Greetings from Cochabamba,

Welcome 2019! The past few months have been busy - wrapping up summer vacations and getting back into the swing of a new school year. In this update, we want to share some of the highlights from the past few months, as well as some current health challenges a few of our kids are facing.

We hope you enjoy catching up with our children and programs. For more frequent updates, be sure to follow us on Facebook.

Paz y Bendiciones,

The kids, staff and volunteers of Niños con Valor

*Please note, for legal reasons and confidentiality, all children’s names have been changed and photos of children under 18-years-old have been modified to protect their identities.

High School Grads!

They grow up so fast !!!

As we wrapped up 2018, three of our girls graduated from high school (Jesica, Evelyn and Adriana). We are so proud of them and how they have been working hard to their new goals. Even though they have been on vacation, a couple of them have been working and looking into their options for the future. We are excited to see where life will take them!
Urgent Health Needs

When we opened Pedacito de Cielo in 2008, we made a decision that would have a major impact on all aspects of our organization in the future. Initially, that decision was to integrate children living with HIV into our residential programs. However, this quickly expanded to include a much wider variety of medical needs, both due to the often compound needs experienced by our children living with HIV, and to the fact that very few organizations in Bolivia providing residential care are willing to accept children with serious medical conditions. The main reason other organizations avoid opening their homes to these children is to avoid the human, financial and emotional resources required - often for the long haul.

This decision has brought many highs and lows. In 2014, despite living nearly 2 years longer than the doctor’s anticipated, our little Alvaro passed away due to his many health chronic health needs. Yet we’ve also seen children like Linda and Marta - pictured below - beat the odds and thrive despite initial negative prognosis.

Despite our best efforts to anticipate the costs associated with providing healthcare for so many serious cases, including a significant increase in funds designated for healthcare in 2019, complications arise that require urgent (and often expensive) intervention.

Here are a few of the kids who have major medical needs being responded to or up and coming later in 2019:
**Linda** just underwent her 4th major brain surgery in 12 months, and it currently back home recuperating. She suffers from several chronic needs, the most urgent being her recurring hydrocephalus, which is being managed through a cerebral shunt.

We are hopeful that Linda will not have to return to the hospital any time soon, yet are aware that her conditions will demand regular follow up and possible future surgeries.

**Marta** arrived and was given one of the most unfavorable prognosis that we’ve ever received. Doctors doubted that she would ever walk or talk, yet love and attention quickly proved them wrong.

In addition to some minor neurological difficulties, Marta has a very weak immune system, and last week entered hospital for a condition called purpura and poor kidney function. While it is always hard to see our children in pain, of all our kids Marta is the one most apt to smile through her difficulties (and ask when she can have pizza!)
**Fabian** requires auditory evoked potentials to determine is auditory capacity and to help diagnose with greater accuracy his learning disability.

This will help us and his teachers develop a more individualized plan to maximize his potential as he grows up.

**Claudia** underwent a major operation in November 2015 to correct her Tetralogy of Fallot, a congenital heart defect that unfortunately was left untreated too long before her arrival.

Recent tests have revealed that Claudia requires an additional surgery to replace the shunt that was placed in 2015, and until this is possible, requires anticoagulants and regular testing to monitor her situation.
Natalia underwent a major mastoidectomy in 2016 to repair damage in her ear canal. The operation was a success, however the surgeon suggested that a future surgery might be required on her other ear.

Recent symptoms led to a series of tests that suggest a high likelihood that Natalia will require an additional intervention later in 2019. She is doing well, but is frustrated at her hearing disability and how it effects her studies and relationships, and hopes to someday be able to have a softband or cochlear implant to provide a more permanent solution.

If you are interested in helping us meet the needs of one or more of these children, please consider donating online today!

Program Updates

House Trips
Before we started with vacations, the kids and the Tias from each of the houses decided to earn money to go on vacation and each house sold lunches and cakes. The boys earned money to go to Chapare while the girls earned enough money to go to Punata and Tarata. Everyone had a blast during their vacations and it was even better because they earned it on their own.

Christmas!
Christmas is always a wonderful time of the year and here in Cochabamba this is definitely the case! Our houses were decorated beautifully and on Christmas Eve all of our kids and staff were in Corazon de Pastor for a day filled with activities, reunion between siblings, tons of presents and even more laughter and excitement!
The boys in Chapare hanging out with a monkey and a beautiful view.

