MARTA Man in the Making
Teenager Becomes an Expert on the Public Transit System; Hopes his Hobby will Lead to a Career

Anthony Banks

BEFORE YOU READ: What does the hashtag (#) symbol mean? What is “app” short for? Share what transportation apps you use. What does CEO stand for? What sort of work does a CEO do?

Some people tell me that my hobby is a waste of time, but I don’t see it that way. I’m just investing time into my future.

On the weekends, I get up early and ride the MARTA buses around East Point and Five Points train stations. (MARTA is the name of our bus and subway system. It stands for: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.) I talk to the bus drivers about the changes in their bus route, and I help them with their wheelchair passengers. On Saturday mornings, I take the 8:50 a.m. bus from my house in Southwest Atlanta to the Oakland City train station. There, I transfer to the East Point Station and get on the #194. I usually get back home around 3:15 p.m.

I have a friend who drives the #194. We met when she saw my MARTA T-shirt. I told her I would like to ride along to see how the bus operates and that, one day, I want to be the CEO of MARTA.

My favorite bus is #2376 because I like how it sounds when it goes over 30 miles an hour. That’s when it hums like the backside of an air conditioner. But sometimes if my favorite bus number is on a different route, I check my MARTA-on-the-Go app. This app helps me find the current location of any bus, including my favorite, #2376. Sometimes when I take a different route, I may get back home at around 7:00 p.m.

I can answer any questions about MARTA. I know MARTA’s history and the dates that each MARTA Station opened. The East Line was the first train line to be built from Atlanta to Decatur. In June 30, 1979, the very first MARTA train left the Avondale Station and ended at the Georgia State Station. I know the vehicle identification numbers from each garage, and I also know about how many minutes each route takes. Did you know each MARTA bus costs $900,000?

So you see, my hobby is anything but a waste of time. Riding the buses not only helps me to invest into my future, but it gives me something that I really like to do on the weekends and during winter, spring, and summer breaks.

Anthony Banks, 17, is one of the youngest ABE Students at Literacy Action, Inc., in Atlanta, GA. Anthony has had major heart surgery which caused him to miss a lot of school in the past. He is currently working on improving his reading and math skills to pass the GED tests.

AFTER YOU READ: According to the author, how will his hobby help him get a job at MARTA? What else will he need to do to achieve his dream?