

HONOREE SPOTLIGHT:

*Fran Lozano***Producer, Documentarian, Director***Recipient of the Corazón de la Comunidad Award*

The Corazón de la Comunidad Award honors individuals or a group whose leadership, advocacy, and support have significantly strengthened Our House's Spanish Community Program and its mission of grief support, education, and hope.

Fran Lozano, who is originally from Argentina, has worked in the film and television industry as a producer, documentarian, and director, producing her own projects, one of which is a travel series documenting her journey to visit all 50 states before turning fifty.

For almost six years, Fran has dedicated her time volunteering with Our House Grief Support Center. She discovered the organization during the pandemic, and when she learned that Our House was looking for Spanish-speaking volunteers, she knew it was a perfect fit.

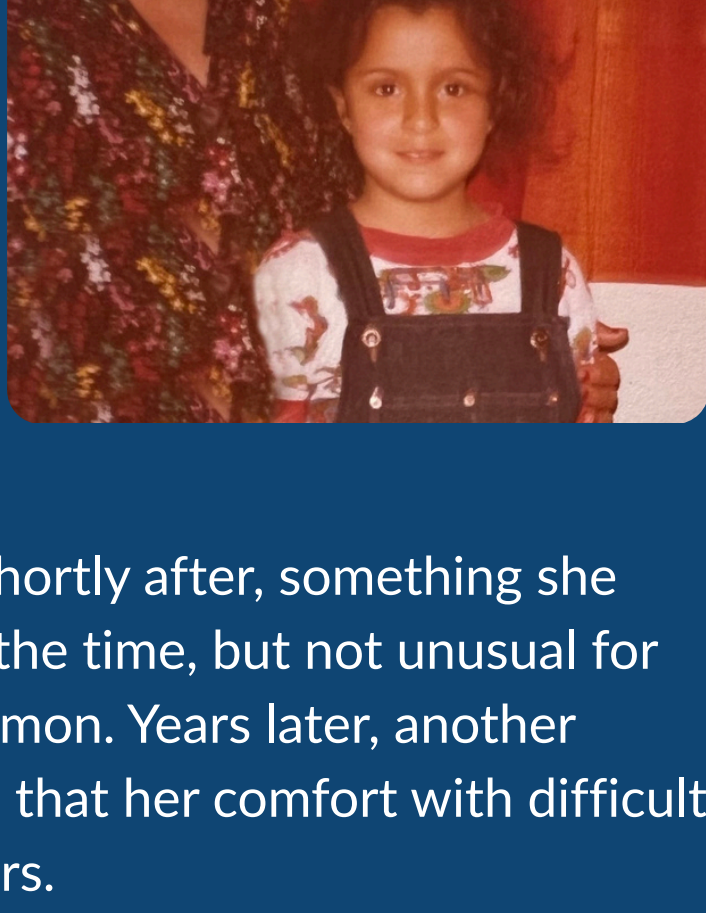
"I appreciate the mission and the approach of getting training. I started online during the pandemic, then in person, but I'm now back to remote, leading groups in Spanish. I notice people are slightly lighter after group. It makes me feel good that I can help, even a tiny little bit."

"It makes me feel good that I can help, even a tiny bit."

In the Spanish Community Program, Fran has witnessed people grieving all kinds of losses, including the deaths of children and adults. The program also has particular complexities for people grieving from a distance, whose loved ones died in their countries of origin and who could not be there when they were ill or after they died. "This adds a different component and way to process grief."

Fran's own relationship with grief began when she was seven years old. She was in a car accident with her grandmother and father, and both died in the crash.

"It was tragic. It was in the middle of the freeway outside of town. It was two deaths of two people extremely close to me, and they were unexpected. My grandfather was in a separate car and saw it happen."



Fran started attending therapy shortly after, something she notes was unusual for a child at the time, but not unusual for Argentina, where therapy is common. Years later, another experience helped her recognize that her comfort with difficult situations could be a gift to others.

When Fran supported a close friend who was diagnosed with cancer, she drove her to appointments and stayed with her through procedures. She saw that her presence and willingness to help were special.

