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The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad **Bolivia**

February 2013



Editor's Letter

Hi all ,

Welcome to the February edition of our Newsletter for Projects Abroad Bolivia. This newsletter aims to inform all ur volunteers with news and information about the latest happenings in Projects Abroad Bolivia, and the country in general.

We encourage everyone to join us in making it interesting and exciting by sending in your own written articles and pictures of your experiences here with us. Your stories and pictures will help others to understand and learn about Bolivia.

Feel free to join us in our Facebook group so we can be in touch, before, during and after your trip to Bolivia!.

If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact bolivia@projects-abroad.org

Best wishes from Bolivia!



Carmen Herbas
Country Director

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Credits

Thijs van Dorssen
Care, three months, Netherlands

“Dit hier is de kleuterklas, jouw taak is om ze blij te maken, veel succes”, zei Fredy vlak voor hij er weer vandoor ging. Daar stond ik dan, tussen een grote groep Spaans sprekende kleuters. “Tio, tio (wat ‘oom’ betekent in het Spaans)!” schreeuwden ze allemaal in koor. Allemaal tegelijk wilden ze met me spelen, wat natuurlijk een onmogelijke opdracht is. Als ik bij een kind weg ging om met een ander te spelen, dan ging er weer iemand huilen omdat ik geen tijd voor die ene had. Uiteindelijk kwam het er op neer dat ik een puzzel maakte terwijl ik balspelletjes speelde en vechtende kinderen uit elkaar haalde en tegelijkertijd ook nog eens met dinosaurussen en poppen speelde. En dit allemaal terwijl er allerlei kleuters me aan het beklimmen waren. In het begin was dit erg slopend voor mij, maar wel erg leuk en mooi om te doen.

Na mijn ervaring in de kleuterklas (die maar een paar dagen duurde) begon ik met lesgeven in karate aan tienermeisjes. Erg zelfverzekerd waren ze niet en het duurde dan ook een tijdje voordat ze geloofden dat ook zij toch echt wel een beetje karate konden. Naarmate ik zelf meer Spaans leerde ging het ook een stuk makkelijker. Zoals het er nu voorstaat is er een kleine groep dames overgebleven waarbij het bij sommige heel erg goed gaat; je kan echt zien dat ze meer zelfvertrouwen hebben gekregen.

Na mijn werk als karateleraar ga ik naar mijn eigen casita (huisje) om daar met de kinderen te spelen. Soms leer ik ze een beetje Engels of speel ik een potje schaak met ze. Er zijn ook genoeg andere spelletjes die je met ze kan doen. Op de bank zitten en tv kijken met de kinderen doet ook al veel voor ze. Af en toe is er niet veel werk te doen in mijn eigen casita en dan ga ik een potje voetbal spelen met wat jongens. Erg leuk (of niet, want ze zijn allemaal beter dan mij, haha). Een potje volleybal wil soms ook nog wel eens gebeuren. En ik heb nog heel wat leuke activiteiten in mijn hoofd die ik met ze wil gaan doen!



In het weeshuis is er ook een grote speeltuin. De speeltuin is echt helemaal naar de gallemiesen, dus ik en een groep andere vrijwilligers hebben ons sponsorgeld bij elkaar gelegd om de speeltuin op te knappen. Hoe het er nu voor staat is dat we het grote klimhuis een likje verf aan het geven zijn. Volgend plan is om het klimrek een nieuw net te geven. Ook gaan we de plekken waar schommels horen te hangen ook echt voorzien van schommels. De wipwappen en de glijbanen krijgen natuurlijk ook een opknapbeurt. Als er nog genoeg geld is gaan we de kleine zwembadjes opknappen.

Ik heb dus ontzettend veel te doen in Ciadudela maar het is echt genieten om zo met van alles en nog wat bezig te zijn!



Samantha Logue
2 months, Care, USA

CATD (Centro de Acogida Temporal para personas con Discapacidad) is a special needs orphanage for children in Cochabamba, Bolivia. There are about 30 children in total with the youngest child being about 8 months old and the oldest child being about 19 years old. All of the children have a variety of physical and mental disabilities and vary as far as their ability to communicate. I started working at CATD a little over a month ago and although in the beginning it was very hard to adjust I can honestly say that now I wouldn't want to work with any other project.

With any work place there is the good and the bad. The bad about CATD is that they lack resources and staff to promote a healthy and beneficial environment for the children. Many of the children at CATD are unable to read and write, name basic colors, and don't even know how to count to 10. The children are pretty much left each day to entertain themselves, which would be okay if they had materials to do so but CATD has almost nothing for the children to do or play with. Most of the children play with garbage they find, dig in the mud, or swing on the rusty swing set. The children that are unable to walk are usually left in cribs for most of the day or are stuck sitting in their wheelchairs and staring at the other children. Most of the staff is not very educated as far as working with children with special needs is concerned and although they do the best they can. What CATD really needs is staff members who are educated and patient with the children and understand the disability that each child has. It is very frustrating to watch the way that some of the staff handles the children when it really isn't the child's fault that they are acting that way. I feel that if the staff were more educated it would be a less frustrating environment for them as well as the children.

