



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

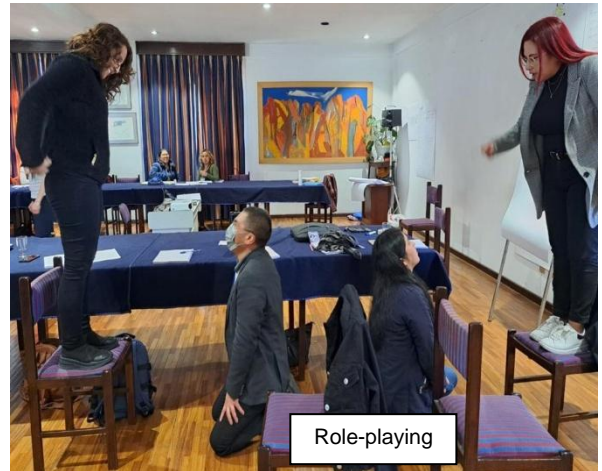
Registered charity no. 1123425

CHRISTMAS 2023 NEWSLETTER

This year we were able to achieve something about which we could only have dreamed in previous years. Thanks to some extremely generous financial support – earmarked for that purpose - we were able to make an investment of time, resources and funds to help develop our wonderful Bolivian staff team!

Not surprisingly, the main purpose of our charity is the direct well-being of the children at Alalay, but sadly this means that we have seldom put as much effort and energy into the support and training of our staff as we would have liked. Yet without our dedicated and extremely hard-working house parents and other staff members, we would quite simply not be able to run Alalay. Each of our children and young people has their own set of complex needs, and are dealing with differing traumas from their pre-Alalay life, in turn requiring very individual care and love. It takes a very special type of person to be able to provide this support.

With this in mind, this Autumn all staff were taken off-site for five days of intensive training. The underlying theme was “respectful parenting” and positive discipline – the view that the best way forward is to give respect to others in order to receive it – not (for example) simply to expect the street-connected children to obey because the house parent has “authority”, but because each respects the other. In addition, practical work, discussion and exercises focused on how best to deal with conflict situations and complex behavioural difficulties in an inclusive way; actively promoting calm dialogue and jointly finding solutions together with the child/children. Staff were encouraged to remember that “we are each in part the result of our childhood”. All the feedback that we have received suggests that the course was VERY successful.



Alongside providing much direct learning, using practical methodologies and role plays, the training itself has helped the staff to rightly feel more valued and allowed them to learn much more about themselves. We have also funded the creation of a practical manual covering the entire training programme, lessons learnt and the activities covered. Now any new staff members can have this great resource from the start.

Many participants said that the learning was not only valuable at Alalay, but was applicable in their family and home environments. We will continue this programme in 2024, through individual and group follow-up with all staff. There was one lovely quote where a house parent said “my first step in future will **always** be to ask the child **how they feel** and **actually listen** to the answer, and **only then** seek to help them”.



Christmas celebrations are very important in Bolivia and there will be great excitement everywhere – especially at Alalay! We are once more funding the production of thousands of panettone, for sale throughout Santa Cruz and La Paz – to both publicise Alalay and raise substantial funds.

Finally, we would like to personally thank each and every one of you, our amazing supporters, without whom we could achieve none of this. In 2023 alone (the 17th year we have been supporting the Alalay Foundation), we have funded: the aforementioned training to the entire staff team; ten young people through vocational training courses; the annual salary of one house mother; the production of panettone; and the renovation of the Girls' Welcome House. You are enabling us to offer these children a much better future.

**All of us at Alalay wish you a very Happy Christmas
and a Peaceful New Year!**

Annie Syrett-Jones, Bristol - December 2023