



December 2003

Dear Valle Hermoso Web page readers:

A lot has happened lately. First, in July the Valle Hermoso children had a winter vacation in Chapare which they all thought was excellent!!! They want to repeat that again next year!

The whole month of November was exam time in the schools here. All of the children passed their exams in the various academic areas. They are growing up and time is going fast! Soon they will be adults.

We have recently made improvements to the courtyard at Valle Hermoso. We now have beautiful grass growing and gravel walkways. (See picture below.)



It is getting nice! When the rainy season starts, we will plant roses, palm trees and fruit trees. The wall around Valle Hermoso was also painted. Valle Hermoso gets nicer and nicer each day!

We have had three parent meetings in the last two weeks. This is because not all of the parents can come on the same day. Most of the parents live in the Cochabamba department, which is big.



The parent meeting went very well. After the day was over I felt like I had passed an exam with flying colors! We have offered an opportunity to the parents to come in March and take courses at Valle Hermoso. We will provide basic, practical courses. The themes are: hygiene, health, management of finances, etc. All of the parents were interested in coming.

While the children were waiting for Christmas and January vacation, we started some art projects. The first one was to make a Christmas card for their parents. That was a great success!



We also received notice that Sonia and Victor, the current house parents, will soon be leaving their position at Valle Hermoso. They feel that it is time to find another position that will allow them to spend more time with their own young children. We are very grateful for their work at Valle Hermoso and all the love they have shown the children. We bid them farewell with the best wishes for their future! We hope we can find the right person or couple to replace them. It will not be an easy search!

In February, a tutor will begin working regularly with the children. He will help them with homework, art projects and assist in school meetings. That will be a wonderful help for me and the future house parents.

We have started the process of getting the proper legal paperwork for the Valle Hermoso property. Since the Home is in Sacaba, we must go to the office of the Mayor of Sacaba to do all of the paperwork. Unfortunately, the Mayor's office staff changes every year, and sometimes every few months. Now we have received new instructions from the new Mayor. This means that everything that was done before today is of no value. We hope that this time everything will work out smoothly so that we can get the paperwork completed.

This Christmas, the Valle Hermoso children will go to Oruro. In Oruro, there is another Children's home which was founded by Berit and Mindor Stokset of Norway. The children from Valle Hermoso and Oruro know each other and are excited about the chance to meet again. Valle Hermoso will be in Oruro for a week. They will go to the zoo, museums, swim in the hot springs, explore the downtown area, play together, and much more.

After they come back to Cochabamba, their parents or extended family members will come and take them home for the month of January. We will use this time to refurbish things at the Children's Home, set up the year's activities program, and give the Home personnel some rest!

This will also give the children and their families a unique time to be together. It is so seldom that family members come to visit the kids. Sometimes, they wonder why no one comes to visit them. They start to think they have been forgotten or that their families don't love them anymore. It is heartbreaking to hear them ask these questions. However, now we are beginning to be more organized and I believe we will have an even better year next year. We will do our best for these kids.

We from Valle Hermoso wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Aija Ruka Torre

