

# Bolivian Quaker Education Fund

## OUR MISSION:

to strengthen ties between Andean Quakers and those of North America and Europe through programs that:

- enhance the educational opportunities of Andean Friends
- nurture their service work
- strengthen their schools, and
- bring this work to the attention of Friends in North America and Europe

11253 Boston Road East Concord NY 14055

## Reflections from "Realized Rubén" a visiting Bolivian educator

*By Rubén Hilari*

Before I start writing about my internship (at Oakwood Friends School), I want to say I am very thankful to BQEF, to BQE-Bo, to the Oakwood community for this great chance. I cannot believe that I am in America; it is like in a dream and in the films. I believe that God is amazing, friendly - and U.S. Friends are, too. In the last AVP workshop, I chose Realized Ruben as my positive adjective name. ("Realizar" in Spanish means to fulfill or carry out/bring into being.) I feel realized thanks to God and thanks to YOU.

I think Americans are developed in many ways. Today everybody communicates by internet. It is amazing the technology in my surroundings....I am shocked to see everything here. I love the Quaker education at Oakwood.... Americans are very responsible ....They are hard workers. I love to work hard. I like to see that in the school all the community works and studies, trying to live in "SPICE" (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, and Equality, the Quaker values).

### *More on Rubén:*

Dear Newton,  
...Rubén Hilari has made a wonderful adjustment to campus

life and is, in every way, a terrific asset to the school community.

This morning he introduced himself at our special "Parents' Week" collection and performed



*Rubén and Jeremy Robbins play Bolivian music*

three pieces of Bolivian music on three different instruments. He was enthusiastically received. Getting to know Rubén has been a delight. Thank you.

*an Oakwood staff member*

Meanwhile, at Carolina Friends School Alicia Lucasi has connected with a group known as Alicia's Friends - a network of 40 or so offering housing and other support.

You can read more (in Spanish) about Alicia and Rubén's experiences at their blogs:

<http://www.alyluc.blogspot.com/> and  
<http://www.rubenhilari.blogspot.com/>

## Real Life and Quaker Ideals:

Quaker Education workshops for teachers and administrators are planned for December 5th & 6th, outside the city of La Paz. Topics include "Analysis and Reflection on the practical life of Quakerism", "What does a Quaker school have to offer?", "Where are we going?", and "Real-life Scenarios - how can we respond with Quaker ideals?"

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# BQEF

## BQEF News

BQEF is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in the state of New York, NY.

Edited by Vickey Kaiser, Newton Garver, Shelley Cochran, and Barbara Flynn. Comments and suggestions welcome, please send them to [office@bqef.org](mailto:office@bqef.org).

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## Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP):

(from a report by Jorge Jardin (Garden George))

### Joy, Respect, and Gratitude

The group of facilitators in Bolivia has been expanded by the Training of Facilitators which took place in June. All of the new facilitators are of great skill. I felt full of respect and gratitude while observing the group, watching their growth during the workshop, their flowering and bearing fruit. I watched them organize agendas, lead sessions, and facilitate exercises. I watched them experiment. They shared discoveries and taught me with their observations. Now the AVP community in Bolivia has an inflow of new blood - creative, dynamic, and able to lead workshops responsibly.

The memory of our team meetings is of harmony, warmth and good humor. I still feel the joy bubbling in my heart.

Especially bright in my memory is the last meeting before heading to Sorata. I had spent one or two days organizing the AVP materials but still had some work to do. The group arrived and finished the work, [they] had affirmed their existence as a community, a living body, able to take both small and large things up in their collective hands.

### To Sow and Cultivate Peace

Several AVP facilitators and QST members participated in a meeting with local Prison Fellowship International volunteers to explore introducing AVP to the San Pedro prison in La Paz.

I felt inspired by the strength and the sacrifice of those brethren whose service it is to be with prisoners who are so easily forgotten behind prison walls.

The Franciscan community for Justice and Peace opened their doors to us during their monthly gathering for a one hour mini-AVP. The group was mixed, men and women of various ages, very hospitable and friendly, and appreciative of the experiences offered. I felt I was among brothers and sisters, joined in the love of our Father/Mother and in the shared call to sow and cultivate peace.

