



# FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

## Spring 2025 NEWSLETTER

We have been making and selling panettone at a profit at Christmas-time in Bolivia for ten years now and, apart from providing much needed income, this is a great way of raising awareness about Alalay. This Christmas was no exception - we are pleased to say that the panettone proved very popular and we completely sold out!

We also continue to pay the salary of Darleny, a fantastic house mother at Alalay who looks after our eldest girls.

In addition, as with previous years, for 2025 we are concentrating a lot of effort in awarding financial scholarships to our teenage students for vocational training. There is much demand for this sort of assistance - so many need our support that, from a practical point of view, our only limitation is funds. They complete their vocational training and schooling, and then Alalay supports them to find jobs and start to become more independent. We thought that you might like to read some background stories, written by two of the girls themselves, with some help from staff. In line with our child protection policy, we have changed all names.



***"My name is Ana Sofia, I am 15 years-old and I used to live with my younger brother and our mother. However, one day my mother didn't come home and we never saw her again. For a while we moved in with an aunt but, because she treated us badly and frequently hit us, we ran away and lived on the streets. The police found us and took us to a children's home – where once more we were badly treated and ran away.***

*Finally we were caught again but this time brought to Alalay. The best thing was arriving somewhere where we weren't mistreated, but welcomed with great affection. I felt that I had a refuge, a place to be safe, a bed and food to eat, and the chance to go to school. I always try to get good grades because I have so much desire to study and take advantage of every opportunity.*

*I like to play football, photography and painting – I've even exhibited some work alongside professional artists! I like working on my cabin-mates' hair and make-up and I'm going to specialise in being a beautician. Thanks to Alalay for changing my life, and giving me the opportunity to be different and to grow".*

***"My name is Amanda, I am 15 years years-old and come from a very large and poor family. My parents thought that I was intelligent, and wanted me to get an education, so they arranged for me to live with another family. The mother was kind and for a while this worked well until her older son returned to live at home and began to abuse me. This frightened me and I asked my parents to take me back. But this was at the time of Covid 19 and they could no longer afford to keep and feed me – I became rebellious, moved in with some older girls and started to live on the streets.***

*Finally the Authorities found me and I was taken to Alalay. There my housemother loves me like my own mother, and I am very happy. I am healthy too and I've learned sewing and making bread, I go to school and attend workshops where I learn of my rights as a woman.*

*I enjoy sports, dance, singing, joking around with my friends and am currently studying on a beauty course. I'm very grateful for the opportunities given to me by Alalay".*

Annie Syrett-Jones, Bristol – April 2025

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