

ProjectsAbroad

The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad **Bolivia**



Editor's Letter



Carmen Herbas
Country Director

Hi all ,

Welcome to the July 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!

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Volunteer Stories

Arts & Technology student gains valuable experience in photography and media while volunteering in Bolivia

Ximena Noya
Journalism supervisor

21-year-old Davied Meerstra, an Arts & Technology student at Saxion University in Enschede, decided to leave the Netherlands for five months for a different kind of life in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Davied set out to complete his internship in Photography and Media Strategy and gain some professional experience by volunteering at the Projects Abroad Journalism Project. "Volunteering has always inspired me because you'll learn so much about the local culture and you are really getting involved. For my internship I wanted to go abroad. The combination of volunteering and my internship was a perfect combination."

Davied spent his 5 month stay working a Photography collective called El Cuarto, a nonprofit organization that promotes the development of photography as art, culture and education for the community of Cochabamba. "Because El Cuarto is a nonprofit organization they don't have the resources to hire professionals. As a media student I could make a difference and be part of this great initiative."

Davied's main role was helping to develop the organization's website, design and all the imagery to represent the group in the future: "My main task was developing a platform where the photographers can showcase their work and inspire others who are interested in photography. The platform is also for announcements about new activities and expositions and will create, together with social media, a community of people who are interested in photography."



Among his day-to-day work at the collective, Davied also had the opportunity to help prepare and curate exhibitions for the weekly photography show at a local cultural pub. He selected and curated photographs for the exhibition, along with showcasing his own work, and also had the chance to meet local amateur and professional photographers. "So far the exhibition was my most remarkable experience here, because I saw and met many people interested in photography and I had a real interaction with people who came to see the presentation of the photographers."

Apart from his work at the Journalism Project, Davied also enjoyed travelling and seeing the beautiful Bolivian countryside: "One of the most interesting places I visited was the Salar de Uyuni salt flats, it was spectacular."

After 5 months in Bolivia, Davied believes he gained invaluable experience: "I think my work here has made a difference because I was part of the process in developing a means for local photographers to have the chance to spread their work and reach the public, showing their work as a collective."

Retratos en la noche de los museos

Zabalaga
Jordán
Estrada
Parra
Osorio
Meerstra
Ergueta



Sábado 18 de mayo, 19:00

Cazona de Mayorazgo

Av. Simón López entre Av. Melchor Perez



Ongoing Projects

For those who have been following our TripBlog closely, you must have realized that our music program has been strengthened by the arrival of volunteers from different parts of the world in the last couple of weeks, and all of us have been able to see a big improvement on the musical abilities of Ciudadela's children, one of the orphanages where we work.

The younger children started singing in a choir, and the female teen group began to develop more confidence on themselves as musicians, so when the music volunteers were asked if they would like to participate on a big concert to be held in Sacaba, the answer was unanimous: "yes, we'll be ready"

Music Program – The big gig

Mariel Torrez
Desk Officer, Bolivia



The day of the presentation arrived and everything that could have gone wrong happened! A flat tire had to be fixed at the last minute, a special permission to take out the little children was finally obtained after some stressful hours of waiting, and, on top of that, a girl got stage fright, but despite everything, somehow, it all worked out.

The children's choir, the teen group, and the music volunteers delivered a great performance -including that girl that suffered from a panic attack- in front of two hundred people to say the least.

The public was enchanted, and we, our course, couldn't have been more proud of them all!



Ongoing Projects

Volunteers that have worked with special needs children say that there is no experience as difficult or rewarding as working with these kids.

It doesn't matter if you teach them how to feed themselves, move rhythmically with the same old song or even tie their own shoes. Believe me, that's really something! So when we heard about the last activity held in one of these placements, we thought that it was worthwhile to share that with you.

This time Music and Occupational Therapy volunteers from different projects worked together to take the musical group of Ciudadela, one the orphanages that we work with, to Maria Cristina, another local orphanage, but for special needs children.

The idea was to use music as a connector among these children, and give them the opportunity to interact with each other.

It's enough to say that Maria Cristina's children were really happy when the merry tunes of Ciudadela's group began to reach their ears. The children with mental disabilities that usually don't move stood up and started to dance around while others clapped and grabbed some tambourines and maracas to play along the music.

You could feel that they were pleased to receive us even though they couldn't articulate that thought.

Great job girls!

Volunteers involved in the activity:
Music program: Laurel Bigman (USA), Gabriela Rincon (USA), Jenna Mackle (UK), Nikki Stedman (AU)
Occupational Therapy program: Adela Merida (USA), Meaghan Yolles (USA)

Occupational Therapy and Music program – A fun afternoon in Maria Cristina!

Mariel Torrez
Desk Officer, Bolivia



Photos of the month





"Life is like a mirror.
Smile at it and it smiles back at you."
-- Peace Pilgrim



Credits

Editor: Mariel Torrez

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Rocío Triveño

Freddy Mita

Davied Meerstra

Ximena Noya

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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