



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

AUTUMN 2013 NEWSLETTER

We have financed a number of children through vocational training in the past few years, often with very successful outcomes, though sometimes with apparent failure as children drop out of courses. It is easy to become despondent, having seen children persevere for many months and then lose motivation, but we work on the basis that anything learned will be of benefit and children may return to study after tasting other experiences for a while. However, I'm pleased to say that each of the current intake is progressing really well, with only one child leaving her course in the past year because she returned to her family 250 km away!

Here are some brief stories of just three of the children that we support.

Roberto is 18 years old and has recently finished his vocational training course as a mechanic. He has been working hard during the past two years – studying and doing practical mechanic's work at his institute from 8am each day, finishing secondary school in the afternoons, and trying to catch up with homework every evening. When I spoke with his course professor last year, he stated that Roberto was the most conscientious of all his students, consistently passing exams. He has now begun work half-time in a local mechanic's workshop whilst completing his school studies, and still enjoys playing football with the other kids



16 year-old **Luis** had a dreadful start in life. As a youngster he was taken on to the city streets with his younger sisters (one of whom was just one year-old at the time) to beg with their mother. When the young mother could no longer cope with her three children, she abandoned them on Alalay's doorstep one night and has since died on the streets of AIDS. Luis is now studying at secondary school and we are supporting him through his vocational training (where he has so far passed every module) to be a chef. He should finish in October of next year and dreams of one day opening his own bakery and cake shop. His two sisters continue to be supported at Alalay.



Before coming to Alalay, 18 year-old **Guiselda** and her six siblings lived and slept on the streets, singing in local minibuses and selling cheap sweets to try to scrape a living for their parents. At Alalay she started a nursing course, which she should finish by the end of this year. She is highly motivated, enjoys her work and has recently completed specialist training to learn how to give injections. This month she begins a four-month placement in local hospitals and health centres, putting into practice what she has learned. She helps with basic first aid for the younger children and is also currently finishing her secondary school studies. In her free time she likes watching (ever popular) Korean soap operas on TV and dancing with her classmates and friends.

On a more material but equally important topic - the production of eggs from the quail farm continues to increase and generate income. We currently achieve nearly 10,000 eggs per month, which is below our target but an increase of over 40% on previous levels. Unfortunately climate change is having its impact on Bolivia too – this winter was especially cold in Santa Cruz and this had an adverse effect on egg laying.

I'm finally returning to Bolivia and the street children in November to monitor existing projects and consider new ideas, and hope to be back in Bristol with more good news, just in time for Christmas!

Annie Syrett, Bristol – October 2013

www.alalay.co.uk