We started Christmas with a dance party outside and little Fabian was one of our favorites to watch!

Elias and Pedro looking out over the river at the campsite.

Zamora waiting patiently to open her stocking.

Alarico jumping into the pool at the campsite.

Zuleika and Alarico opening their stockings.
Elias taking a walk in the coconut field.

Linda posing for the camera after opening her stocking.

The boys walking around collecting coconuts.

Tia Carla helping Wanda sort out her presents.

Tio Carlos teaching the boys how to know when there’s coconut water in a coconut.

Tia Yessica and Agustina are all smiles for the camera on this wonderful day.
Elias and Alarico having a blast in the pool.

Tia Lilliam and Luis with his presents.

Tia Milenka supporting Diego in the pool.

Tia Vicki and Karina after Karina received her presents.

The girls walking back to the van after seeing a castle in Punata.

Tia Evelin and Ramiro with his hands full with his presents.
Wanda and Marta sitting on the steps of a castle.

Mari in a wheelbarrow in Tia Norma's house.

Tia Alejandra giving Alarico his presents.

Tia Carolina and Evelyn with her presents.
Carla exploring a corn maze.

Tia Pamela and Cynthia are all smiles about Cynthia's present.

Cristina checking out the view in Punata.

Manuel was supper happy to receive his presents from Tia Mari.

Bryssa helping Sandra swim in the pool in Tarata.

Tomas loved his guitar that he received for Christmas.

All of our sweet girls with the Tias for a group shot in front of the castle.

Sisters Paulina and Martina opening presents together and with big smiles for their reunion.
BCF Team

We started our new year off with our first team of 2019, a group from the Bolivian Children Foundation of Canada. The week with them was filled with new experiences, like making jewelry with metal wires, making fabric houses, having an animal party and so much more! There was a lot of laughter, art, and confetti with our wonderful team and we are grateful to have started the year with them.

Moda Loca Baby!

As a way to say goodbye to our first team of the year and summer vacations, we brought back our annual Moda Loca! It was a day filled with dancing, painted faces, colorful hairs and crazy outfit that we showed off on our personal runway. This is a tradition that we will be continuing for a long time!
Bemabe, Zamora and Luis reading together while waiting for the team to get to CDP.

Luis showing off his dance moves.

Tia Yessica also got involved in the crafts and helped out Agustina.

The middle aged girls of CDP and CAC prepared a dance for their runway walk.

Tia Amy giving pointers to the girls on a project.

Gloria and Jimena in of Day of the Dead makeup.
Tia Pam helping the smaller girls.

The older girls of CDP showing off their outfits.

Tia Vaneesa watching over the boys as they work hard on the craft for the day.

Tia Ellie teaching how to dance the Wobble for her runway walk with Mariela and Bryssa.

The team were so wonderful they even built a hydroponic system for Corazón del Pastor.

Jhoselin and Adriana with Claudia walking down the runway.
Jimena is in her element with the art project.

Fabian in part of his costume showing off some moves.

Tia Christina working hard alongside Jhoselin.

Tia Lilliam with Greta and Alarico during the dance party.

Tia Vaneesa, Tia Rachel and Agustina are very focused on their work.

Tia Carla and Tia Vicki looking very fashion crazy with all the smaller girls.
Tia Christina and Pedro taking a break from soccer to do some chalk art.

Sweet Cristina dressed as Frida Kahlo.

Tia Amy and Zamora having a nice walk together at the park.

Martin looking like the sweetest lion.

We had a very intense game of Flag Tag and Tia Christina and Enrique were experts at it.

Alarico as Captain America.

Tia Sadee and Martin looking super cute for Moda Loca.

Tia Carla with Frida Kahlo and Mari with the boys dancing in the back.

Introducing Gloria...
A new member of the family!

Gloria is a new addition to our Sendero program. She transferred from another home when she turned 18 and has integrated with the other girls quickly. Gloria is sweet, smart, and artistic in any activity she tries. She also has a calmness about her that has really benefited those around her. She is a young lady with a big sweet tooth for lollipops and an amazing personality that is open to everyone! If you are interested in supporting the Sendero scholarship program that will support Gloria and the other young women in the transition home, or would like to directly sponsor one of our younger children, please follow the link below:

If you would like to learn more about sponsorship, please visit our sponsorship page to learn how you can do so!