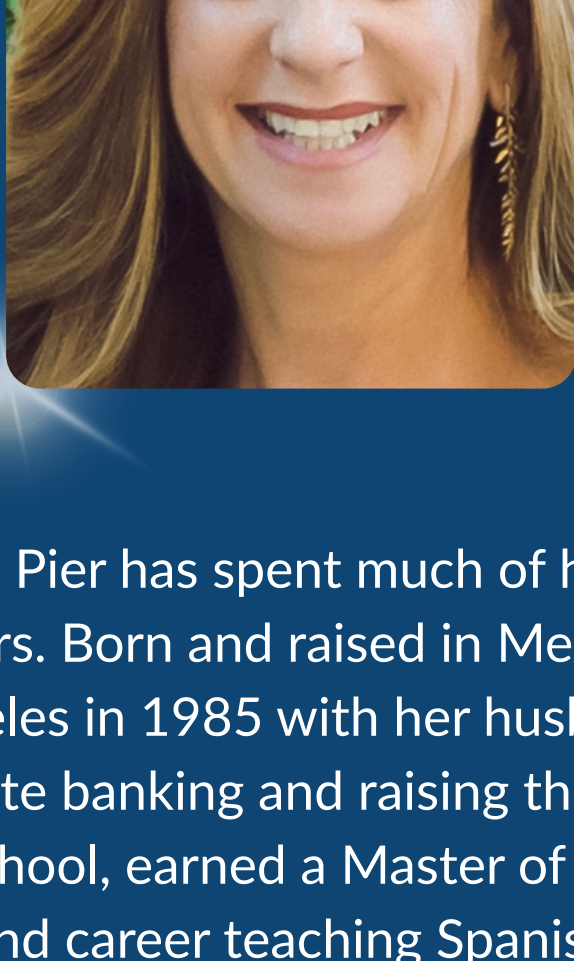


HONOREE SPOTLIGHT:

Liora Pier

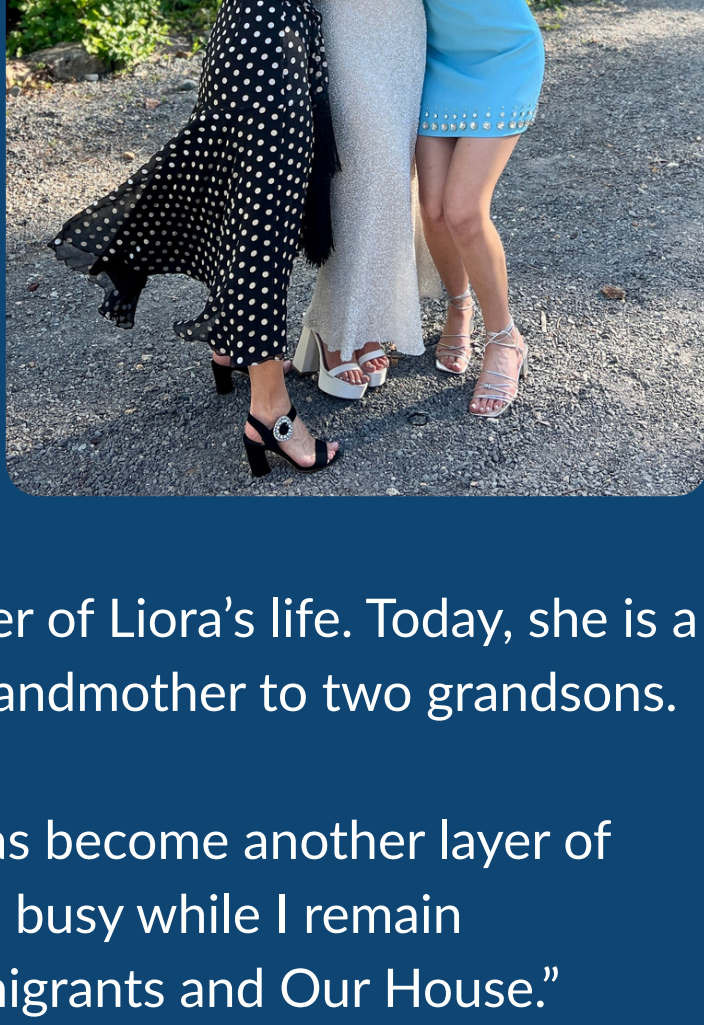
Educator & Volunteer

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.

