



Bolivia Cultura

“Creating a bridge to understanding Bolivia and her people”

April 2009



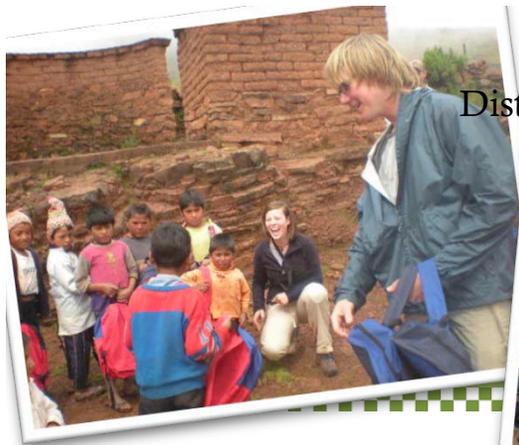
Toro Toro Backpack Distribution

Dear Friends and Supporters,

We are pleased to announce the completion our backpack distribution project! As most of you know, we were unable to raise our usual, yearly support for a Christmas project. Instead, we decided to use the donations we received to buy school supplies for schools in Toro Toro, a small village about five hours from Cochabamba. The goal of this year’s plan was to deliver backpacks containing school supplies to the students of the small schools surrounding this village.



Top Picture: Alan making trek to first school. Bottom Picture: Bill getting the backpacks ready at the office. Right Picture: “The Team” before the departure from Cochabamba



Distribution at the first school:



The week prior to delivery two of our volunteers, Julia and Bill, prepared the supplies by packing pencils, pens, notebooks, erasers, colored pencils, journals, rulers, and sharpeners into the backpacks for the long trek through the mountains.

The journey began on a sunny, Thursday afternoon. We managed to fit all the backpacks and our four volunteers for the project into our four-wheel drive vehicle for the journey ahead. Toro Toro is a village deep in the mountains that is known for its beautiful scenery, spectacular canyon, caves and dinosaur fossils. It is still quite un-touched by the

western world because of its remote location. The road to Toro Toro from Cochabamba is a winding path of rocks laid into the mountain. It crosses rivers, streams, and other obstacles making it an interesting drive. Luckily, we successfully made it to our destination on Thursday night.

On Friday, we woke up bright and early to the extraordinary scenery Toro Toro has to offer. We prepared the backpacks one last time and began our expedition deeper into the mountains to our first school. Although sometimes it

seemed unlikely we would make it through the paths that are considered “roads,” we somehow managed. For the first school, we parked our truck on the side of the road with no school or building in site. We then grabbed the packs and made a half-hour trek on foot through the mountains. Eventually we arrived at a small school with about eighteen students who live nearby in the mountains. They hardly spoke Spanish (since they speak Quechua instead) and were obviously tentative to approach the gringos that had

An unforgettable experience...

arrived. Despite their reservations, they gladly accepted the new backpacks. It was an unforgettable experience to see these children who live so remotely. In the words of our volunteer Bill, “that was mind-blowing.”

The third and second schools were much easier to access. The second school was actually visible from the path through the mountain and had about twenty-two students. These students were thrilled to have visitors and receive new backpacks!



Distribution to the second school:



After the supplies were distributed, they sang one song in Quechua followed by another song in Spanish, since they are working to learn both languages in their school.

Our final stop was a third school reasonably close to Toro Toro. When we arrived at this school, we were shocked to discover there were over 100 students! As they watched us expectantly, we split up the backpacks and school supplies so that all the students could receive some new materials. It was quite the experience trying to distribute the supplies to all of the excited children who were flocking towards us!

As we made our way back to Cochabamba, we handed out the remaining backpacks to the children who live near the road. As soon as they saw we had backpacks for them, they came running with big smiles on their faces!

Although you were not able to accompany us on this memorable experience, without your support, this whole trip would have been impossible. As we distributed each backpack to every smiling child, it was as if you were there with us making a difference too. Thank you so much for your support in this project. There are now over 200 children with new school supplies to enhance their education and their future!



Third School Distribution: