

Angela M. Sánchez

Formerly Homeless, Writer, Cartoonist, Magician, Education Advocate, First Generation Latino College Graduate

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Topics

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About Angela M. Sánchez

Angela M. Sánchez (she/they) is a writer, equity advocate, and nonprofit consultant. Formerly one of the thousands of homeless students living in Los Angeles, Angela now serves on the Board of Directors for School on Wheels, Inc., a Los Angeles-based nonprofit that provides academic support to K-12 students experiencing homelessness. In 2018, the Los Angeles Times featured her children's book, *Scruffy and the Egg*, which tackles topics of single-parenthood and homelessness. Angela provides readings to family shelters, schools, libraries, and other organizations. An alumna of the Riordan Leadership Institute, Angela has provided training on understanding social identities and implicit bias for organizations, such as the Karsh Center, the Childcare Resource Center, and the Southern California Leadership Network among others.

Angela has a master's in education with a focus on student affairs and a bachelor degree from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Select Keynotes

• Poverty to Professional

The Great Recession hit many Americans hard; my family's financial situation was one of the casualties. We weren't simply broke -- we went homeless. With my father's support during dire times, one thing urged me to continue: the hope for a better future that college might bring. I made it! Rather, we -- me and my dad -- made it! However, the transition from being homeless in high school to being a first-generation college student to being a first-generation *professional* were not easy pathways to navigate. And while I was in college, my father was terminally diagnosed with cancer. The motivation to move forward was more challenging than ever. There are plenty of lessons I wish I had known in advance -- explore career options early, build a personal board of directors, the worst anyone can tell you is 'no' -- and this is something I gladly wish to share with students navigating their own journeys and the people who support them. This talk can also be tailored to center on any one specific subject (e.g. motivation in difficult situations, lessons from a first-generation professional, etc.).

Angela can discuss also the physical toll that homelessness takes on individuals. You can be clean of any kind of substance use and still face significant wear on your body. Fears include of dental care, sleep, and food insecurity.

Target audience: General audiences for motivational speaking, high school students, college students, higher education professionals, young career professionals, career coaches.

• Hidden Curriculum: The Difficult Process of Trying to Fit at a Place that Does Not Match One's Background

Hidden Curriculum is an academic term that essentially means the spoken rules/system that under-girds success (e.g. most students are given a syllabus with the professor's office hours, but few know that office hours is how you get to know the professor better and build the rapport to later ask for a letter of rec).

When Angela was accepted into UCLA, there was a difficult process of trying to fit in at a place that does not match your background. We all can experience bias at different times in our lives, however, there is something about young people have to deal with it at such an important and unsettled time of life that is especially moving and needs to be explored.

At a flagship university like UCLA, she would have felt very out of my depth were it not for a summer bridge program that connected me to a group of other first-gen, Pell-eligible students of color. Angela had a whole year where she thought my demographic was relatively normal.

The **rude awakening** came in my second year when Angela was randomly assigned to dorm with two first year students. One was the

daughter of two alumni from prestigious Greek houses, a bona fide "Baby Bruin." Angela felt like she was as new a student to the campus all the same as I had been the previous year. Naively, I asked if she'd like me to give her a tour.

"No," she said casually. "My parents have already taken me here lots of times. They both went here, remember?"

Her remark hit home. Angela suddenly noticed the alumni who played with their kids in front of Royce Hall, who pushed strollers around campus like it was a neighborhood park. Her grandfather had been a janitor at the Fox Theater down the street from UCLA, and as a teenager, her dad would help him on weekend nights. Yet, Angela had never set foot on UCLA until after she had submitted my college admissions decision.

- **The Subject of Gentrification. Does it Fuel the Crisis of Homelessness?**

Imagine a world of everything changing around you. Having been a long-time resident of Highland Park -- a Los Angeles neighborhood which has been branded as "the poster child for gentrification" -- Angela can eloquently discuss the subject.

Highland Park, California is where Angela's father and she landed our Section 8 housing. Now, ten years later, Angela is not sure if our same neighborhood would take us.

The notion of "revitalizing" neighborhoods through gentrification, giving the impression of increased wealth while treating residents like interchangeable parts, is superficial at best -- and, at its worst, fuels the crisis of homelessness that is already rampant in cities like Los Angeles, New York and Dallas.

- **Not "A Career vs. B Career" But Red Career and Blue Career**

The Millennial Generation is one that is expected to have five careers over the course of their lifetimes -- not jobs, *careers*. Many Millennials, and their successors of Gen Z, are also seeking fulfillment from their jobs at higher levels than past generations. This has given rise to the "side hustle," with the intent that someday the B Career will become the A Career. But what if it's not so either/or but more both/and? Playing on the Japanese folklore of Red Oni/Blue Oni (i.e. an aggressive ogre alongside a laidback ogre), this talk details how to make both careers work in tandem for a more fulfilling lifestyle.