Liora Pier has spent much of her life finding ways to help others. Born and raised in Mexico City, she moved to Los Angeles in 1985 with her husband, Mauricio. After working in private banking and raising their two daughters, she returned to school, earned a Master of Arts in Education, and began a second career teaching Spanish. She taught for 15 years before turning her focus to volunteer service. For more than a decade, she has volunteered with Our House Grief Support Center, first facilitating English-speaking grief groups and eventually finding her calling in the Spanish Community Program.

"I was taught values of community, volunteer work, and giving back to people who are in more need," Liora says. "It starts there, at home, learning to give back and help others."



Family has remained at the center of Liora's life. Today, she is a mother of two daughters and grandmother to two grandsons.

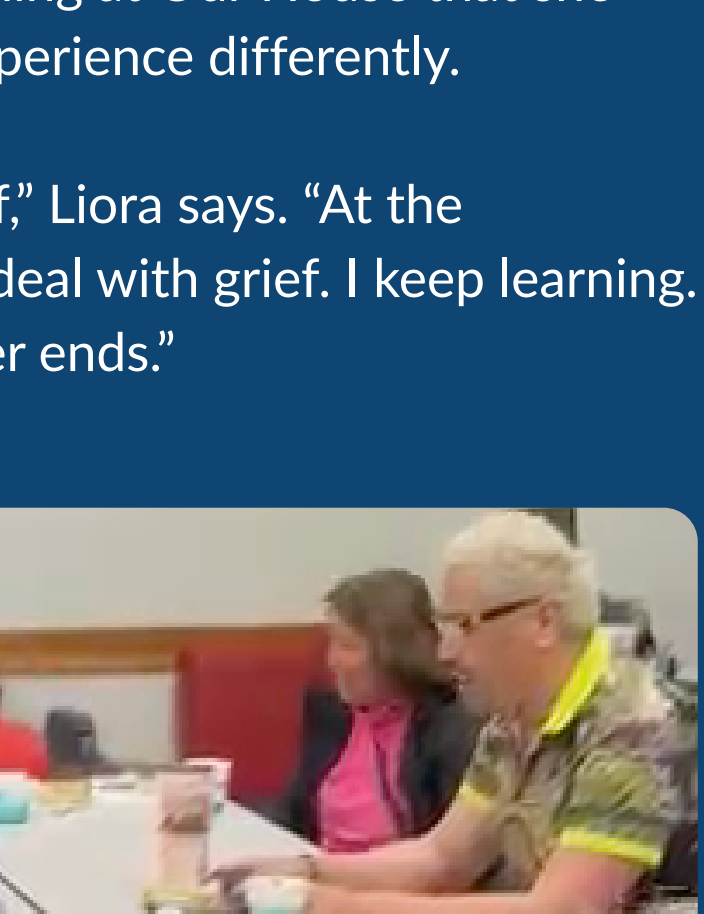
"My new role as grandmother has become another layer of satisfaction and fun. It keeps me busy while I remain committed to my work with immigrants and Our House."

Liora's commitment to Our House is rooted in both service and personal experience.

"When my mother died, that was one of the most traumatic moments of my life. I dealt with so many feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety," she says. "Instead of reaching out for professional support, I felt I was strong and could do it on my own."

