

Local engineering student awarded \$5,000 bursary by foundation

Liliya Boyadjieva hopes to make breakthroughs in health technology



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A young Laval woman with aspirations to advance in the traditionally male-dominated domain of electrical engineering is one of five female university undergraduates from across Canada who've been chosen to receive scholarships from the Canadian Engineering Memorial Foundation.

An ÉTS student

Liliya Boyadjieva, who currently is attending École de technologie supérieure (ÉTS) in Montreal, is a second-year electrical engineering student. She and the others were selected as 2021 CEMF Undergraduate Women in Engineering Scholarship winners, the CEMF says.

They were chosen as the strongest regional ambassadors in their profession, based on their leadership, volunteerism and community involvement. Each award is valued at \$5,000 and comes with extensive networking and promotional opportunities for the recipients.

Women in engineering

The scholarships are awarded annually to the most promising women in an accredited undergraduate engineering program in Canada.

Since 1990, the CEMF has been promoting engineering as a career choice for young Canadian women through an extensive award and networking program.

While the level of competition is always outstanding, with many strong contenders among the women in engineering, the CEMF says the five women chosen this year stood out as the very best. All of the recipients are actively involved in their communities, volunteer many hours to helping others and are strong role models for the engineering profession.

Inspired by robotics

Liliya, 23, lives in Laval's Sainte-Dorothée district. She went to high school at École internationale de Laval in Chomedey.

In an interview with the Laval News, she explained how she became interested enough in electrical engineering to pursue a career in the domain. "It was a long road," she said. "When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to participate in robotics competitions and I participated one year. And that sparked an interest for me in robotics.

"When I went into CEGEP at Collège Bois-de-Boulogne, they had a team in competition there. And it was there that I really just fell in love with creating things with my hands, the process of designing something from scratch. That's really when I started to love engineering."

Interested in health technology

Currently studying at ÉTS for a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering, she hopes eventually to apply her learning and skills towards the development of health and medical technology, a field where robotics are increasingly being used in areas such as surgery.

"I think there's a lot of work to be done in that area, and not a lot of people going into it," she continued, noting that part of her current studies include health technology. While she had previously received awards for her entries in robotics competitions, she said the CEMF scholarship "is the biggest honour I've been given so far. It is indeed a great honour for me."

Worthy award winners

"It is heartening to see so many qualified and capable applicants," said Julie Lassonde, the CEMF's president.

"Each of these young women are worthy award winners and we look forward to watching them continue to help connect young Canadians, through their passionate volunteerism, with engineering and its vast possibilities as a viable career choice for other young ladies.

"We're delighted to see their infectious enthusiasm for engineering, and are thrilled to be supporting them in their future endeavours."



Twenty-three-year-old Liliya Boyadjieva of Laval, who is studying for a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering at École de technologie supérieure in Montreal, was recently awarded a \$5,000 scholarship by the Canadian Engineering Memorial Foundation.

STL offering \$1 fare on smog days

From June 1 to September 6, whenever Environment Canada issues a smog warning for the Laval region, the Société de transport de Laval (STL) will reduce its fare to \$1 the following day throughout its regular bus and shared taxi network.

The STL hopes that this initiative—which is unique in Canada—will encourage public transit use in Laval and reduce the number of cars on the road, which are responsible for a large part of atmospheric pollution during the summer.

"Once again this year, we are proud to launch our Smog Alert program. Public transit plays a crucial role in fighting climate change, and this initiative reflects our commitment to improving air quality," explains STL Board President Éric Morasse.

The special \$1 fare in effect the day following a smog event is equivalent to a reduction of almost 70% off the regular single fare.

Watch for smog alerts!

When there is a smog alert, the STL will issue a special bulletin on its website, on its newsletter, social media and on variable message signs operated by the ministère des Transports (MTQ) along the region's main highways, in addition to providing announcements to media outlets.

STL to provide accessible transportation to disabled women fleeing domestic violence

To mark Quebec Week for Disabled Persons, the Association Lavalloise du Transport Adapté (ALTA) and Société de transport de Laval (STL) are proud to announce a new initiative making it possible for disabled women who are victims of domestic violence to use accessible transit services free of charge, with no registration required. The arrangement, which comes into effect today, is a first in Quebec.

The project began in spring 2019 with the creation of a task force made up of women working for the following organizations: Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine (TCLCF), Société de Transport de Laval (STL), Regroupement des Organismes pour la Promotion des Personnes Handicapées de Laval (ROPPHL), Lina's Home, Maison le Prélude, Maison l'Esther, and the Association Lavalloise pour le Transport Adapté (ALTA). Evidence shows that 39% of women with functional limitations are likely to experience spousal violence, but they are underrepresented in shelters.

"Domestic violence against disabled women is a serious issue, and given that transportation to shelters has been identified as a barrier, I am very proud that the STL is part of the solution. The initiative provides women and children fleeing domestic violence with an option that is free of

charge, quick and easy to use," says Éric Morasse, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Société de transport de Laval.

"We are proud to work with the City of Laval and support the project as part of the sectoral development agreement to promote gender equality in the region. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine has provided close to \$100,000 in funding over two years to ensure the successful implementation of the project. This is a meaningful initiative developed jointly with a number of regional partners. The new project will enable women with disabilities to get out faster of abusive relationships and find their way to a shelter. Removing barriers for women who need to go seek help is a step in the right direction," says Isabelle Charest, Minister for Education and Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

"The new approach is a community-driven solution to the pressing issue of domestic violence against women with disabilities. The City of Laval is pleased to be the launchpad for this initiative, which is the first of its kind in the province. Quebec's disability awareness week is the perfect opportunity to spread awareness of the many barriers to inclusion and of the serious challenges disabled people are facing in their daily lives, even when they find themselves in abusive situations," says Stéphane Boyer, Deputy Mayor.

The service is easy to use. Women can call any of the three shelters in Laval and the shelter then contacts the STL to book a ride without disclosing the victim's name. Rides can be booked for the same day with a minimum of two hours' notice. The drivers, who have experience working with people with functional limitations, are sensitive to the issue of domestic violence and will respect the women's privacy.

An awareness campaign led by ALTA

In addition to the initiative, ALTA is distributing awareness materials to better support at-risk women with functional limitations who are fleeing abusive relationships. "It is critical that we address the issue of domestic violence against disabled women. We want to circulate the awareness campaign logo and posters to give a voice to women with disabilities. More information and details will soon be available on the project website. We are proud to continue working on this initiative and other projects over the coming months," says Mara Audet-Leblanc, Chief Executive Officer of ALTA. The website can be accessed at www.fshlaval.ca as of June 15.

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