



Amigos de Potosí

# Documentary

stichting / fundación / foundation

Newsletter no. 15 | Dec. 2016

[WWW.AMIGOSDEPOTOSI.COM](http://WWW.AMIGOSDEPOTOSI.COM)



*Queridos Amigos,*

*Not all news is good news...But I'd like to share that with all of you as well. Sometimes it feels like I'm knee-deep in sluggish mud. When I get impatient, I keep telling myself that we are working in Bolivia, the poorest country in South America. In October I was in Potosí for 10 days on project visits and many meetings. Good for motivation: theirs and mine! Fortunately we are making progress and managing to get things done meanwhile.*

*You will only need six minutes to read this update about the developments, which sadly enough includes bad news as well: the vegetable hothouse at our project school is no more... Our dearest project had to give way. Another project is delayed. Why? This newsletter will give you the details. There is also a lot of good news to tell. And do watch the video of the music project at our school, it 'll lift your spirits again. It only needs a small amount of money to do wonderful things in Bolivia!*

*On behalf of the board of Foundation Amigos de Potosí I express the hope you will continue your friendship with us and I wish you a very happy and prosperous 2017.*

*Yours,*

*Margret Kamphuis*

## Ready to roll in Laja Tambo



Hurray for the electricity in Laja Tambo! They are waiting for just one thing in this hamlet: when will we start building the village centre with the school kitchen and toilets? The amiable new mayor, Jaime Fabián, is very happy with our project: Laja Tambo is taking off! This is our first project in which not only the community is participating, the local authorities also do their share with transportation of building materials and supervision. Another step forwards!

But they'll have to wait a little longer: we will need to select a contractor and deal with the mountain

of paperwork. It is fascinating to experience the way things work around here: one contractor even included the receipts of the electrical tools he owns. Our choice of the experienced contractor MGM is unanimous and he can start in December.

This project was made possible by gifts of Innerwheel Ambt Almelo, Spark Holding, the profits of our Benefit Party in 2015 and by Wilde Ganzen ([www.wildeganzen.nl](http://www.wildeganzen.nl))!

*read more on the next page >>*



### Latest news, December 5th: Laja Tambo on the roll!

The inhabitants, the mayor, councillors, technicians and others involved came together on December 5th to give the project its festive start. The contours of the building were drawn and with

the traditional ceremony of Ch'alla (in which a little alcohol is poured onto the building site) Pachamama (Mother Earth) was asked to grant permission and help for this building. The best of luck in this construction work!

### How the vegetable hothouse buckled under its own success!

In 2011 heavy weather completely demolished the plastic roof of the then vegetable hothouse of the country school 1. de Mayo San Ildefonso at the edge of Potosí. After a cry for help from the school we rebuilt the hothouse with a firm roof and other improvements. Unfortunately, fate struck again and the hothouse was hit by a torrent of rainwater flushing down the mountain, damaging it severely. Naturally we came to the rescue and not long after that the children could garden again to their hearts' content. Many rich harvests followed. In March 2016 to our disbelief and grief we received the news that the hothouse had to give way to the school extension. Wonderful though it is that the school is doing so well that it needs extending

and that the local authority provides the funding for it, how sad this has to be at the expense of the hothouse.

Meanwhile the hothouse has been deconstructed carefully and the building materials and tools stored for reuse. The school will be extended quite a bit, with toilets, computer facilities and a dining room, classrooms for secondary education and covered sports facilities. All these improvements make the school leap forward in a single bound to be a school that suddenly counts. We are not a hundred percent certain but assume that our vegetable hothouse project, our music project and all our contributions in sports gear, medication and bandages may have contributed something to the school's positive image and subsequent growth and to the wellbeing and awareness of the pupils.

We'd rather show you a happy photo from our archives of proud children with their own home-grown tomatoes, than sad photos of the building site where the hothouse once stood...





### Music project: the day of their lives!

*La marcha (the march)*

For months the schoolchildren practised the new rhythms and melodies with endless patience and optimism and agonized over learning musical notes. August 5th was the day: their first concert outside of school! They were a bit nervous but all went well. With music teacher Luis the children marched through the quarter while making music, cheered on by parents and teachers. And on August 17, Bolivia's national holiday (the day of Bolivia's flag) the school orchestra, expanded meanwhile to 36 (!) members hopped on board the bus to hold a festive parade in the centre of Potosí and were even immortalized on

television. What a moment of triumph for these children who never really matter, from a school at the edge of the big city, where no one counts.... But this day they do! They played with great dedication and self-confidence, from the moment they got out of the bus until they had to get back in. How music can make this happen.... The glowed with pride and it was a day never to be forgotten.

Be happy with them when watching the videofilm: [the march](#).

### New project Caracoles delayed by mining activities.

Thanks also to Ger and Paul van Lier's successful sponsored bicycle tour to Marrakesh in August 2016 with proceeds of no less than € 3.895 we now have built up sufficient funding. So one thinks: let's roll! But no.... Because of local mining activities the situation has changed and the project is delayed. A new plan needs to be developed with different construction techniques for the water tank (among others with a pump since gravitation is no longer usable) and the centre's walls and rainwater drainage must be restored by the mining company (Manquiri) responsible for the altered circumstances.

On my work visit it appears that no progress has been made and we venture into 'the lion's mouth', as they say over here: we visit the company and explain the need for speedy restoration. Our engineer Franklin develops a new plan meanwhile and we are now waiting for Manquiri. Hopefully the company will honour her promises quickly.

### New project: healthy schoolchildren.

The Red Cross has made available volunteers and dental personnel in order to weigh and measure primary school San Ildefonso's 153 pupils in order to determine their physical development status. In addition the children will get anti worm treatments and fluor treatments of their teeth. The costs are 1 € per child.

### Colegio Pichincha among the winners!

In 2013 Amigos de Potosí donated 20 new computers with internet tot the secondary school "Pinchincha". The multimedia centre is used frequently and gratefully and one pupil (Alvaro Choque) has even excelled in computer science so that he went on to compete in the finals of the national computer science Olympiad in La Paz.



## New volunteers in Potosí!

**Gris Ayllón Arias** is working as a receptionist in the hotel Santa Teresa, opposite of the convent of the same name and meets many foreign groups. She is very involved in the work of the foundation in order to give Potosí's children a better youth. She is an enthusiastic promoter of the foundation's work in Potosí, with tourists and possible partners for cooperation.

*Bienvenida Gris!*

**Hector Martinez** is an experienced controller who will assist Enrique, our coordinator in financial affairs. His help is also very welcome.

*Bienvenido Hector!*



## Greatest drought in Bolivia since 25 years

Meanwhile, Bolivia is suffering under a great drought and the drinking water in many cities (such as La Paz and El Alto) has been rationed. It is the greatest drought since 25 years and because of the water shortage in large parts of the country the government has declared an emergency situation on November 21st. The government has released funds to compensate farmers and other Bolivians for damages as a result of the water shortage.

The drought has struck 125.000 families and brought danger to 290.000 hectares of agrarian lands.

### Will you help realize their plans?

*Please make your donation payable to BIC: RABONL2U IBAN NL28 RABO 01622.37.871, or through Pay Pal to: Foundation Amigos de Potosí,*

*[click here to donate online with iDEAL or Pay Pal](#)*

*Any contribution is welcome! Thanks for your gift and participation. If the amount necessary for a project has been reached, we will make your contribution available for another one of our projects.*

*Muchas gracias!*