"There were procedures and needles, but I didn't realize that it's not something everyone can do until I was told it's a gift. Why not share it? I love helping people. You never know when you're going to be in need, so if you can help, why not?"



"To be in touch with the truly human side of people is an absolute privilege."

Fran has also learned that grief can stay with us in ways we don't always recognize, sometimes surfacing when we least expect it. A few years ago, she went to a chiropractor because her back was hurting. As part of the routine questions, he asked whether she had ever been in a car accident.

"Though nothing physically happened to me, I didn't know how to answer the question, 'Have you been in a car accident?' I said yes when I was seven."

Usually, she says, a doctor would simply continue through the checklist. But this time, the chiropractor stopped.

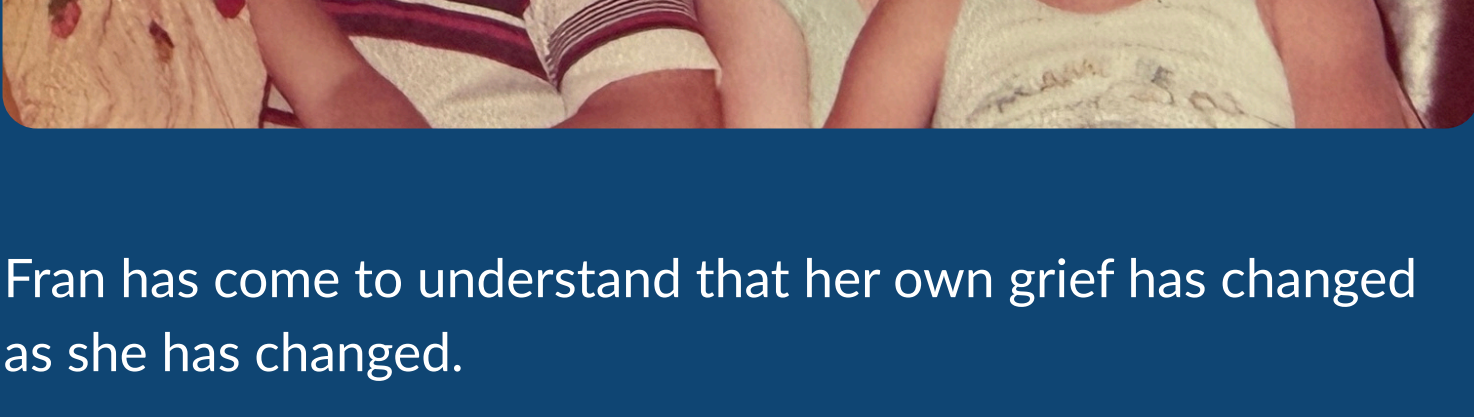
"He looked at me and asked, 'Was everyone else in the car okay?' And suddenly I had this lump in my throat because he was the only person to understand that, at seven, I was not in the car alone."

She was suddenly back in the accident.

"I choked and said, 'No, they all died.' And it took me back. I was right back there. He had the humanity to see that."

For Fran, that moment captures something essential about grief and about the work she does with Our House.

"When people show their vulnerability, it's a huge responsibility. To be in touch with the truly human side of people is an absolute privilege."

