

MAYA AJMERA

President & CEO

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Maya is the President and CEO of Society for Science & the Public (SSP) and Publisher of its award-winning magazine, *Science News*, and family of media properties. She is also an alumna of the 1985 Science Talent Search.

Maya grew up in Greenville, North Carolina, the daughter of Indian immigrants, a physicist and a business entrepreneur. Maya's interest in science began with her work in a botany lab exploring the growth of duckweeds when she was 13 years old. Her passion for scientific research and the thrill of competition made her a lifelong science fair junkie.

After attending Bryn Mawr College and receiving an AB in biology, Maya was awarded a fellowship to study and travel in South and Southeast Asia. It is there that Maya had her

“moment of obligation” and founded The Global Fund for Children (GFC), a nonprofit organization that invests in innovative, community-based organizations working with some of the world's most vulnerable children and youth. Under Maya's 18 years of leadership, GFC grew from a vision into one of the largest networks of grassroots organizations working on behalf of vulnerable children. To date, GFC has awarded nearly \$40 million to more than 600 grassroots organizations in 80 countries, touching the lives of nearly 10 million children.

In 2013–2014, she served as the inaugural Social Entrepreneur in Residence for Duke University and Visiting Professor for the Practice of Public Policy at The Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke, where she received her Master's of Public Policy in 1993. From 2011–2014, Maya was a Visiting Scholar and Professorial Lecturer at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at The Johns Hopkins University.

Maya is also an award-winning children's book author of over 20 titles with more than five million readers worldwide. Maya is a recipient of numerous leadership awards, including the 2011 Henry Crown Fellowship at the Aspen Institute, the Echoing Green Fellowship, the William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations, and the Rotary International Graduate Fellowship.

She is regularly invited to address audiences nationally and internationally on STEM education, local and global philanthropy, global children's rights, international development and social entrepreneurship. Her work and life story have been profiled by such media outlets as CNN, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *Financial Times*, NPR, and many others. Maya is co-chair of the board of Echoing Green, a trustee of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, and a board member of Kids in Need of Defense.



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