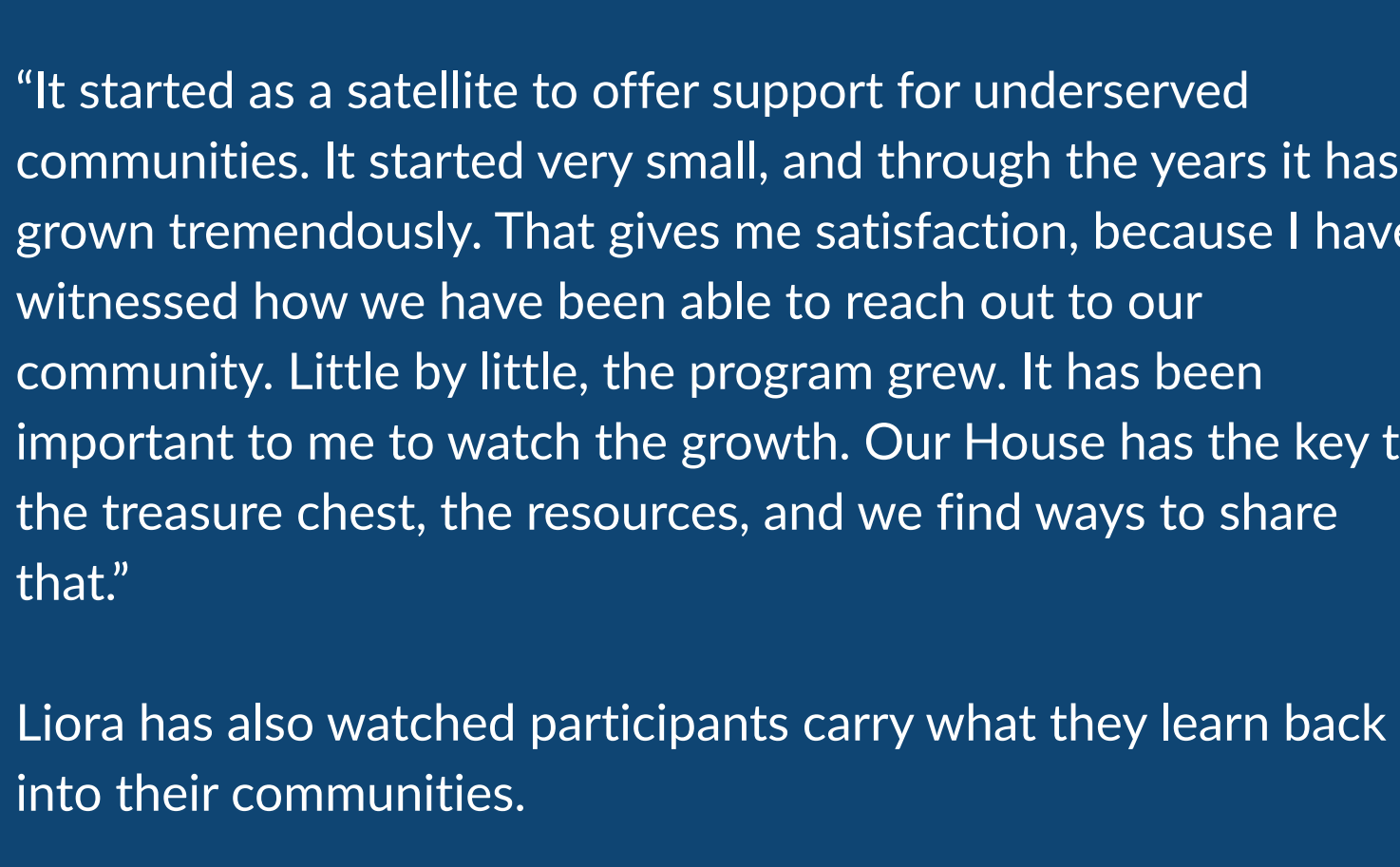
Years later, after her father died, Liora realized she was still carrying that grief.

"I keep learning about grief. It's an evolving process that never ends."



It was through her work and training at Our House that she began to understand her own experience differently.

"I never felt like an expert in grief," Liora says. "At the beginning I was only learning to deal with grief. I keep learning. It's an evolving process that never ends."



At Our House, Liora has watched the Spanish Community Program grow from a small start into a program that reaches grieving families across Los Angeles County.

