

Audio Transcript: Kristal Sotomayor

Sotomayor Productions

Hi, my name is Kristal Sotomayor, my pronouns are she and they, I'm based in Philadelphia, I would say that, you know, I went to middle school and high school in western Pennsylvania and that's where my family lives. I became a media maker, I would say, out of a necessity, because there just aren't very many Latino stories out there. And I had noticed that growing up, and so I wanted to change things. And in particular, I was always interested in film and in journalism, so documentary is like a happy medium between those things. I did take some classes in college, I went to Bryn Mawr College, I did take some film classes, but most of what I did in most of my coursework was around film theory. As soon as I graduated, I started on this film called *Expanding Sanctuary* that I'm still working on, it's been like, four years right now, about Juntos and this campaign that they put together to end the sharing of the Philadelphia police database with ICE.

I think because Latinos are so underrepresented in media that sometimes we don't realize how amazing we are, and like the things that we're doing. And so in making *Expanding Sanctuary*, like, no one knew it was gonna win in the end, like they ended up ending this contract that the city had. Really, I think that these things just aren't archived. No one sees what's happening behind the scenes, and no one sees how it's directly affecting people. And so I think that that's how my films and my work helps the community is because our stories go untold, truthfully, and our impact that we ended up making to the city into the country as a whole, pretty much goes ignored. And so in filming these things, it gives it importance and it gives it weight and it gives it historical memory that it wouldn't have had otherwise. I've worked with PhillyCAM in many different capacities, like I used to work at Scribe Video Center and so we would collaborate all the time I work with the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival and we're like members of PhillyCAM through that. For me, I want community media to be taken seriously in the larger film ecosystem because it isn't.

You know, I think there's so many misconceptions about that, when sometimes there's some of the most beautiful films you've ever seen, but they're not given a fair chance. It's the heart and soul of it makes it so much better than some of the films you might see. You know, it's just like, the dedication that you put into it is really seen in every frame of the story in a way that you can't really see him in, you know, popular media, that I think people just dismiss it, and it's really unfair.