



Interview by Larissa Chelius | Nomination & Images by Shooting Future

Balancing school, friends, and extracurricular activities can be difficult for any 14-year-old. But most 14-year-olds don't also have a busy acting career, a published children's book, and a full schedule of motivational speaking appearances, radio co-hosting along with radio & TV interviews.

Then again, Maya Jai isn't like most 14-year-olds.

With over a dozen acting credits to her name, Maya Jai is a native Washingtonian and high-school freshman who has already made a name for herself across an impressive spectrum of media. Not only is Maya starring in an upcoming new TV series, "Dads Do It, Too," and co-hosting the radio segment of "Voices of Our Teens", but she also finds time to speak to children and adults alike about the importance of balancing work and play in their lives with her method of "Stop, Drop, Work, Then Play".

Maya certainly has the experience to back up her words. On top of her busy professional schedule, she's also maintains a high GPA. This talent and passion for achievement has led to Maya being featured in Washington Post Magazine, AFRO Newspaper, the WJLA TV news network, and as BMore Lifestyle's 'Go Girl of the Week' in addition to a wide variety of other print, radio and TV segments.

Considering all this, it might be tempting to ask if there's anything Maya can't do. But with someone this accomplished at such a young age, there's an even more fitting question.

What will she do next?



1. How did you become interested in acting?

I started modeling in magazine ads at the age of 1. I played basketball, volley ball, lacrosse and softball but around 11 years old, when the opportunity presented itself, I decided to explore acting and film like my older sister and my mom.

2. How do you manage your time with all of your different activities?

In addition to being a children's book author, I've always had a lot of extracurricular activities and I know that balancing a heavy schedule isn't always easy so, I came up with a solution that I call "Stop, Drop, Work, then Play". The method is a pretty easy one to remember;" Stop what you're doing", "Drop what you are doing" "Work on your assignment" Then you can Play or have leisure time. When I saw that some of my peers could use that method and I figured if you started developing that habit at a younger age it would become your first thought so, I incorporated my motto into my book Back Pack Lilly. The summary of the book is Back Pack Lilly teaches kids how to prioritize their studying and school work over extracurricular activities and playing.



3. What advice would you give to others about getting involved in many different opportunities?

If you're interested in getting involved do some research to make sure that it's really something that you want to try. You can pursue whatever opportunities your heart desires. Just remember that you have to develop a plan and with discipline and consistency you can make it work. Incorporate Stop, Drop, Work then Play in your daily routine and remember you should pace yourself and no matter how hard it gets, you can do it - just keep pushing and never give up!

4. How has radio-co-hosting impact you?

Voices of our Teens (VOOT as we like to call it [smile]) has definitely inspired me to keep working harder towards my goals. It allows me to be expressive, creative and inspirational all of which helps me in the classroom, my motivational speaking and acting. I love being able to give teens a platform to speak from their hearts on the issues that's impacting them negatively and positively. The host and I also give them advice on various ways to approach certain situations. The host Archie is a great mentor and pushes me to better myself and to never give up.



5. With all your different commitments how are you able to go out and do things with your friends?

I have a schedule that I check daily and I always make sure my school work is done. Depending on the event that's coming up, I generally plan my activities around them. Yes, there are times that I might miss out on some things but prioritizing my schedule leaves me time for a healthy social life. Besides I have a fun family and group of friends (I like to prank them) so, we really don't miss a beat.