



# FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

## SPRING 2024 NEWSLETTER

Throughout the past eighteen years, in addition to setting up many income-producing projects, we have supported large numbers of children through vocational training and eventually found them worthwhile jobs: in banks, as hairdressers, car mechanics, beauticians, financial advisors, nurses and so on – even a dance instructor and a boxer. Many of the students have been very successful – often going on to win prestigious scholarships and to university – though sadly some have given up and not completed their courses. Much as in the UK and with people everywhere.

In this newsletter we'd like to start by giving snippets of information about just a few of our students who have undertaken vocational training – their names have been changed and some have been described in previous newsletters. These examples perhaps also show the fragility of some of them and how they can so easily lose motivation, as well as how determined many are to succeed. Remember that without Alalay most of these children would have had dreadful lives on the streets with little chance of satisfying jobs and probably been addicted to alcohol or solvents.

**Sara and Lucia** have both now completed their courses and graduated last November with great results – they are going on to further education, and currently teach baking to the other girls. **Augustin and Felipe** each won scholarships to study “gastronomy technology” but, having found the course too intense, decided (with the support of staff) to spread their studies over a longer period. In parallel with their college work they are currently therefore also paid house parents at Alalay. **Catalina's** mother has died unexpectedly and, though her goal still is to complete her course, she is taking a short break from her studies while she handles her considerable grief. **Wilbur and Marisol** work in a bank, married and have bought a house. **Emma** continues to show promise but is having to re-sit one of her failed modules. **Isabel** moved onto a university course studying law and politics and her brother **Pedro** now works in a bank, having studied financial management at university. **Maria and Rodrigo** completed their vocational training – the latter as a car mechanic – and now have a flat together and two children. **Luis** completed his cookery courses, training as a chef, and still hopes to open his own bakery. **Roberto** trained as a mechanic and works in a car repair shop. **Guiselda** qualified as a nurse and works in a hospital. **Maria**, after losing her way a bit, transferred courses and became an executive secretary. **Marizel** qualified as a hairdresser and beautician. **Andrea** left her course early and returned to her family and the streets – despite showing earlier great promise and a willingness to work hard at her chosen career. **Leonardo and Delia** each earned scholarships from Banco Mercantil and are at university.

We've also taken on another student named **Julieta** whose funding had dried up part way through her course. She appears very keen to qualify as a beautician at the local institute.

Next, for some years now we have produced and sold panettone at Christmas time and last year was no exception. We produced, and the children sold, 5,000 panettone and made a profit of nearly £3,500.

In some ways more important than the level of profit, having an opportunity to interact positively with the general public helps improve the psychological well-being of the children, as well as providing good publicity for the work at Alalay.

For the first time ever we used Social Media in Bolivia to successfully promote the sale of the panettone.

And of course the children enjoyed sampling the product!



Children and panettone

*Annie Syrett-Jones, Spain – April 2024*

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