



THE COCHA-LINA HERALD

Newsletter of the North Carolina Partners of the Americas (Partners with Cochabamba, Bolivia)



Newsbits

- [5 Things to Know](#) about the Bolivian election and a [TIME article about its results](#)
- [Bolivian fires](#) have caused the government to declare a State of Emergency
- Volunteer campaign, "[Adopt a Grandparent](#)" helps the elderly amid Bolivia Covid-19 pandemic
- A Bolivian Salteñas [Recipe](#)



Keeping in touch during Covid-19

By Allison Siebens, Secretary of North Carolina Partners

While Covid-19 has impacted North Carolina Partners of the Americas travel exchanges and ongoing projects, the Partners organization continues to be committed to its goals and ongoing projects. The board meets via zoom to keep current on issues relevant to the partnership and to share ideas about ways to keep working on projects where possible.

On September 12th, during our Fall annual meeting, we had the pleasure of interacting with Monica Guzman and Laura Morales from Cochabamba Partners over zoom. (Photos on right)

In light of these successful Zoom interactions between North Carolina and Cochabamba Partners, members are brainstorming ideas for projects that could be done online during the pandemic, such as teaching via virtual exchange.



Laura Morales from Cochabamba Partners presenting Del Mar Projects on Zoom



Monica Guzman, President of Cochabamba Partners, presenting Del Mar Projects on Zoom call

Follow us on ...



[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Twitter](#)



The streets of La Paz in June 2020

Reminder: Membership Dues

Please ensure that you are current with your annual dues.

Dues can be paid [online](#) or sent directly to: 1243 Boyd Court Shelby, NC 28150



Visit our website at ncboliviapartners.org



North Carolina Partners of the Americas Officers

President: George Wilson
Vice President: Vacant
Treasurer: Judy Gibson
Secretary: Allison Siebens

Subcommittees and Chairs

Autism Project- Hank Graden
Culture and the Arts - Daniel Johnson, Kitty Stalberg,
Health and Clinical Practices - Carlos Vargas
Membership – Virginia Freedman

Board Members

Hank Graden, Virginia Freedman, Lori Unruh Snyder, Carlos Vargas, Daniel Johnson, Kitty Stalberg, Lindsay Naumann, George Wilson, Allison Stalberg Siebens, Judy Gibson

Incoming President of Cochabamba Partners: Noelia Colque

The current vice-president of the of the Cochabamba Bolivia-North Carolina Partners, Noelia Colque Mercado, will become President in January of 2021. The North Carolina Partners enthusiastically welcomes Noelia and looks forward to planning productive projects and enjoying a dynamic partnership during her tenure as president.



Noelia, daughter of long-time Partners volunteer and leader Marlene Mercado, received a college degree in the Humanities at Maryknoll College in Cochabamba and went on to receive a graduate degree in business at the Catholic University (San Paulo).

At the community level, Noelia has been very active with the Girl Scouts organization, participating in local, national and international events and serving as a member of the Scouts organizing committee. In collaboration with an architectural group and the German Scouts organization she worked on an ecological gardens project.

Noelia has brought her considerable experience and skills to a number of Partners projects including youth leadership, education, the environment, youth leaders and sports. She has been a featured speaker and exhibitor at dozens of congresses and conferences including a major youth congress with the theme of “Change Maker.” She also coordinated the “Millennials are Coming” event which strengthened community ties among youth groups of Cochabamba. She has also helped to create the Partners Campus at San Simon University. Recognized and known for her leadership and support of Partners over many years, we eagerly anticipate working with Noelia in the coming years.



Current Projects

Funded by the Del Mar
Foundation

Forest Fire Tools and Equipment

Project Leader: Cochabamba Executive
Board
Status: In Progress

Biological Equipment

Project Leader: Mario Aranibar
Status: Completed

Management of Social Networks in Schools

Project Leader: Carla A. Leigue Castellon
Status: Pending (see sidebar)



The social network project (scheduled to begin in February 2021) focuses on teaching children to use the network correctly and safely, and encouraging parents healthy teaching habits. Project leader, Carla (photo above), was a Partners visitor in late 2018. Her project focused on internet safety for youth. She continues to build on what she learned during her time in North Carolina through his project.

Photo (right) was shared by Cochabamba Partners. Pictured is the supplies for Mario Aranibar's biological equipment project.



Attention Lifetime Members

Please consider making a donation to the organization at this time when fundraising efforts have been halted due to the pandemic.



