



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

WINTER 2013/ 2014 NEWSLETTER



A little late, but a very happy and peaceful New Year to you all!

I'd like to begin by thanking the Musical and Amicable Society for the fantastic concert that they gave in December at Cotham School in Bristol. It was greatly enjoyed by all and raised nearly £1,400 for Alalay.

I recently returned from Bolivia after a very interesting and successful trip - looking at existing projects, considering new ones and meeting the many ex-street children who have turned their lives around with the help of Alalay. The only problem that I encountered was on my final day, when I was attacked and robbed by two men in a car and, because they took my camera, I lost all of the video and photos that I'd taken in the previous month!

I took over a hundred hand-knitted teddy bears with me to Alalay, which the children absolutely loved, and a large quantity of medical supplies.

The English teaching is proving a great success, with around 100 children attending classes and developing a good grasp of the language. Two more British volunteers will be helping in this work over the next few months.

Whilst in Bolivia I attended many meetings, including one with Claudia Gonzales (the Founder/Director of Alalay) and Nelida Sifuentes (a Senator in La Paz) with whom we discussed Alalay's work. I also met with the children we are supporting through their vocational training courses. A personal highlight for me was seeing the boy who I mentioned in my last newsletter officially graduate from his two-year mechanic's course (funded by us). Roberto had previously been living on the streets, taking drugs and being taught by his peers to mug people in the local market. And yet, here he was dressed in a suit, proudly going up to collect his certificate, and giving a speech at a huge celebratory meal with all the boys in the welcome house. As already mentioned, he has now started working full time in a local mechanic's workshop and hopes to start his own business in a couple of years. These kids can achieve so much if given the chance.



The first part of the extension to the girls' welcome house (in the centre of the city of Santa Cruz) is almost complete and we're considering some similar work at the boys' welcome house. In addition, we continue to support a number of house parents in their vital roles as they care for their young families in the out-of town cabins.

Thanks to the livestock and other associated projects, food for the children continues to improve and the carpentry workshop is creating high quality furniture for internal use and for sale elsewhere. Much of the emphasis this year will be on helping Alalay to generate its own income by extending production projects.

Annie Syrett, Bristol – January 2014

www.alalay.co.uk