AVPers ("Pavistas") in Bolivia have arranged for the next workshop series in January 2009, beginning in Cochabamba, followed by La Paz & Santa Cruz. The Bolivian Alternatives to Violence Project has taken root and is flourishing.

*AVP Advanced workshop*



*Jorge Arauz, Mari Moreina, and 3 graduate facilitators from the La Paz training.*

## All the Students Bring Their Books!

from a report by Emma Condori, BQE-Bo English Program Coordinator

### Working Together

The four English teachers involved with the BQEF English program work as a supportive team. We meet once a month to discuss how the English classes are going at the three Quaker Schools. It is very helpful to be able to share situations and solutions with other English teachers.

Last July, three of us attended the 10th annual ALBA (Association Bi-national Centers of Latin America) Teachers' Convention held in Santa Cruz. During the three day event we attended several interesting and informative sessions. The workshops were conducted in English by native speakers, thus we were immersed in the language at an advanced level. Attending this gathering reinforced how to improve our teaching and our students' learning, and also reinforced our own English skills.

### They Put Their Hearts and Souls Into It

This year the English Program began with a new vision and mission. 95% of

the students now participate in this program, compared to 45-50% participation in 2007.

In September we held a talent show for participants from all three Quaker high schools. Each student chose from poetry, music, or drama. It was wonderful for them to be able to practice the language within a larger context - they really put their hearts and souls into it. The teachers and students all made it the most wonderful and interesting talent show that we have ever had.

The administrators of the three schools recognize the positive results of the English Program. At Los Amigos High School it has developed into one of the central academic subjects. All the students make sure to have their English books and they attend all the classes. And the other two school communities consider the English Program as the main tool for the students' success in the future.



*Mari Cruz and Ester Mamani of Colegio Emmanuel perform the poem "My Country" at the 2008 English Talent Show.*

## Hunkering Down

*How much of our spending does hope deserve?*

*by Newton Garver*

It is the best of times and it is the worst of times. The nation and world have been brightened by the US election, but trillions of dollars of wealth has disappeared, along with jobs and homes. With the economy uncertain, many folks are hunkering down, with "charitable giving" moving down on their list of spending priorities. Where does BQEF fit in?

Here are three things to bear in mind:

- A dollar spent in Bolivia buys 12 to 15 times as much in the way of education and supplies as it would in the US. In Bolivia a \$500 scholarship is like a \$6,000 scholarship here.
- BQEF is not fighting crisis but nourishing hope. How much of our spending does hope deserve?
- BQEF is strengthening Quakers in Bolivia, vastly increasing the chances that Quaker values will impact the development of that emerging nation.

BQEF will be part of my own hunkering down. Please give generously to help nourish these emerging hopes and Quaker values.

# *¡Feliz Navidad!*



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Internado:



*An art therapy group led by a volunteer*



*Maria and Yobana in the kitchen, where 4 simple meals are prepared daily. Maria will be working with a nutritionist to help ensure the students' dietary needs are met.*

It's near the end of the school year in Bolivia, where at the Internado they are already taking applications for the few openings expected next year.

In July the students returned from their winter vacation, eager to resume their studies. Some had spent the time with their families; most went to work, either harvesting crops a day's bus ride from Sorata, or in the mines. Mining work often means crawling into small tunnels less than 2 feet in height to chisel out ore. The students' hope is always to earn enough to pay for school supplies, new clothes and possibly some soccer equipment. Some fared well; others barely covered their travel expenses.

The Yearly Meeting of Santidad Amigos was held in Sorata in late October and all the internado students attended. Also in October, they installed a laundry tub in the patio of the internado. They consider this a great convenience, though they will probably still need to take large items like blankets down to the river to wash.

The Internado budget is severely strained by the dramatic increase in food prices. If you'd like to help fund meals or other expenses, please click on the Donate tab at our website, [www.bqef.org](http://www.bqef.org), or mark your donation "Internado" on the enclosed return envelope.

**Please use the enclosed envelope to support Bolivian Friends' education or make a donation via our website [www.bqef.org](http://www.bqef.org).**