

Student painting business starts this summer

Monica Kreber

mkreber@journalscene.com [@mkreber](https://twitter.com/mkreber)

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Patrick Gardiner and Brandon Phillips are two College of Charleston Students who are part of a student painting business starting up this summer. MONICA KREBER/JOURNAL SCENE

They may be young but two College of Charleston students mean business this summer.

Summerville Student Painters is an affiliate of Young Entrepreneurs Across America (YEAA), an organization that gives students the tools to become America's next great entrepreneurs through the medium of running his/her own painting company while also earning tuition for college.

Brandon Phillips is a freshman marketing major at the College of Charleston, hoping to one day be executive of a marketing company.

Phillips is the Summerville branch manager for Student Painters. He described the business as a wonderful opportunity for local students searching for jobs, and for homeowners looking for a quality paint job.

Phillips said he got involved in the business when he attended an information session at school and landed an interview with two executives, followed by an interview with the vice president. He was accepted into the business in November. Since then, Phillips has been working on a business plan and getting things ready for summer; he is focusing on booking jobs, putting out flyers and doing job estimates.

Phillips also had to go through training to learn how to do estimates, how to recruit employees, how to make the business plan effective, how to organize his time effectively, and to attain marketing skills.

"It's been going well," Phillips said, adding he booked his first job in February. "Right now it's neat being able to do estimates but I want to see what the finished product is going to look like, from all the hard work I've put in from hiring painters, to meeting with customers and getting booked jobs."

Phillips is also excited to see if he can reach his goal of running a \$100,000 business, so he can take that money and save it up for studying abroad and paying for his college tuition.

Phillips is going to take 10 percent of his profits from this summer and start a scholarship fund at Scholars Academy, a partnership with USC Upstate. High school students apply to get in the program, which helps students pay for college after they graduate.

Patrick Gardiner, a junior business major at the College of Charleston hoping to one day work in sales, serves as regional manager for YEAA. He has been involved since his freshman year and has

enjoyed watching the business transform during the summer. Gardiner helps the branch managers get their business started.

“I like the idea of getting paid for how hard you work,” he said

Gardiner too got involved in Student Painters as a freshman. He said he has enjoyed taking what he has learned in class and applying it to an actual business.

“I’ve really elevated in sales and leadership, and just learning all aspects of business,” he said.

Phillips said so far the most stressful part has been getting jobs booked and working on the estimate. “It can be stressful but it’s also rewarding once you do get an estimate,” he said. “I’d say trying to find jobs is probably the most stressful.”

Phillips is looking to hire area high school and college students as painters. They will be trained by Sherwin-Williams at the end of April. Hiring painters is Phillips’s focus for March.

Prospective painters will need to apply and interview for the job. Phillips is looking for people who are goal-oriented and willing to work hard as a team. He is also looking for employees to be marketers

“So those who are interested in sales and business, they can get the experience of marketing and business and put it on their resume to prepare for college and future jobs,” he said.

It is also an opportunity for students to network. Phillips wants a sense of camaraderie to develop among the student painters. “We’re going to be working together for three to four months, so there are definitely some relationships we can build with that,” he said.

Gardiner said he has gotten positive feedback from employees. “That’s got to be the coolest part: whenever you talk to people, like some of the managers from last year, that have that peace of mind moving forward that they can do whatever they want to do,” he said.

Phillips said entering college as a freshman he never envisioned himself getting such an opportunity

“It’s really nice to see a company that’s willing to invest in people as young as 18 to run their own business,” he said.

More on YEAA can be found at www.yeainternship.com. More on Student Painters can be found at www.southeaststudentpainters.com.