



## USC Young Entrepreneurs Across America

*Pictured above Christian Chasmer and Alex Cwiakala*

If you asked USC seniors, Alex Cwiakala and Christian Chasmer what they were doing on their weekends; they would tell you they run their own businesses while mentoring and training young hopeful entrepreneurs.

They have had the rare opportunity to become branch managers for an internship program on campus with Young Entrepreneurs Across America. YEAA is a program that trains students how to run their own small business over the summer. Christian and Alex ran their own branch of Student Painters and helped pay their way through school while employing 10-12 employees themselves.

The students develop communication and business skills through a summer of real world experience. Christian says YEAA has been one of the best learning experiences he has ever had that can't be matched by a classroom. The two students were so successful in the program they were asked to come back in leadership roles and help train students.

Last year in 2013, Alex recruited and mentored Christian while training three other managers from the university. Between the two of them this year, they are mentoring and training 11 managers who will all be running their own branch of Student Painters. Alex says "I love seeing these students transform into new people in such a short period of time".

This internship is not only just a unique opportunity for the students; it is also unique for the customers. There is really no other place where a customer can help college students pay for tuition without sacrificing quality. Student Painters partners up with Sherwin Williams and is also fully insured and licensed, so the customers can rest assure they are getting a high quality service.

"One of the biggest lessons this internship has taught me was what we call my 'why' " Christian says. "It was more than money to me, but I had no idea what that was. I realized that the reason I am pursuing the path less traveled was all because of my mother, who raised me by herself and made me the man I am today. My whole goal in life is to make her proud."

Alex says "Each manager has a different 'why' and we try to focus on them individually so we have strong personal motives to reach personal and professional goals". These two driven students are selling more than paint jobs; they are selling an opportunity to help students grow.