



FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

AUTUMN 2025 NEWSLETTER

Thirty-five years ago, a 19-year old Bolivian student called Claudia Gonzales met with Joaquín (a young boy living on the streets) and thus began the Alalay Foundation's work. The children who came to live in the first house named the organisation Alalay, meaning "I am cold" in the local Aymara language; and Claudia has since dedicated her life to supporting them.



Since its inception, the Foundation has cared for over 45,100 boys, girls and adolescents in Bolivia, and has supported 14,030 families living in poverty. In order to achieve this, Alalay staff have worked with around 3,800 officials and more than 2,500 teachers! These are awe-inspiring statistics, but it is so important not to forget that each one of these represents a child, one who has been offered a better future, love and hope. We are so proud to be a small part in Alalay's story.

For its 35th anniversary the Alalay Foundation has run a series of events in Bolivia. The decorations for the one in Santa Cruz were designed and

installed by one of the oldest girls who we are funding through her "party decoration and events management" vocational training course. You can see some of her work in the above photo - a fantastic opportunity to put into practise what she has learnt thus far!

And as part of the celebrations, a few weeks ago I was invited to a Reception in Madrid, bringing together organisations and individuals across Europe who support the Foundation. I was thrilled to be formally recognised as an "ambassador for Alalay" for my work over the years and asked to share a few words. It was a very emotional moment for me personally as Friends of Alalay has also recently reached our 20th anniversary! It offered a great opportunity for me to highlight publically that our work has only been possible through the support, both financial and in many other ways, from our very loyal supporters. I therefore wanted to once again thank you all – for supporting my charity and improving the lives of the children at Alalay for so many years. Without each and every one of you so little would have been achieved.

A fellow "ambassador" was a young man – Limbert, who had left the streets and spent his own childhood at Alalay. He now lives and works in Germany with his wife and composed a beautiful song, which he played at the Reception, alongside covering some fond memories of his time at Alalay.



Afterwards Limbert and I spoke and laughed together, sharing stories about the head lice infestations, ants in the stale bread (a reality of the distant past), and volunteers secretly trying to sneak sweets into their rooms (thinking that the kids didn't know... they did!). He was so positive, with a calm, quietly confident presence, and thanked Alalay for being his "family" – a wonderful reminder of why I do this work, and once more why I'm so grateful for your help.

Annie Syrett-Jones, Bristol – October 2025

www.alalay.co.uk