



## SEPTEMBER UPDATE

# Spurring Women's Self-Esteem & Voice



This month, Amigos' Women's Empowerment Program held a series of workshops for women with the goal of boosting their community leadership and self-esteem. Women are the backbone of the Santa Cruz community, yet their voice has often been silenced. Amigos' Women's Empowerment Program works toward greater economic inclusion of women through support for women-owned small businesses, yet also maintains a broader focus on the various issues that effect women in society. Workshops in self-esteem, political participation, domestic violence and nutrition support women to live healthier and happier lives, and to find their voice in both the community and the home.

## From Culinary Student to Chef & Teacher

Ismael Chumil graduated from the CECAP Culinary Program in 2012, one of the first culinary cohorts in CECAP. He always knew that he had an interest in studying the culinary arts, and the opening of CECAP finally provided him with the opportunity to pursue his dream. Ismael was quickly hired by Casa Palopó, a high-end hotel in the nearby town of Santa Catarina Palopó.



Seven years later, Ismael still works for Casa Palopó. He has developed his skills to become an essential part of the hotel's team. But also this year, Ismael also started teaching in the CECAP Culinary Program himself! We are particularly proud to see a young man from Santa Cruz go from student to teacher, giving back to the next generation of young Cruceños and Cruceñas who want to learn. That is what Amigos is all about!

## Preparing to Apply for Professional Jobs



The 2019 Santa Cruz Youth Corps cohort is coming to the end of their term, and the interns are hard at work to use their year-long professional development experience to find permanent work. This month they are focused on learning how to write resumes and cover letters, essential parts of job applications that they have never learned how to do

before. They will also be participating in mock job interviews, learning job application skills and practice to feel comfortable applying for jobs and competing in the professional job market. The goal is to find all of these recent graduates good work opportunities, and to build the first generation of young professionals in Santa Cruz.

## Meet The Man Behind the Scenes... Amigos' Program Director, Alex Macfarlan!

This month we are giving a shout out to the man behind so much of what happens here at Amigos de Santa Cruz. Alex Macfarlan is truly the energy that keeps our programs running. He oversees our day-to-day work, mentors staff, and always comes up with fresh new ideas to increase our impact in the Santa Cruz communities.

Alex first came to Guatemala in 2011 from Sydney, Australia to work in international development. During that time, he started several of his own small businesses and developed a strong passion for small business development. Since joining Amigos in 2016, Alex's energy and enthusiasm have been the driving force behind our economic development programs. His goal is to identify new business opportunities that will build a strong local economy in Santa Cruz.

In the few extra hours that Alex has free, he is also known to be an amateur yet spirited guitar player, lover of logic riddles, and an adventurous hiker.



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