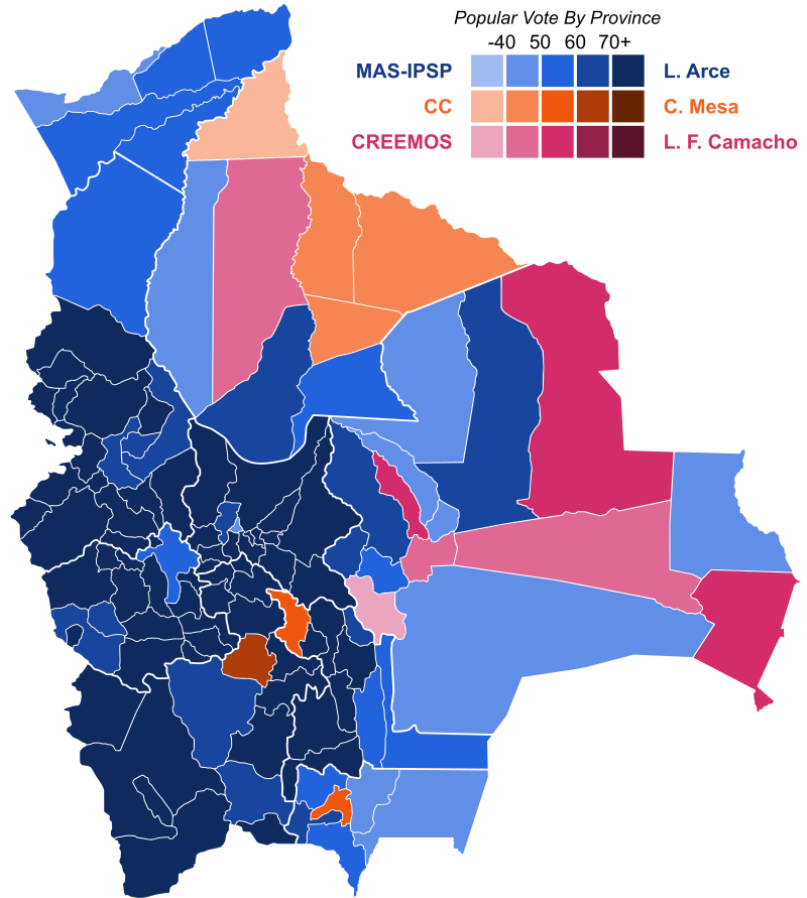
Visit our website at ncboliviapartners.org





The October 18th Bolivia Election Results

Election results by province in Bolivia



- Luis Arce of the Movement for Socialism (MAS) party was elected president
- Arce won 55 percent of the votes against six rivals on the ballot
- Salvador Romero, the head of Bolivia's electoral authority, said in a press conference that there had been a huge turn-out despite COVID-19

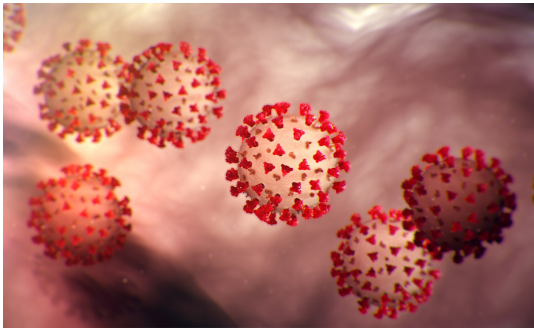
Member Spotlight: Allison Stalberg Siebens

Allison currently serves as the board secretary and editor of the Cocha-lina Herald of the North Carolina Partners of the Americas. She is a second generation member, as her parents Kitty and Christian Stalberg have been active with the North Carolina Partners. Kitty also worked in the Washington D.C. headquarters.

Allison graduated from Guilford College in 2015. With a bachelors degree in sociology/anthropology and English. In 2018, she traveled to Cochabamba and La Paz on a Partners exchange, teaching journalism and writing skills to youth and teachers.



Covid-19 in Bolivia



Bolivia's health care system was hit hard by COVID-19 in the initial months of the pandemic. The first death in Cochabamba occurred on April 5. During the first few months of the pandemic, cases were rising by 20-40 cases per day. As exponential growth continued, Cochabamba recorded up to 263 new cases per day on June 26, the highest level of all other departments in Bolivia. As of October 24, 2020, 140,779 cases had been confirmed by the Ministry of Health.

Throughout the seven month long emergency, public health sectors were significantly impacted. The health system was near collapse as hospitals reached full capacity and experienced a lack of supplies, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals for treatment. Furthermore, the number of health care personnel was reduced as many were forced to quarantine or became ill themselves. Record-keeping has been difficult as not all cases of the virus could be confirmed due to a lack of testing supplies as well as number of existing labs to do testing in order to confirm testing, resulting potentially in many unconfirmed cases.

Existing protocols and infrastructure to manage funerals and burial services have also been impacted and weakened as a result of the virus. Some families have held loved ones' funerals in their own houses.

Bolivia has successfully dealt with many aspects of the virus. Mitigation methods and community vigilance strategies have de-escalated the crisis and lowered the number of cases in recent months. As in other parts of the world, citizens have united in creative and wonderful ways. Bolivian musicians and artists joined the Police Musical Band in paying homage to the work of doctors, nurses and other medical workers. Uplifting messages fill the streets and are posted on storefronts and homes. The anthem "I will resist" is sung from balconies and the flag displayed as a symbol of hope.



At the current time, 200 days since the first reported Bolivian case, citizens are crediting physical distancing and bio-security with improving public health conditions.

[Coronavirus characters help Bolivian police raise COVID-19 awareness](#)

