

# Group wants to transform Reading into paradise

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By [Bruce Posten](#)

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Can Reading be transformed into a paradise one block at a time?

Three city men think so.

But they know that just thinking and talking about it won't make it so.

"We saw people on Facebook talking about ideas to beautify the city but nothing was coming to fruition, so we decided to form a group call Destination Paradise LLC back in January and sought partners and volunteers for projects to transform Reading," said Rohan Cambridge, 41, an artist and Jamaican native who became an American citizen in 2012.

Cambridge, who also works as a maintenance man at Olivet Boys and Girls Club in Oakbrook, is joined by two other city residents, artist Ed Terrell and real estate agent Javon Phillips, who worked recently to maintain the Garden of Good Thoughts on a vacant lot at Schuylkill Avenue and Walnut Street.

The men, with the help of a handful of other volunteers, weeded the garden, mowed a grassy meadow, pruned flowers and cleaned up trash.

Several area residents periodically stopped by and expressed their appreciation for what the men were doing, recalling that the site was once an eyesore, overgrown with weeds and filled with litter.

"The idea to do something came from a burning desire to experience the beauty of nature everywhere I go in the city," Cambridge said.

Destination Paradise, with its dramatic train logo and sign at the Garden of Good Thoughts site, plans another community garden project in the next few weeks at a vacant lot at 924-928 Penn St. owned by the Reading Redevelopment Authority.

"We got the green light from the city and Brian Kelly (executive director of Redesign Reading Community Development Corp.) to establish the garden and we are looking for volunteers," Cambridge said.

Redesign Reading is a nonprofit focusing on neighborhood recovery.

To volunteer or learn more about Destination Paradise, individuals can go to [www.destinationparadise.info](http://www.destinationparadise.info). Cambridge and Terrell hope to tap into community creativity and artistic talent to beautify outdoor areas in the city.

Phillips, 28, said the group has an even broader vision that falls under an umbrella called C.R.E.A.T.E.R.S (Community Recovery and Education in Arts, Technology, Economics, Real Estate and Science). "In the future, we hope to set up workshops and mentoring opportunities for young people so a new generation will continue our work and expand it to improve our community," said Phillips, who is earning his bachelor's degree in business management at Alvernia University.

"We are looking at the city as our canvas to C.R.E.A.T.E. beauty and economic empowerment with community," Phillips said.

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