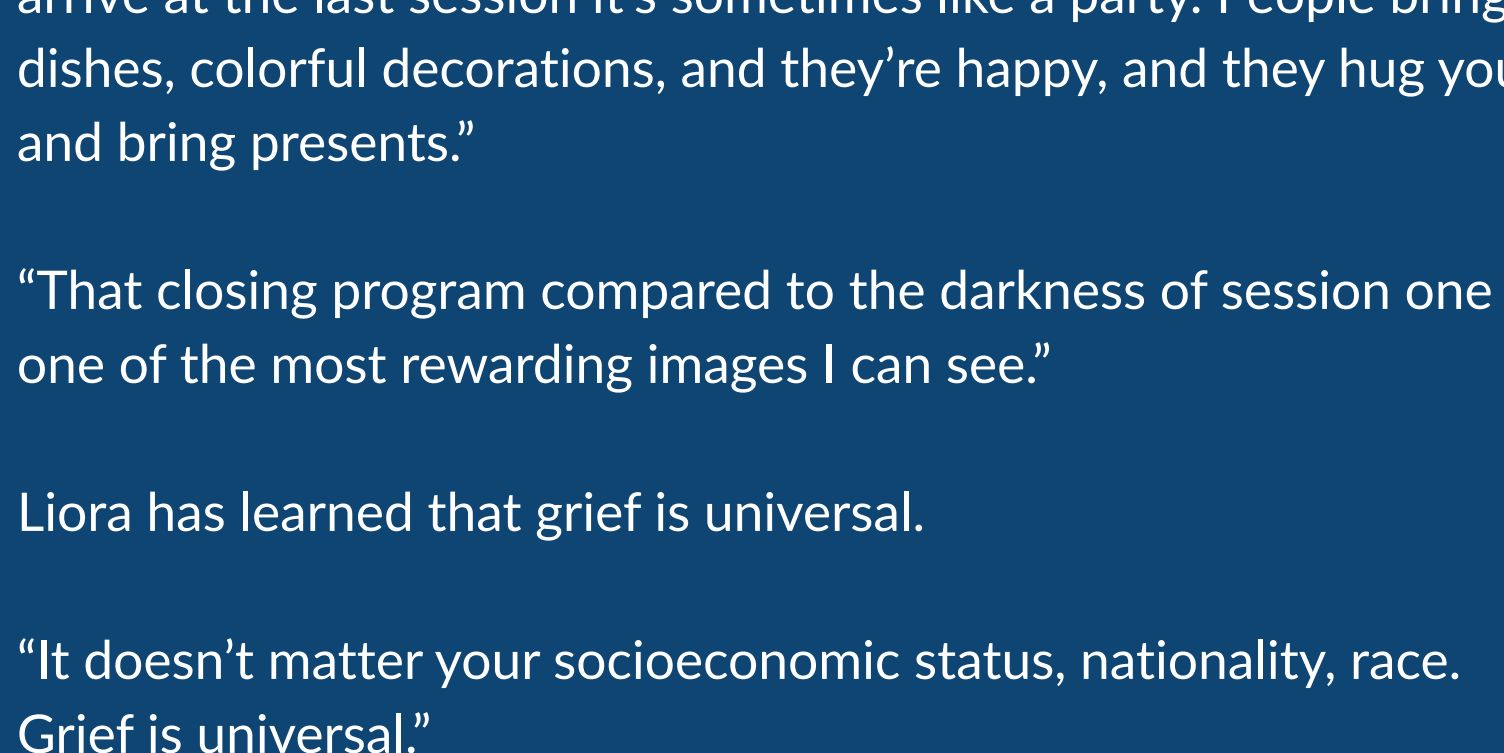
"It started as a satellite to offer support for underserved communities. It started very small, and through the years it has grown tremendously. That gives me satisfaction, because I have witnessed how we have been able to reach out to our community. Little by little, the program grew. It has been important to me to watch the growth. Our House has the key to the treasure chest, the resources, and we find ways to share that."

Liora has also watched participants carry what they learn back into their communities.

"I am seeing our people benefit from our programs and become ambassadors, spreading the word through churches and communities."

One of the greatest rewards is watching people change as they move through the group.

"Our House has the key to the treasure chest, the resources, and we find ways to share that."



"For women, their smiles return, their colors get brighter. You see a change in the hair, demeanor, and humor in their anecdotes. By about session six, there is a noticeable change with people."

She especially treasures the final gathering, the "sweet goodbye."

"By the last session, specifically in the Spanish group, when we arrive at the last session it's sometimes like a party. People bring dishes, colorful decorations, and they're happy, and they hug you and bring presents."

"That closing program compared to the darkness of session one is one of the most rewarding images I can see."

Liora has learned that grief is universal.

"It doesn't matter your socioeconomic status, nationality, race. Grief is universal."

She also knows that grief does not have to mean giving up on happiness.

"We give them the tools to embrace grief and know that it will be a companion until they die. Make a deal with grief: that you will accept it, but grief will shrink and allow you to enjoy life."

"Tremendously honored and humbled."



Receiving the gala honor leaves Liora "tremendously honored and humbled."

"I don't perceive myself as someone to be singled out. I'm super honored. There's also a part of me that feels that I am one little volunteer in this huge community."

For Liora, hope comes from the people around her.

"My personal connections give me hope. My family, daughters, friends, colleagues, community. It's about people and the relationships that you build."

And that is what she hopes people find at Our House.