. However, I managed to find another person, the one I was destined to become, the woman who helps her community and who will remain in the field of education all her life, to help other students discover themselves. and build their future. Ironic to think that the teenager who wanted to leave school has become the woman who will spend her whole life there."*



**Alice Joncas** is a young student, a native of Carleton-sur-Mer in the Gaspésie. She was the Treasurer of her CEGEP student association and participated on various committees. She's currently studying mechanical engineering at the Université de Sherbrooke. A few years ago, she discovered the world of scientific research, while participating on projects that were notably examining the impact of climate change.

*"All these research projects made me realize that my studies could enable me to address certain genuine problems in my milieu and do something about them by way of science. I'd like my studies to give me the tools to help society."*



**Marie-Laurence Marcoux** is a student who is working towards a Bachelor of Pre-school and Elementary School Education at the Université de Sherbrooke. In high school, she tutored others at lunchtime, while at CEGEP, she participated in climate change strikes.

*"Your help will be much appreciated, as I'll really be able to devote myself to my studies and begin my career with less of a financial burden on my shoulders. Hence, I could be a teacher who is present and even a model for young girls, who, like me in the past, will try to find the love and the trust of notable personalities."*



**Ginette \*** emigrated from Haiti at 17-years old. She had to wait several years before being able to complete her studies. She's now doing a Bachelor of Social Work at the Université de Montréal, and is very active in numerous community groups: Host at the Youth Consultation Office, educator at her church's daycare centre, and volunteer at the *Afrique au féminin* women's centre. Ginette has sole custody of two children.

**Alimatu Sadia Olagboye** was a 2021 Foundation scholarship recipient and she also received an ICEA award in recognition of her perseverance in school. Determined is still her middle name, because she's now in her third year of a Bachelor of Social Work at Université de Montréal. A native of the Ivory Coast, Alimatu has been in the Province of Quebec since 2016. She's a mother of three young children. Notwithstanding her numerous responsibilities, Alimatu manages to find time to be active in her community, notably at the *Carrefour Le Moutier* in Longueuil.

*"I'd like to thank you for the scholarship that I received last year. It was very beneficial in my academic trajectory and the amenities around it. I was thus able to enjoy a calm school year."*



**Héloïse \*** is a single-parent mother of a nine-year old girl. She lives in Waterville, in the Eastern Townships. She worked for 20 years in a daycare centre, where she was a union shop steward for several years. Currently, she's active both as a parent and as a student. She's a parent member of the School Board, a volunteer at the school's Foundation and a representative at the Sherbrooke Services Centre. At university, she sits as an external representative on the Student Association. Héloïse is enrolled in the Social Services program at the Université de Sherbrooke. She never thought that one day she'd become a university student.

*"Going into social work, I see the link between all those years being involved with children, my colleagues, my community; in short, vis-à-vis society, in general."*

**Irène \***, a permanent resident, arrived from Mali with her mother, when she was 14 years old. Her integration into school was quick, she moreover won several awards. She's involved in the low-rent housing complex where she lives with her mother: helping to keep the premises clean, helping young people with homework, and helping children in the soccer league. At CEGEP, she participated in the creation of an antiracism committee. Irène wants to become an engineer and is currently in her first year of the Bachelor of Civil Engineering program at l'École Polytechnique.

**Jasmine \*** is a permanent resident, originally from Morocco. Life has not always been easy for her. In addition to personal problems, she had to take several courses to fit in and qualify for enrolling in graduate studies. She's currently doing a certificate in Business Analysis-IT and hopes to acquire a Bachelor of IT, by earning the necessary certificates. She was an IT tutor at the YWCA and she works diligently at the housekeeping tasks she's responsible for in the shelter where she lives.

