

For Immediate Release

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Genesis Perez has been named as Ventura County's 2019/2020 youth poet laureate by the Ventura County Arts Council.

The Ventura County Arts Council is pleased to announce its selection of Genesis Perez as the county's 2019/2020 Youth Poet Laureate; she will serve for one year as official poet and ambassador to the community for poetry. Ms. Perez will be inaugurated with a ceremony on November 8, 2019 at 7:00PM in the Guthrie Hall on the Ventura College Main Campus located at 4667 Telegraph Rd, Ventura, Ca 93003. The event begins with a reception at 6:30PM, and the public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Genesis Perez has been published in *Scuffed Diamonds*, a collection of Ventura County Poets and *Through Me, You Will See*, a collection of Oxnard High School Poetry slammers. She won the 2019 Oxnard High School Poetry Slam. Perez is a poet of social conscience, dealing with sexual harassment, sexuality, grief, and the struggles of immigrants. She was a featured reader in Mexican Schools at Beyond Baroque in Venice, Los Angeles, and the Elite Theatre Company in Oxnard. Her poetry is a close and profound examination of the human condition.

Genesis Perez is 18 years old. She was born and raised in Ventura County. She is a freshman at California State University, Northridge, where she studies Marine Biology. She has been involved in the local theater community for many years and utilizes her stage experience to enhance the delivery of her poetry to audiences. She has described herself as a "total ham". However, she is dedicated to advocacy through the Literary Arts.

The tradition of the poet laureate reaches back to the ancient Greeks who crowned their most celebrated poets and athletes with laurel wreaths. England has had a poet laureate since Geoffrey Chaucer first enjoyed the mantle in the 14th century; Italy's tradition dates back to Petrarch in 1341. The United States established its laureateship in 1937, and California appointed its first laureate in 1915. In April 2019, Kara Jackson was named the National Youth Poet Laureate. Genesis Perez's laureateship follows closely after the newly appointed Los Angeles youth poet laureate, Djuna Appel-Riehle. Currently, there are 41 youth poet laureates across the nation.

The position of the youth poet laureate is largely voluntary and no tax dollars will be spent. It's the work and enthusiasm of a committed community of artists, educators and writers that makes this possible. The Ventura County Youth Poet Laureate Committee is composed of Jenn Brickey, Monique Gonzales, Friday Gretchen,

Fernando Albert Salinas, Gabriel Valdez, Jaclyn Walker, and Kaiden Cole Wilde. All funding is generated through contributions and county sponsors.

More information about the Ventura County Youth Poet Laureate program visit: vcartscouncil.org.