The best thing about CATD is the children. Every single one of them is honestly amazing in their own special way. I have fallen in love with almost every child and everyday am impressed by their high spirits and smiling faces even though life has dealt them a pretty tough hand. Most of the children's favourite activity is sitting on my lap or getting a hug. You can feel how much they cherish someone showing that they care about them. Another good part about CATD is the two physical therapist that work there, Nadia and Neigba. They work very hard, with very limited resources, to



help the children with physical disabilities. They have both gone to University and received their degrees and they are just a small example of how great the staff could be with some education. Even though they both have physical therapy degrees there is still a lot about special needs that they don't know, but they are more than willing to learn. For instance I have been teaching them about Autism and how to work with the 6 boys at CATD who have the disorder and although there is a tremendous lack of resources which makes it hard, Nadia and Neigba's eagerness to learn and the fact they care so much about the children really makes me want to help.

Working at CATD, although it hasn't been easy, has been one of the best experiences of my life. I have been inspired to do more once I receive my degree as a Speech Pathologist and I have been inspired on a personal level as well. There is nothing more rewarding than making the children at CATD smile and laugh and hear them shout your name when you walk in the door in the morning. As I said before I wouldn't pick any other project to work with, mainly because CATD really does need volunteers to help them. They are under staffed and are majorly lacking resources. I don't even feel that a volunteer at CATD has to have prior knowledge or experience working with children with special need. More than anything a volunteer at CATD just needs to be happy and loving with the children and trust me they will welcome you with open arms. If you really want an experience that will change your life for the better and also the lives of children in need, please don't hesitate to volunteer at CATD in Cochabamba, Bolivia, I promise you won't regret it.



Ongoing projects - Donation

Donation for Ciudadela

Mariel Torrez
Desk Officer, Bolivia

This was a great month for Ciudadela Orphanage's children because they received donations from different parts of the world thanks to three volunteers, two from Netherlands and one from Australia, that generously fundraised among their friends and family before their arrival.

Thanks guys on behalf of those children (Including the other volunteers who helped to execute these initiatives)!

Thijs van Dorssen - Ciudadela's playground paint work
Arley Plush and Laura Jansen – furniture and clothes for children

Enjoy the pics!



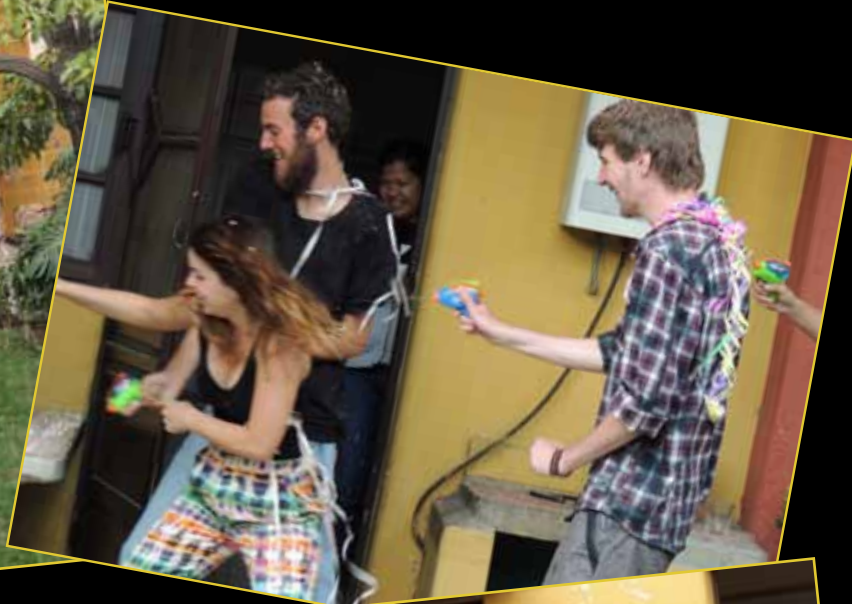


When you talk about Carnival with a local in Bolivia that person will probably tell you, with a big smile on his face, that this is a one month celebration that changes the whole country's mood for the better.

Our volunteers could "taste" a little bit of the Bolivian Carnival during the first two Thursdays of February, when we threw a surprise "Comrades" and "Comadres" party for them.

There was music, water fights, food and a lot of joy.... Enjoy the pics!





Credits

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Thank you to everyone who has helped bring about this month's issue of the Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Bolivia. If you would like to contribute your experiences, stories, photos or anything else to the next edition then please send them to: bolivia@projects-abroad.org

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