Target audience: College Students / Early Career Professionals

- **Nimble Philanthropy: How to Get Over Convention to be Truly Innovative and Impactful**

Drawing on my professional experience as a program officer at a national foundation, this talk will center on how philanthropy can be more attentive to rising needs in a given field while still making informed decisions that are evidence-based as well as timely. The primary focus will be on the growing movement of supporting [basic needs](#) in higher education and grantees I've worked with. The presentation will also be attentive to how this might work in different context for local or regional funding networks.

Target audience: Professionals in philanthropy, corporate boards, corporate responsibility professionals, community organizers and local nonprofits

- **The Power of Narratives: How Story-Telling Saved Me and My Dad While We Were Homeless**

When Scruffy, a family dog, is left behind after his owners' home forecloses, he embarks on a quest to find them. Along the way, Scruffy meets his titular traveling companion, an egg that has fallen from its nest. The pair becomes inseparable, discovering that sometimes family finds you. This is the premise of the story my father and I used to tell each other while we were homeless. Eventually, I turned this into a picture book. The delicate themes of *Scruffy and the Egg*—homelessness, single-parenthood, and adoption—are critical to validating the daily challenges of so many children and families. But this complex narrative isn't something you usually see featured in children's literature. Families who live it are not represented, while families who do not remain unaware. It's time to give nontraditional families—families like mine—a story to share as they search for their homes in the world. Our children's literature needs to become more inclusive of these tough topics, not just for representation but also for teaching empathy.

This is a keynote relating to single parenthood and homelessness. In her homeless years, Ms. Sanchez and her father told one another stories to pass the time, refresh their happy memories and give each other hope. "The stories were always based on things from our real lives, but with an element of fantasy," she said. "They helped me feel safe, but without ignoring what was really happening."

Target audience: General audiences, children's book authors, homeless advocates

- **Homelessness, Higher Education, and How I Mastered the Hidden Curriculum**

The "hidden curriculum" is defined as "lessons which are learned but not openly intended." For example, most college students are told to attend their professor's office hours, but the hidden curriculum behind it isn't simply to ask for help mastering a subject as much as to draw upon the instructor's network, build rapport, and advance one's own social capital. It is this very knowledge that many college students, especially those who are the first in their families to attend, miss out on. Homelessness taught me its own type of hidden curriculum -- learning to be resourceful, strength in numbers, and recognizing that there's always a way around a locked door. How can someone who has a less than 10% chance of graduating within six years (and a three times higher likelihood of winding up homeless again) make it through to a master's degree? These were the foundations of my education.

Target audience: General audiences, higher education professionals, college students.

- **Seeing the Invisible: What Being a Magician Taught Me about Social Change**

People usually don't see what they do not expect to see, and rarely see what they do not want to see. When people think of homelessness, very few think of children, even if California disproportionately holds 20% -- or 570,000 -- of all homeless American children under 18. How is it possible to miss such a salient and vulnerable population? Perceptual blindness. Perceptual blindness, or the psychological brain block to

acknowledge what we do not expect to see, stands in the way of what could be a tidal wave of social reform. This is also a key principle to being a successful magicians. This particular talk will examine attention frames related to social welfare, specifically homelessness and the lack of conversation around homeless children.

Target audience: General audiences, social justice advocates.

Select Book Titles

- **2017:** Scruffy and the Egg

Select Articles

- [Two Generations to Get Me Here—and It's on Their Shoulders I Stand](#)

Although my father always assured me that college is the logical next step after high school, that is not the expectation most people had for students from my socioeconomic class. For my last two years of high school, I was homeless.

- [Former Homeless Woman Writes Children's Books That Break Stigma of Homelessness](#)

Formerly homeless woman is writing children's books to break down the stigma of homelessness. Kim Baldonado reports for NBC4 News at 11 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 22, 2019. Video of Angela being interviewed.

- [OPINION: Four ways to break the cycle of food and housing insecurity on campus](#)

For my last two years of high school, I was homeless. My father gave me the option of sharing our circumstances with teachers, counselors and administrators. I chose to stay silent.

- [Essay: At 16, My Dad And I Were Evicted And Homeless In LA](#)

A week before Thanksgiving in November 2007, I stared dumbly at the barren room. Our dining table was dismantled, its accompanying chairs lined up against walls devoid of family pictures and once-beloved bookcases. This year, there would be no handmade stuffing to prepare and no friends to have over.

- [Members on Issues: A Millennial Funder in Old-School Philanthropy](#)

How Generation Y is Shaping the Future of Philanthropy.

- [National Funder, Local Influence: How To Be Mindful of Your Playing Field](#)

With so much activity outside our window, remaining agnostic to geography isn't easy. But being a national funder does not mean being disconnected to the activity happening in our own backyards. It's a careful exchange to be locally engaged while staying true to mission. In working at ECMC Foundation for three years, the following is what I've learned so far.

- [POVERTY TO PROFESSIONAL](#)

A blog about homelessness, higher education, and hope