**Once again, it's so very touching to read the stories about all these courageous, determined, and hard-working women. There are sad stories, even tragic ones, but there's also some very beautiful stories. Meanwhile, they're all beacons of hope. Bravo! We hope that your dreams come true, you so deserve it to come to pass.**

\* Fictitious first name

## LEA ROBACK FOUNDATION / MAMAN VA L'ÉCOLE (MOTHER GOES TO SCHOOL) WINNERS

Mother goes to school awards \$500 scholarships to young single-parent mothers who wish to acquire a first diploma. Granting these scholarships is made possible thanks to donations from regional groups, individuals and the support of national partners. The Lea Roback Foundation is one such national partner, and since 2016, has funded 64 education incentive scholarships. Here are the eleven 2022 scholarship recipients.



Christine Pelchat, from the Gaspésie - Les Îles Chapter, with one of de Chapters godmother, Roxanne Albert.

### Christine Pelchat

Christine is a 40-year old mother, a head of her family and sole provider for them. She's been studying accounting since November 2021 at the Paspébiac Career Training Centre, in Gaspésie. She's a volunteer with a minor league hockey team and has demonstrated her leadership skills by organizing various fund-raising activities, external tournaments and prospecting for new sources of funding. She's good at motivating the team by attracting sponsors, and furthermore, takes care of various administrative tasks. Christine is an inspiring and determined mother.

### Nathalie Lavoie

Nathalie is enrolled in the Témiscouata College Studies Centre, in their special education technician program. She started the course in the fall 2021 and will finish it in spring 2024. She's 45 years old, and the mother of two teenage boys. Her eldest, 16 years old, has language impairment, while her younger 15-year old son has an autism spectrum disorder. *"That's why I want to be a special education practitioner, she explains. I want to help people like me get through this difficult ordeal"*. She's worked very hard to strike a balance between her family constraints and her studies. In addition, she's a caregiver for her elderly father, who lives alone in his house, and she nonetheless still finds the time and energy to volunteer in a nearby senior citizens residence.



Samira Garces Peyrano, from the CEA L'IMPULSION in Laval (National), with her teacher Mariana Ciofu.

### Samira Garces-Peyrano

Samira arrived in Quebec in 2010, with a 1½ year old baby. A victim of conjugal violence, she got a divorce. Shortly thereafter, her daughter was diagnosed with autism. In spite of everything, she doesn't give up. According to her teacher: *"What sets Samira apart is her generosity. [...] She devotes many hours of volunteer work to helping women who've experienced the same anguish and similar difficulties as she has."* Indeed, in addition to her studies at the Centre l'Impulsion, in Laval, Samira volunteers at the Relais-femmes, a feminist liaison group that provides training, research and consultation services. She likewise volunteers at Mon Resto Saint-Michel, whose mission is to accompany citizens in their struggle with poverty.



### Vanessa Richer

Vanessa, from Rouyn-Noranda, is a student at the General Training Centre (Marchand Building) in the Parents going to School Group, geared towards people going back to school. There, she's a volunteer lunch monitor for children with cognitive impairments who attend this school, and where she also organizes fun activities for them. In addition, she's been designated a spokesperson on academic perseverance, which has led her to be invited to several schools to help motivate other elementary and high school students to stay the course. She explains: *"I have the impression, in a certain sense, that I'm finally fulfilling my mission in life"*. She's now finishing high school and plans to go on to CEGEP, in special education or social work.



Vanessa Richer from the FGA of Saint-Jérôme (National) with Linda Denommé, Fabie Ricciardo and Nadia Hudon.



From Abitibi, Kathryne Jalbert with the Chapters godmother.

