



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

SPRING 2013 NEWSLETTER

The Spring got off to a great start for my charity, with a very successful cello concert in March. St Matthew's Church was packed with more than 350 people; the money raised exceeded £7,000 and the cello playing of Michael Jones was exceptional. After the weekend, Michael referred to "all the wonderful memories of that magical experience in Bristol". I remain very grateful to him and all those people who helped to create such a momentous evening. The photo exhibition also fitted well with the event, both in raising awareness and giving clear evidence about how grim life can be for the children on the streets.

Things have also been busy at Alalay. During Easter a group of students (from Tudor Hall School) worked with the kids; painting a children's cabin and organizing various creative workshops. Project-wise, alongside the continuation of our quail farm, other "production projects" (chickens, vegetable garden, textile unit, carpentry, bakery) and English courses, we are about to support another three students through their vocational training in cookery and car mechanics. We are also in discussion with Alalay regarding an important new project: extending the psychologist's room in the girls' welcome house. Group activities are a vital way of developing trust and working with children who have recently come in off the streets. However, the psychologist currently works from a tiny office, unsuited for group sessions or work with more than one child at a time. We hope to extend this room and thus create a more useful and productive space.



In addition to the concert, other fundraising efforts have been going really well. Huge congratulations to Jamie, Will, Mike, Dan and Tom who successfully completed a three-day sponsored trek up Huayna Potosi (a 6088m mountain near La Paz in Bolivia) and also to ex-Alalay volunteer George Maggs and all at Thornbury RFC for recently organizing a wonderful charity rugby match.

Other fundraising events coming soon include: a jumble sale in Faringdon and a stall at Redland May Fair in Bristol. All are listed on the "upcoming events" tab of the website, as soon as we hear about them, so do please keep checking for the most up-to-date news.

Last year two university postgraduates spent time at Alalay researching the children's perceptions of their own health and the support and encouragement that they receive. The following quote from one of the subsequent dissertations is encouraging:

"children were thankful to Alalay for 'changing their lives'. They admitted not needing anything there and not lacking anything. They all recognized having evolved a lot through the programme in terms of life skills, personality, health and behaviour".

As well as some interesting suggestions for improvement, there were many more very positive comments.



Thank you for your help in making all of this work with street children possible!

Annie Syrett, Bristol - May 2013

www.alalay.co.uk