

**Brian Jenkins M.A. '93** To learn more about Brian and the work of Entrenuity, visit their website: [www.entrenuity.com](http://www.entrenuity.com).



PROFILE

## Beyond the Asphalt and Concrete

by Lena James Fenton '99

Hope can be hard to find on the streets of inner city Chicago. But for a group of urban teenagers, their parents and their teachers, dreams are becoming reality and joy is spilling over into their communities.

Meet Brian Jenkins M.A. '93, co-founder of Entrenuity, an organization that trains urban youth to channel their energy and talents into starting their own businesses. Brian's work is not so much focused on developing the job skills of teenagers as much as it uses a biblical platform to challenge these

young people to "see beyond themselves and their circumstances, to see past the asphalt and concrete that surrounds them every day," he explains.

"Under-resourced communities have tremendous value," he continues. "It's the media that promotes negative images of high crime rates and poor schools. But we are focusing on positive things and teaching the students to identify the skills they have and to bring them back to the community."

While Entrenuity's program, "Creating True Wealth," focuses heavily on building character and integrity in its students, it also incorporates Christian principles into high-quality business training. But it isn't just his students' progress that makes his efforts seem worthwhile: "When I see other adults and other youth grasp what we've been teaching, when they realize that they really do have opportunities and options, that's what I'm most proud of," he says.

Entrenuity's success stories range from a sophomore who creates web pages for friends, families, and corporations to D&S Vending, which is run by two high school students. Their vending service brought in \$15,000 in 2002 alone. The success of the business depended on much more than their friendship; it also required total parental participation, the support of their southside Chicago neighborhood, and their desire to honor God's kingdom.

By weaving opportunity, integrity, and a sense of purpose into the lives of young people and their families, Entrenuity helps students become business owners—and in the process grows hope.