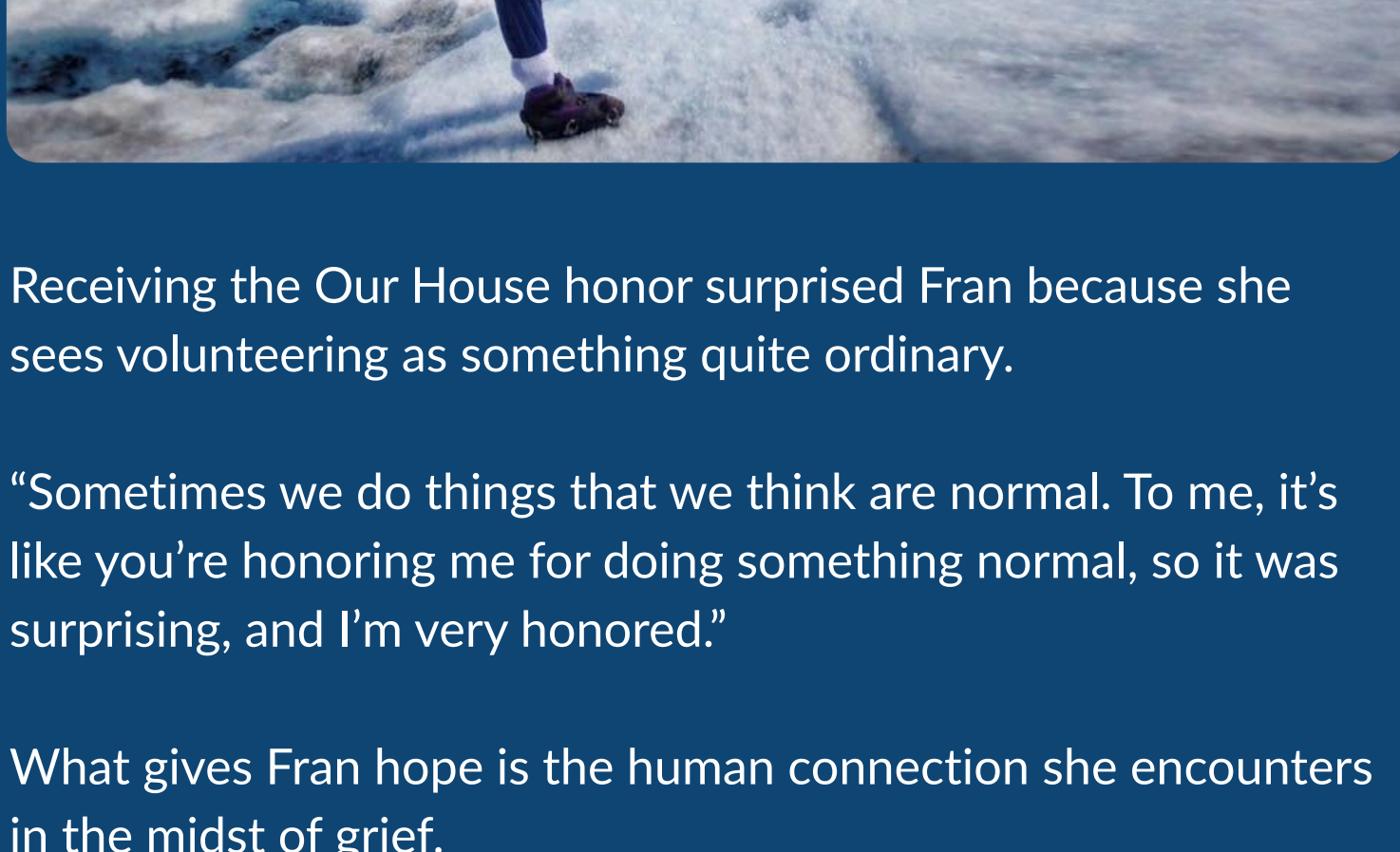


Fran has come to understand that her own grief has changed as she has changed.

"I like talking about how grief grows with you as you grow. The first time I had to process it was when I was a child. But then when you're closer to the age when you are your parents' age, you grieve again."

She has even found herself thinking differently about her grandfather, who witnessed the accident from another car. "I never thought of him, but he had a front-row seat to see the car kill his son and wife. For me, it's interesting how grief evolves. As you become a different person in your life, you have to reprocess."

"We're all vulnerable and in pain at times."



Receiving the Our House honor surprised Fran because she sees volunteering as something quite ordinary.

"Sometimes we do things that we think are normal. To me, it's like you're honoring me for doing something normal, so it was surprising, and I'm very honored."

What gives Fran hope is the human connection she encounters in the midst of grief.

"When you see the raw humanity, that we're all vulnerable and in pain at times, and in need of others at times, and that some days we cry and some days we laugh out loud, that gives me hope."

"You can continue your own life despite the worst scenarios. You can continue, and it's because of human interaction and support. That's not very common these days."

"Facilitating groups doesn't mean we're experts or know more than others. We're all trying to do this together. Something I always say is, don't compare grief. The worst grief that exists is your own. Everyone is entitled to be here."