

A scholarship for Elisabetta Ballarin

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The scholarship, established in memory of Cristina Lonardoni, is, therefore, **dedicated to strength and courage**. It was the intention of the provincial committee of **Confcooperative Varese**, of which Cristina, who died on 11 January this year after breathing in carbon monoxide, was an active member.

And the award ceremony was deeply moving and meaningful, for many reasons. The first recipient of the scholarship is Elisabetta Ballarin, Cristina's daughter, who was sentenced to 22 years in prison for her involvement in the murder of Mariangela Pezzotta, which was committed by the Beasts of Satan, in 2004, in the woods of Somma Lombardo.

Elisabetta Ballarin is following a long path of recovery and reintegration, and is working hard to complete the course of study in Brescia, after already completing her degree. The scholarship was given to Elisabetta by **Silvio Pezzotta, the father of Mariangela**. "It was a deeply moving, albeit simple moment, reserved, not hidden, and sad, as we remembered those who no longer with us; but it was also joyful, because it brings great hope," Chairman Massimo Galli said. **(See photo, Silvio Pezzotta meeting Elisabetta Ballarin.)**

During the simple, but moving ceremony, Chairman Massimo Galli and Director Nicola Abalsamo remembered Cristina, who worked hard, particularly in the last few years, for the good of the Confederation and of the numerous employees of the cooperatives she worked for, enthusiastically providing real help, especially to young people and students. And it was the school, the importance of study and of books that gave Cristina her perspective on life in her last years. **Study as an opportunity for awareness and the search for truth, but also as an extraordinary opportunity for social redemption**. Cristina herself followed her convictions as far as she could, when she enrolled in Communication Sciences at the University of Varese, at the age of 50, achieving brilliant academic results and establishing a cooperative specifically for that course.

"This gesture has great significance for us," Chairman Massimo Galli stressed. "First of all because of the bond between Elisabetta and Cristina, because of the suffering instilled in that bond, and because of the joy of a newfound purpose."

Elisabetta is paying for her mistakes, and today, she is a new woman, on the move, with a view to the future. And it is studying that has had a special role in her rebirth.”

The scholarship is going to be awarded every year, on 9 June, Cristina’s birthday, and will be given to deserving students, collaborators and/or children of collaborators, or people who write their dissertation on the topic of collaboration.

Applications must be made by 30 April.

Confcooperative Varese reminds readers that you can contribute to the scholarship by making a donation. The bank details for donations are: IBAN IT81A0840410801 000 000 002 867, to the Varese branch of BCC di Busto Garolfo e Buguggiate, made out to Confcooperative Varese – Borsa di Studio “Cristina Lonardoni”.

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redazione@varesenews.it