### Kathryne Jalbert

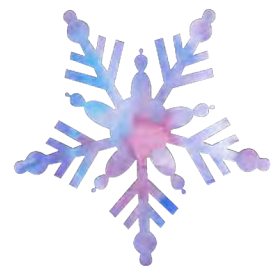
Kathryne Jalbert is an extraordinary mother, who for her own well-being and that of her child, has gone back to school, notwithstanding the many obstacles in her path. Last year, she attended *Le Retour à La Sarre Centre*, and this fall, she's studying at the Centre-Elisabeth-Bruyère in Rouyn-Noranda, to get her high school leaving diploma. She will soon begin CEGEP, in a visual arts program. Moreover, Kathryne is active and volunteers at the Snowmobile Club and sits on the Sainte-Rose de Poularies 100th anniversary committee. At the Centre-Elisabeth-Bruyère, she participates actively in student activities and is collaborating on the creation of a mural in the library, thanks to her artistic talents. Talents that she likewise offers to many projects, where she is a volunteer.

### Valérie Lessard

Valérie is a young 26-year old mother, who lives in the Beauce. She has two children, 2 and 6-years old. She got her high school diploma in 2011-2012 and worked in a milling company. Since then, she's enrolled in milling technician program at a career training centre and hopes to later become a teacher in this field. She's currently volunteering at putting together a musical, and likewise collaborates on other musical shows in her community. Balancing her work-family-school responsibilities is not an easy task for her, all the more so, seeing as the father of her children doesn't provide any help. But thanks to the support of several other people, she's received material assistance and especially, she underlines, moral support that really helps her stay the course.



Valérie Lessard, from the Beauce Chapter, with Suzie Brochu..





Amenan Rosalie Ngotta Allain, from the Haut-Richelieu Chapter, with the Chapters godmother, Sylvie Desranleau and Jacinthe Côté, from MVE.

### Rosalie Ngotta Alain

Rosalie lives in the Haut-Richelieu. She has a licence as a senior human resources and communications technician from the Ivory Coast. Unfortunately, her diploma is not recognized in Quebec. She's thus going back to school, in order to improve her living conditions and those of her son, who she's raising alone. In spite of the many obstacles that have crossed her path (separation from her biological family, her adoptive family's rejection, sexual aggression, a difficult separation from her child's father), Rosalie affirms that she doesn't see these things as obstacles, but rather as "adaptations that have to be made". When she was living on the Ivory Coast, Rosalie helped people with HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis. Upon arriving in Quebec, she quickly became a member of the ACCM (Montreal AIDS volunteers). It's a cause that's close to her heart. Since 2021, she's enrolled in a double Secretariat and Accounting DVS.

### Sarah Blain-Rompré

Sarah Blain-Rompré is studying at the *Centre des Cîmes* in Sainte-Adèle. She's a humble and discreet woman, who makes herself very available to others and gets an awful lot done. She's always cheerful and available for the Centre's pupils, and is likewise a role model for the youngest amongst them. She often provides transportation for students in need from her town in Sainte-Marguerite. Finally, she volunteers at the St Sauveur Youth Centre and is involved in the region's Optimist Club. In short, she stands out thanks to her autonomy, resourcefulness, determination and courage.

### Arianne Chartier

Arianne is a young mother from Terrebonne, brimming with potential. Her chaotic childhood may have deferred her schooling; but today, nothing's going to stop her. She's sharply focused upon her daughter's development and thus went back to school, notwithstanding her baby's young age. In a few weeks, she overcame her academic difficulties and apprehension to pass a first exam with an excellent mark over 80%. Since then, she's made lots of progress and is back in school full-time. In addition, she finds the time to help others, notably to redecorate the kitchen of Uniatox, a group that provided her with generous support in the past.



Ariane Chartier from the Centre L'avenir in Repentigny. She is with Julie Dubé, the Chapters godmother, and Paula Duguay of MVE.



## Jessica St-Pierre



Jessica St-Pierre, from the Lanaudière Chapter, with her two daughters and Claire Lalande, from MVE.

Jessica lives in the Lanaudière area. She's very motivated to get a nursing assistant DVS. After leaving school in grade 8, she decided to take things into her own hands. She thus earned the various prerequisites needed to enrol in this DVS. Her teacher lauds her numerous qualities: inclusive, tenacious, timely, diligent, always cheerful; if she fails at something, she doesn't give up. Her empathy and ability to listen to others will certainly make her an excellent professional. A mother of children with difficulties, she was able to seek help in order to help them. In addition, she's a member of the Student Council; and in this capacity,

participates in a food bank project, where she's been noticed for her empathy and concern for helping improve the lives of fellow students.

