

Teen Author's Big Dreams Spark Book, Launch Career

by Lauren Moses

Author, motivational speaker, actress and radio co-host are the titles that Maya Jai Pinson goes by. Pinson hosted a book reading at The Space located in Beltway Plaza across from the AMC movie theater entrance on Sunday, November 4.

The young author, only 14 years old, read her self-published book, *Backpack Lily*, to a group of children and their families. Those who walked through the mall stopped to look and participated in activities like coloring following the reading.

Backpack Lily is a children's book that Pinson said, "teaches kids how to prioritize school work over their play time." A Washington, D.C., native, Pinson realized at a young age that juggling so many responsibilities and schedules was quite difficult, but over time she was able to create a method called Stop, Drop, Work, Then Play. This is a concept that she uses a lot during her motivational speeches, she said, because "My message is broad, but still relatable to everybody."

During the reading, Pinson allowed the kids to ask her questions about the book and shared her method of Stop, Drop, Work,



Maya Jai Pinson

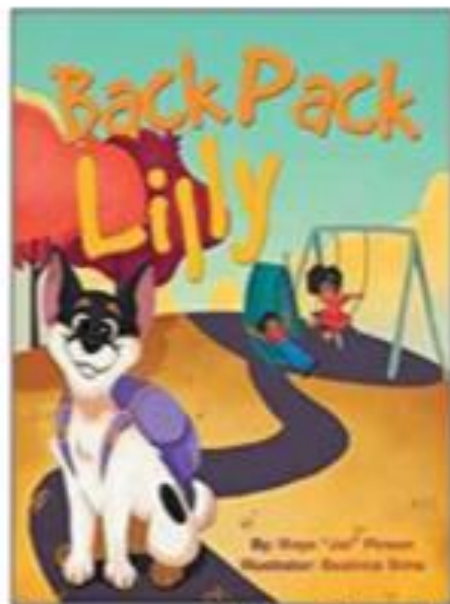
Then Play, to emphasize how important school work is. She said she loves inspiring people, especially young people, because she doesn't let her age hold her back from what she wants to do in life and with her career. Pinson doesn't think anyone else should either, no matter how old they are. "I like to focus on dreaming big because of how young I am. Once you have your mind set on something and you never give up, you can always accomplish it," she said.

Becoming an author did not happen overnight for Pinson. She got into the entertainment busi-

ness at the age of 1 as a model and she has always had a crazy schedule. She published her book as a 13-year-old but began acting even before that. She recently wrapped up the filming of a TV series titled, *Dads Do It, Too*, and is currently co-hosting a radio show titled *Voices of Our Teens*. Pinson said she enjoys being a part of the radio show because it gives kids a platform to speak on topics that they normally don't get a chance to.

Pinson has several projects on the way, including more TV shows and movies. To keep up with her, visit her website at mjaip.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PINSON FAMILY



The cover of Maya Pinson's book, *Backpack Lily*