



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

In the light of some of the current difficulties that we are facing, I can't think of a better way to start this newsletter than to repeat the photo that was in our Spring version, at the beginning of the virus outbreak.



Our last newsletter dealt in some detail with the implications of the global COVID-19 pandemic for our work amongst the street children in Bolivia. This included the negative impact on funds for Alalay, both from within the country and further afield, since many donors are currently unable to continue financial donations.

In order to further save money we've needed to undertake substantial reorganising in Santa Cruz and have made the tough decision to transfer children from our Welcome House in the city centre to the out-of-town Aldea (where the majority of our children live) and reduce staffing. Though clearly not ideal, this will enable us to get some much needed additional income from renting out the in-town premises (fortunately now in an excellent state, thanks to our major refurbishment last year!). There is the added benefit that everyone should be able to better self-isolate together as one Alalay family.

To best support Alalay in surviving and continuing with their wonderful work with our kids, I can confirm that last month we sent almost all of our remaining funds of £25,000 to help children and staff through this difficult time.

According to the [Bolivian Ministry of Health's 28 June update](#), the Santa Cruz region has by far the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, with almost 18,000 of the country's total of nearly 31,500. This is why we have taken dramatic action so quickly – it is critical that we protect our children and staff.

The nationwide lockdown has been extended, but with a certain loosening of rules – for example people are now allowed out during daylight hours from Monday to Friday, but under penalty of fines or even prison for breaking this law. However, Bolivia faces the same dilemma as all other countries – balancing the requirement to keep the economy going with the need to protect lives. It is clear that infection rates will now rise; which is

why we are maintaining some funds to support the purchase of Personal Protective Equipment and potential medical costs.

Recently the Director of the Pan-American Health Organisation stated that “last month, I announced here that our Region had become the new epicenter of the pandemic. I am sorry to say that since then, cases of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean have now tripled from almost 690,000 on May 23rd to more than two million today”. Despite this worrying announcement, we remain positive for our work and I am relieved and happy to say that so far we have managed to protect everyone at Alalay in Santa Cruz from the virus.

However, it’s also important that we focus clearly and optimistically on the future - we are currently funding online learning for all of our children, so that they don’t fall behind in their schooling during the lockdown and can keep up with those from more affluent families, and we have agreed to support three additional students through their vocational training during the rest of the year.

Once more this is an “act of faith” and we are enormously grateful to those many people who have given in the past few weeks and helped us start to rebuild our finances.

For the most up-to-date information please always look at our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

We hope that you and your loved ones stay safe and well.

Annie Syrett-Jones, Bristol – June 2020
www.alalay.co.uk