## Cynthia Lacourse

Cynthia had a difficult life, but discovering *L'École de la rue* was a revelation for her. Finally, she found a place where she could have the necessary support to move forward and allow her to have plans for the future. In addition to her parental responsibilities and her secondary studies, which are progressing well, Cynthia is very involved in her school, in particular by making videos for the *Méritas gala* and by helping other people edit their videos. In addition, she helps the cook for lunches during special activities.

She wants to obtain a diploma of professional studies in secretarial studies and she has all the perseverance and rigor to achieve it.



**The Lea Roback Foundation is proud to lend a hand to all these courageous women**

*Richard Brunelle*



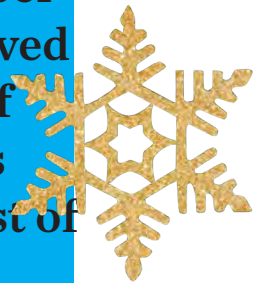


# FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

**Even more so today, your donations are indispensable!**

Many many women, who have gone back to school, have to pull out all the stops these days to pay for the foregoing, while still finding the money for their groceries and a place to live. Inflation has made their task uncommonly difficult. Your donations are thus indispensable, which is the theme of this year's campaign.

**In the space of just three weeks, from October 15 to November 7, the Foundation has received a little more than 40 donations for a total of \$11,191. We're still in the early stages of this campaign, which will continue until the first of January**



Our remarkable partner, the Sœurs de Saint-Joseph de Saint-Hyacinthe, sent us a cheque for \$6,000. And our donors, as well as several Unions, have sent us donations that have been averaging about \$100. A big thank you! It's been a great start and we're hoping to raise \$40,000, between now and January 1.

Year after year, the Foundation provides assistance to women who for the most part are involved in their milieu. These women are often over 30 years old, mothers, who are ready to roll up their sleeves to resume their studies. A demanding challenge and even more so, when one's income is meagre. But by helping them complete their studies and realize their potential, we're giving them the possibility to fill various positions in many economic sectors. Everyone wins!

Six of our scholarship recipients, this year, are enrolled in social work programs. While others are studying in the health sciences, education, engineering and communications.

We believe it's imperative that we continue to provide this financial support next year, thanks to your generous donations

*Maroussia Kishka*

# THE LEA ROBACK ART WORKSHOPS

One less well-known aspect about Lea Roback is her considerable interest in art. Always preoccupied about linking education and action, in the 1930s, Lea organized art workshops for children from poor neighbourhoods. We should point out the relationship that she maintained with the Montreal Children's Creative Art Centre, founded by Normand Bethune, and where the painters, Marian Scott and Fritz Brandtner, taught.

Here's a summary of how Lea described the experience, in her own words:

*"In Rosemont, in the 1930s – there weren't any leisure activities for children, in other words, [no place] where children could go to learn and have fun. There were three of us. One was a sculptor painter, the other had already worked with 8 to 10 year olds, boys and girls. While the other one was me.*

*Well, we went door to door, but the mothers weren't easy to convince. All the same, we began with seven children, three boys and four girls.*

*We found a big hall under a bowling alley! We'd get together Saturday mornings and we never had more than 10 children.*

*Our main activity was drawing. It was an unforgettable experience for us all. The children spent a very pleasant Saturday morning. We'd tell them a story and the children would stretch out on the floor, that was covered with packaging paper. Each child had a box of colour crayons and a large sheet of brown paper. He – she would translate the story by drawing it on their board. Other times, two – three children would draw the story on a big sheet.*

