



# Sustainable Bolivia

Newsletter

October 2011 - Issue 8

## Director's Message

As the Northern Hemisphere begins to enter into autumn, the land of eternal spring is officially entering the spring season – bringing with it hotter days and a city peppered with the violet blooms of jacaranda trees.

Sustainable Bolivia has had another successful quarter with lots of volunteers working on impressive projects, including one project at an orphanage made possible by a donation that we used as a mini-grant competition. We have had several expert speakers give presentations on topics critical in Bolivian politics and culture right now – topics that include the TIPNIS and the water situation in Cochabamba. We were joined by another talented artist-in-residence, a wood sculptor from Germany. In addition, we welcomed J.R. Killigrew, a sustainability expert who is working to help Sustainable Bolivia develop its own sustainability report. We opened some new doors on community and global levels, and we have closed some doors, as the Sucre volunteer house will no longer be home to our volunteers or our get-togethers on the terrace.

As we enter into the final quarter of 2011, we are motivated by all the success and positive efforts that we have seen this year. Thank you for your continued support of Sustainable Bolivia and its inspiring projects. We could not have made it this far without you. We hope you enjoy catching up on what has been going on in Cochabamba.

¡Gracias! Make it a great day,

Executive Director, Michelle Gross

## Volunteers Making an Impact

In July, August, and September, SB disbursed the following mini-grants:

Asya Tsarkova - Hogar de Sueños; \$150  
Maciej Krzyzewski - Movimiento Sonrisa; \$75  
Marc Hermel (from Stefan Mansk) - Hogar de Sueños; \$75  
Elizabeth Drobnick-Smith - Centro de Salud Pacata; \$225  
Robyn Lambert - PAAC; \$247  
Mikayla Losier - PAI Tarpuy; \$75  
Allison Covey - Centro de Salud España; \$150  
Jared Hutchinson - CADEPIA; \$85  
Vincent Burgmeier and Bairbre Doyle - Energetica; \$600  
Bianca Schulte - Hogar de Sueños; \$200  
Marc Hermel with funds from Stefan Mansk  
- Hogar de Sueños; \$225  
JF Brandon - Energética; \$300  
Stefan Mansk (from Charlotte Thomsen)  
- CECAM; \$263  
Lilian Mackay - Movimiento Sonrisa; \$60  
Michelle Rzepecki - Manuela Gandarillas; \$75  
Sara Napetschnig - Hogar de Sueños; \$75  
Alexander El Kheir - Mano a Mano; \$75  
Cynthia Ord - Performing Life; \$75

To read more about each project, please visit the [Mini-grant section](#) of the SB website.

## SB's Sustainability Intern

In July, SB brought in J.R. Killigrew as our first sustainability intern. J.R. has a background in film and has been studying sustainability and environmental management in a graduate program at Harvard University. His interest in combining these two worlds of storytelling and quantitative sustainability reporting made him a great candidate to join SB. Over the last three months, J.R. has worked to assess the internal sustainability of our organization, considering environmental, economic, and social impacts. The primary objective of our first-ever sustainability initiative is to show leadership and commitment to a just and sustainable future.



When we started the project, we were hoping to complete a report and set up a timeline for implementing projects and changes. But J.R. has gone above and beyond our expectations, involving volunteers and staff, creating sustainability events, and impressively producing several short videos to showcase our sustainability projects. We started the project with a brainstorming meeting of all volunteers to gain input and generate ideas. From that discussion, volunteer interest in local waste disposal, food production, and indigenous culture sparked three exciting events: a locally-sourced dinner of Pique Macho, a Quechua language class, and a group trip to the infamous K'ara K'ara landfill. Through our internal reporting analysis, we also found that volunteer travel creates a significant climate change impact for SB and we will be looking for ways to encourage volunteers to stay longer and mitigate the impacts of their travel. You can learn more about these events through the sustainability video series that J.R. produced on our YouTube page: <http://www.youtube.com/BoliviaSostenible>

We are putting the final touches on our sustainability report and will share it with all of our stakeholders in the next month. You will be able to see our yearly energy and water use, along with our future steps to promote sustainability. We value any feedback or comments that you might have about this process, as well as ideas on how to create the most positive impact possible in Cochabamba.

## Mini-Grant HIGHLIGHT

In July 2011, Sustainable Bolivia received a generous donation from Isobelle Smith. In order to create a fun and transparent way to use the donation, Sustainable Bolivia created a “mini-grant competition.” We encouraged volunteers to compete for US\$200 as a stand-alone project, (i.e. independent of the volunteers’ designated mini-grant funds). After volunteers submitted proposals for projects that would take place within their volunteer organizations, a committee of Sustainable Bolivia staff deliberated over the applications. Despite a difficult decision, the committee selected Marc Hermel and Bianca Schulte—volunteers with Hogar de Sueños—as the winners of the competition.

In an effort to provide outside opportunities for the children at the orphanage where they worked, Marc and Bianca began to take the orphans from Hogar de Sueños to Centro Equestre Tunari, a center for horse riding and equine therapy. The Equestrian Center seemed like a perfect option, as it provides a hobby for the children that not only adds a bit of sport to their lives, but also teaches them responsibility, respect, and trust with animals. Marc and Bianca took the children to the center every Saturday, and when the director of the center noticed progress and tenacity in the children, she offered a significant discount so that she can continue to teach the children new skills in working with the horses, and so that the children may continue to learn from and enjoy the experience. Marc and Bianca put a schedule in place in order to ensure that the children will continue to go to the center each week, and in collaboration with Sustainable Bolivia, the volunteers will continue to monitor the continued use of the donation.



