

Erika L. Sánchez Speaks at April 19 School Meeting

April 19, 2019

Erika L. Sánchez, the author of 2018 Mercersburg summer-reading selection *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, addressed the Mercersburg student body at a school meeting April 19 in the Irvine Memorial Chapel.

Sánchez is the daughter of Mexican immigrants. A poet, novelist, and essayist, her debut poetry collection, *Lessons on Expulsion*, was published by Graywolf in July 2017 and was a finalist for the PEN America Open Book Award. Her debut young adult novel, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, was published in October 2017 and is a *New York Times* best-seller and a National Book Awards finalist. She is a 2017-2019 Princeton Arts Fellow and a recent recipient of the 21st Century Award from the Chicago Public Library Foundation and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Poetry.

Sánchez grew up in the Mexican working-class town of Cicero, Ill., which borders Chicago's southwest side. As a daughter of undocumented immigrants, she has always been determined to defy borders of any kind. And, not surprisingly, her clothes perpetually smelled of fried tortillas when she was a child. Ever since Sánchez was a 12-year-old self-proclaimed nerd in giant bifocals, she's dreamt of becoming a successful writer.

Sánchez graduated Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude from the University of Illinois at Chicago, then went on to Madrid, Spain, on a Fulbright Scholarship. She then moved to Albuquerque, N.M., where she completed an MFA in creative writing from the University of New Mexico.

From 2012 to 2015, Sánchez was the sex and love advice columnist for *Cosmopolitan* for Latinas. She has also contributed to a variety of publications, including *Time*, *The Guardian*, NBC News, *Rolling Stone*, Al-Jazeera, *Truthout*, *Salon*, *BuzzFeed*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Jezebel*. Her articles have been republished around the world and have been translated into several languages.

Sánchez held a brown-bag lunch open to students and faculty following the school meeting.

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