*For example, we'd explain the origins of bread. The beautiful wheat fields in Western Canada. Who were the farmers, why they had left their native countries. Other times, we'd tell stories about children in Africa and Asia – their way of life, what they ate, the colour of their skin. "They're as beautiful as you", Sophie, the painter sculptor, would say...*

*There was a nice award for the most talented child in the group. He – she would be given free paint courses at Dr. Bethune's workshops, given by the painter Fritz Brandtner..."*

*Irène Ellenberger*

*Une autre expérience :  
À Rosemont dans les  
années '30 – Il manquait  
des loisirs pour les  
enfants.  
Les enfants pouvaient  
apprendre en s'amusant.  
On était 3. Une était sculpteur  
peintre.  
L'autre avait déjà  
travaillé avec des enfants  
de 8 à 10 ans, garçons  
et filles. L'autre c'était  
moi.*

*On a fait du porte à  
porte. Les mamans  
n'étaient pas faciles à  
convaincre. Quand même*

*On a commencé avec  
7 enfants 3 garçons et 4  
filles.*

*On a trouvé une grande  
pièce au-dessus d'une salle  
de quilles. On se réunissait  
le samedi matin. On n'avait  
jamais plus que 10  
enfants. Notre activité primordiale  
était le dessin.*

*Ça été une expérience  
inoubliable pour nous.*

Excerpt of notes for a talk given by Lea

The original documents are in the Jewish Public Library's archives.

# WRITINGS ABOUT LEA ROBACK

## A novel about Lea Roback's life and an overdue reprint



**Léa**  
Ariela Freedman, Linda Leith  
Publishing, 2022

Published in March 2022, Ariela Freedman's novel tells the story of Lea Roback's life, her quest for social justice and her determination to act, which put her at the very heart of some of the major upheavals that marked the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Street fighting in Berlin, during the rise of Nazism in Germany, strikes in Montreal to defend the working conditions of women, as well as the hopes generated by the

Communist Party amongst activists in the 1930s and 1940s, not to mention the struggles for women rights. Lea Roback did not sit back and watch History pass her by. She spent her life at the centre of the action, a relentless force of nature.

On the book's cover page, we can admire the beautiful mural of Carlo Oliva, that was unfortunately destroyed by vandals this past year.



Born in Brooklyn, Ariela Freedman moved to Montreal after living in Jerusalem, New York, Calgary and London. Léa is her third novel, she has also written numerous articles in literary magazines. Ariela Freedman teaches literature at Concordia University.



**The Strangest Dream : Canadian Communists, the Spy Trials, and the Cold War**  
Merrily Weisbord, Vehicule Press, 2022

Originally published in 1983, Merrily Weisbord's book tells the story about the lives of communist activists in the Province of Quebec in the 1930s, up to Khrushchev's 1956 revelations about Stalin. Lea Roback is one of many people in this book, who talk about their commitment, their struggles and their dashed hopes.

This new edition includes a new preface, as well as new documents and photos.

The French version of this book was published in 1983, by Éditions VLB, under the title "*Le rêve d'une génération. Les communistes canadiens, les procès d'espionnage et la guerre froide.*"



Merrily Weisbord is a writer, screenwriter and documentary filmmaker, producer and host at CBC Radio. She is also one of the founders of the Quebec Writers Federation (QWF) and has taught at McGill University and Concordia. She lives in Montreal and in the Laurentians.



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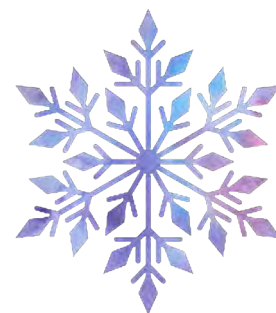
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Our honorary friends have made exceptional  
contributions to the Foundation and we wish to  
celebrate their memory.

M Jeannine Chenard;  
Ms Margaret K. Howes;  
Ms Thérèse Laliberté;  
Ms Madeleine Parent;  
Ms Hélène Pedneault.



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