## Mano a Mano Fundraiser

Mano a Mano Bolivia is an SB partner organization that works to provide health and education access to some of the most rural and isolated communities in the areas around Cochabamba. Their team of architects, engineers, and administrators collaborates with poor communities to build schools, health clinics, roads, and airplane runways to improve access to basic services in the areas that need it most. They also supply these projects with educational materials and medical supplies to ensure the sustainable operation of these projects.

SB volunteer Dr. Brian Steber is working for three months with Mano a Mano to provide additional medical care at several of their clinics. He has also launched a fundraiser to initiate a new health clinic for a community in need – he has a goal of US\$10,000 to reach by December 2011 and has raised US\$2,000 so far. Current and previous volunteers have contributed their time and energy to Mano a Mano through project planning, construction, metal work, and clinical care. The organization recently inaugurated a series of health clinics and schools, and several members of the SB community participated to learn about the communities that Mano a Mano serves. If you'd like to support construction of the next Mano a Mano health clinic, please make a donation and read more about Brian's project at <http://sustainablebolivia.chipin.com/mano-a-mano-clinic-fundraiser>

## IN THE NEWS

## TIPNIS

increase trade among different regions of the country by facilitating the movement of goods and opening up access to new markets. In doing so, they believe this type of integration will spur Bolivia's economic development. Brazil intends to finance the construction.

Controversy surrounds the issue due to the fact that the highway will transect an area called the TIPNIS (Territorio Indígena y Parque Nacional Isiboro Sécuré), an indigenous autonomous region and national park. While some of the affected indigenous groups are in favor of the plan, many have joined the opposition. Opponents of the road fear it will negatively affect the traditional lifestyles of the inhabitants of the region and that it will cause further environmental degradation, not just from the construction of the highway but by essentially dividing the park in half and drastically reducing the area's biodiversity. Currently, a group of protestors is marching from Trinidad to La Paz to demonstrate their disagreement with the plan.

The proposed highway will connect Villa Tunari with San Ignacio de Moxos, reducing the overland distance between the two cities from around 900 km to 306 km.

# Día Peatonal

Sunday, September 4th marked another *día peatonal*, the day of the pedestrian. Use of motorized vehicles was outlawed for the day and thousands of

Cochabamba's citizens took to the streets to walk, roller skate, ride bicycles, and enjoy a day free of motorized transport. Several SB volunteers and staff members organized a bicycle ride around the city, while others prepared an outdoor lunch using solar ovens. Cochabamba was abuzz with activity, with information booths, puppet shows, games, concerts, and theater performances.



Bolivia's government recently enacted a law that declares the first Sunday of September the "national day of pedestrians and cyclists in defense of Mother Earth." President Evo Morales claimed he hopes to raise awareness about the environment through this initiative. This year, two million vehicles in nine cities throughout the country were temporarily taken off the roads in observance of this celebratory day of civic participation.

## Local Pique Macho Dinner

In mid-July, SB sustainability intern, J.R. Killigrew, hosted a Local Dinner event for volunteers. The motivation for the night stemmed from a group interest to create an entirely local and Bolivian dinner, to learn more about Bolivian cuisine, to support smaller local food vendors instead of the supermarket chains, and ultimately to help reduce our environmental impact through the food we purchase. After discussing dinner options with guest chef, Carolina Felipes, we chose Pique Macho as our main dish and set out to the Cancha (the major local produce market in Cochabamba) to purchase all the food. Our initial sourcing range of 400 km soon proved to be too limited, as all of the meat we found at the Cancha comes from Santa Cruz. We finally decided to expand our sourcing range to 750 km, which allowed us to quickly and efficiently find all ingredients. By eight that night, all volunteers were settled in their seats eagerly awaiting such a savory dish. J.R. indulged the group with tales of finding all the ingredients as well as indicating the provenance of each pepper, onion, tomato and spice.

We were very excited to share such a new and educational night with the rest of the volunteers. There was not a piece of Pique Macho remaining, so we look forward to having another Local Dinner Night to promote the thoughtful and sustainable outlook that we at Sustainable Bolivia love to share.

## Artist in Residence: Johannes Bierling

For a constructive abstract sculptor like Johannes Bierling of Germany, taking his work on the road is no small task. Johannes' primary medium is wood, and his sculptures and installations make for large-scale exhibitions. To really grasp the magnitude and presence of Johannes' full-size sculptures, you would have to visit galleries such as MaGu in Hallsfors, Sweden where his work has been on display. For his Cochabamba audience, Johannes shared photos of his past exhibitions, and his film called "Sculpture Space," to demonstrate his creative process, which represents his style—one that tends toward simple forms, circles, angles, forms, and linkage.

"I like to think that my art will have the same effect as good architecture. It is intended to fascinate the eye and force it to reconsider space," he explains. When turning a tree trunk into a work of art, the decision-making process is complex, even drastic. "In a work in progress, sometimes you must change direction," commented Johannes. "You must make a radical cut."

When asked for advice to young aspiring artists, Johannes laughs. "An artist's life, it goes up and down," he observes. "New artists need to find their own media and then focus and specialize."

As part of his residency, Johannes exhibited some of his sketches on paper at La Troje, a cultural center in Cochabamba. You may view more of Johannes' work on his website <http://www.bierling-art.de/>



### About SB:

Sustainable Bolivia is a non-profit organization in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Our primary objective is to provide Bolivian organizations much needed human and financial resources while providing students and professionals the opportunity to gain practical work experience through internships and volunteer opportunities.

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