



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

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SPRING 2023 NEWSLETTER

Our work in 2023 is concentrating in two main areas – to expand upon activities which enable Alalay to generate more of its own income, and thus not rely so much on donations; and to increase the number of vocational training scholarships which we can award. This newsletter briefly describes the stories of three students who we are supporting with vocational training scholarships for the first time. As is our normal practice, all names have been changed to protect identities.

Andrea is sixteen years old, second from youngest of six siblings and starting a catering course that should lead to a career in the hospitality industry. Her mother died when she was very young, her father worked hard in the fields but could not find time to care for them. He left them with their grandmother, who could not cope, and they simply survived on the streets, begging for food and often sleeping rough. She discovered Alalay and for the first time felt that she really was part of a loving family. She is determined to succeed as a good cook and become independent and support herself.



Emma is fifteen years old and previously lived with her parents, an older sister and other step-siblings, in a very remote area. The family were very poor – her father was a cowboy, herding cattle, but he is now in prison because he got an older step-sister pregnant. The mother simply disappeared because she could not cope and the children moved onto the streets in a nearby town, where they were discovered by an Alalay street worker. Her goal is to go to university and later to become an Events' Manager.

As a small child, Sara lived with her parents and brothers and sisters – however her father was an alcoholic and died when she was very young. Her mother alone had to support her whole family (including Sara's elderly grandmother) – which meant that she had no time for the children, and Sara became very wild and moved onto the streets. One day she simply left her home and never returned – placing herself at great risk of harm.

Fortunately Sara met our colleagues during their street work visits and, upon entering the Alalay family, discovered that she had a great talent for football. Sara began training at Alalay's socio-sporting school which aims to teach football alongside life skills and values (to both children living at Alalay, and those at risk of going onto the streets). And last year, at sixteen years old, Sara was selected to represent Bolivia as part of our Alalay girls' team at the Street Child Football World Cup and related International Congress to champion the rights of street-connected children worldwide. In her own words, today she is happy because she has everything that she needs. *"I believe that without sport, my life would not be the same, because thanks to football and the daily effort I put into it, I have had the opportunity to travel and know a distant country (Qatar), which has inspired me to keep striving forward and build upon the skills I will need when I one day leave Alalay"*. In addition, Sara has found a real aptitude for cooking (in particular pastries!) and we are funding her through a catering course.



As well as preparing our children for the future, as global prices rise, we are acutely aware of the urgent need to continue to diversify income sources for the Alalay Foundation. With this in mind, this year we are planning to also refurbish an unused existing building in the city centre, such that it can provide a sustainable rental income with which to continue our work.

Annie Syrett-Jones, Bristol, UK – April 2023

www.alalay.co.uk