



Embassy of the United States of America

Public Affairs Section, La Paz, Bolivia

Avenida Arce 2780, La Paz, Bolivia

For more information please contact: Phone 216-8122, Fax 216-8622

Embassy website: <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov>

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Native Trails Performs in Cochabamba

Native American Dance group "Native Trails" touched the hearts and minds of indigenous peoples throughout Bolivia during their U.S. Embassy sponsored tour September 18th through 24th, while at the same time dispelling long held myths of Native Americans. In Cochabamba on September 16th, the musicians spent time talking with students at the Centro Boliviano Americano Cochabamba. The students at the CBA had the opportunity to appreciate some Native American dances in the patio of the institution. Robert "Tree" Cody, leader of the group, talked to the students about his culture and spoke some words in his Dakota language.

Later that evening in the Coliseo of the Colegio Aleman Santa María, after finishing an incredible display of traditional dances, songs, and chants, the four dancers that make up "Native Trails" were enthusiastically greeted by the crowd. The dancers spent over 2 hours talking with the fans, sharing information about their lives and their culture, and taking photos with the crowd. Both events were co-sponsored by the Centro Boliviano Americano Cochabamba.

The group toured 4 cities in Bolivia, sharing their culture with over 8,000 Bolivians in settings as varied as a solstice festival in Batallas, a rural indigenous community, as well as on the main stage at ExpoCruz, Bolivia's largest international trade fair, performing for over 5,000 excited fans. Each performance was shared with members of local Bolivian indigenous groups, who performed traditional dances for the American attendees and who encouraged Native Trails and the Public Diplomacy Officer to dance along. The program broke stereotypes of Americans at every event. Most telling was a comment made by a small child in Batallas to Tree Cody, "But uncle, I thought all Americans were gringos".