



# FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

## SUMMER 2015 NEWSLETTER

Firstly, just to let everyone know that I leave for Eastern Ukraine at the end of this month as a member of an International Monitoring Mission run by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and will be there for at least seven months but, since I will continue to run my street children charity from there, hopefully no-one should notice any difference!

Next, due to a horribly long rainy season in Santa Cruz our major renovation project at the Boys' Welcome House has been progressing painfully slowly. This house is critical to the work Alalay does with children when they first come off the streets and the building had become extremely dilapidated. We are financing work on virtually all aspects of the centre (new roof, re-painting, new bathrooms, tiling and so on) and are focusing on quality work rather than the usual "quick botch jobs" that are unfortunately rather common in South America.

In other news, the Alalay children have been really enjoying their Winter holidays, with trips to the local Zoo and an amusement park amongst others. They've also appeared live on TV as part of the recent fundraising "Centamaraton" – a similar event to Children in Need in the UK, where people can donate Bolivian centavos to go directly towards specific organisations, including Alalay. This is a really good example of ordinary Bolivians helping the street kids and showing their support for our work, and also additionally provides positive publicity for Alalay.



Existing Boys' Welcome House ceiling



Hard Rock birthday party

We continue to reap benefits from Joss Stone's visit earlier this year. The Hard Rock Café (where Joss played her one Bolivian concert) has kept its promise for further collaboration. Every month a team of staff members organise a big party for any children who have had their birthday during that month and each child can invite a couple of friends. The team organise games, party bags, a lot of food and a big birthday cake to share!

The Alalay kids also made a small appearance in Joss Stone's latest music video "The Answer" – you can find a link to watch it via my website.

In the Winter 2014 newsletter we mentioned Alalay's socio-sporting schools, financed by the Real Madrid Foundation. The schools aim to prevent children going on to the streets in the first place, teaching vital "life skills" through football and working with their parents. In July all of our kids participated in the school's first "family day" where families involved in this part of Alalay's prevention programme came together to play games and join in activities centred on the importance of family and how to improve family relationships. Furthermore, Alalay has also been working with local Government to coordinate the 1<sup>st</sup> International Street Work Symposium and the 1<sup>st</sup> National Meeting of Bolivian Street Workers. Each provided great opportunities for those who work on the streets with people of all ages to discuss and share ideas and successful methodologies for this very challenging work.

We've received our latest update for the adolescents who we are supporting in their vocational training, and once again we are very pleased with their hard work and determination to complete their courses. One of our boys has just graduated from his cookery course and is working, another has just four months left to finish his mechanics course (and is employed part-time in car maintenance), two have completed the theory and practical elements of their cookery and are waiting for the Ministry of Education to award their certificates later this month (both are already working in restaurants), four are part-way through their cookery (one of these already has a job in a fish restaurant), and two have finished the first six months of their three year mechanics' course. And our girls are doing fantastically well too! It really does make all the hard work seem very worthwhile!

Annie Syrett, Bristol – August 2015

[www.alalay.co.uk](http://www.alalay.co.uk)