

# TEEN TUESDAY

Article on Erik Perez for Latino.com

## Erik Perez Has Designs on a Graphic Artist Career

By [ADOLFO MENDEZ](#)  
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CHICAGO, October 23, 2000



Erik Perez is this week's featured teen. [Click here](#) to nominate your favorite, outstanding teen for Teen Tuesday.

### Erik Perez

- Age: 17
- School: Gage Park High School
- Ethnic Background: Puerto Rican
- Birth Place: Chicago
- Involvement/Hobbies: Drawing, painting, graphic design, web page design, cartooning and illustration.

When he's not playing heavy metal music with his garage band, Chicago teenager Erik Perez is honing his skill as a graphic artist.

A senior at Gage Park High School in Chicago, Perez works as a graphic artist for New Expression, a citywide teen news publication in Chicago. He also recently completed work on a 20-page coloring book that he donated to fourth graders at a local elementary school.

The coloring book, "Famous Hispanic Americans," contains his drawings of Roberto Clemente, Martin Sheen and other Hispanic notables.

"I did it for free," says Perez. "I hope one day to become a graphic artist or work in illustration."

Perez is also a member of a local garage band called Tridium. And he's designed a [Web page](#) for the group.

### Latino.com: What are some of the challenges Latino teenagers face today?

**Erik:** Typical stereotypes of Hispanics -- all Hispanic guys are in gangs or dealers. Some Latinas are bound to get pregnant at a young age or drop out of school. Sometimes you hear this from students or people on the street.

### Latino.com: Do you think Latino teenagers are actively involved in making a difference?

**Erik:** Most Latino students are involved academically and socially. It all depends on the options placed before them. I believe that if you want to make a difference in our society you have to work to make a difference, it won't just gradually change itself.

**Latino.com: What changes do you hope happen in the Latino community?**

**Erik:** I hope that we as a Hispanic community work for a better tomorrow, not just for ourselves but for future generations. I know that no one would want to raise their children in an unsafe environment. I wouldn't.

**Latino.com: What are some of the main problems Latino teens face today?**

**Erik:** Some Latino teens don't have encouragement in their lives, if they did they would look to do better in their community and within themselves.

**Latino.com: Do you think Latino teenagers have enough role models?**

**Erik:** I think these days there are enough role models for teens. There are so many different role models in the world, only you can pick the right role model for yourself.

**Latino.com: Who is your inspiration, your role model?**

**Erik:** I really don't have a role model. I just work hard at everything I do and when someone tells me that I won't be able to do it, I use that negativity and I work harder so that one day I will come back and show them what I've accomplished. I don't feel the need for a role model.

**Latino.com: What has been your biggest challenge?**

**Erik:** School. I'm not the best student but I try my best and work hard in school.

**Latino.com: What can teenagers do to make things better for their community?**

**Erik:** They could help out in their community or even volunteer. At school, I'm involved with the Latin American Student Organization. We've done canned food drives for hurricane victims.

**Latino.com: What are your future plans?**

**Erik:** To become a graphic designer and/or "Disney" cartoonist. I took an animation workshop at Columbia College in Chicago this summer.