

HOME WEUU INTERNET SERVICES COMMERCIAL PRINTING Subscriber Services Advertise With Us E-Edition Archives Contact

readingeagle.com Search Site Here... SEARCH SEARCH OPTIONS

News Money Sports Arts/Entertainment Lifestyle Multimedia Special Sections Community Special Moments Classified Web Exclusives

READING EAGLE Better Look. Better Read. [Click here to subscribe](#)

"IMPOSSIBLE TO RESIST!"
- The New York Times

THE NEW HIT MUSICAL COMEDY
Featuring the music of
JOURNEY • STYX • PAT BENATAR
POISON • RED SPEEDWAGON • FOREIGNER
NIGHT RANGER • TWISTED SISTER
WHITESNAKE AND MANY MORE!

ROCK OF AGES
Click for tickets

January 26 • 7:30pm
Sovereign Performing Arts Center

READING EAGLE BIGdeals

\$10 for \$20 worth of food at Brewer's Bar & Grill

Originally Published: 10/17/2011

Share 87



more news from this area >>>

Seeds sown for garden, neighborhood in south Reading

Activists hope small lot in south Reading sparks a renaissance

By **Erinn Connor**
Reading Eagle

Like 87 likes. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

Candice Mayton knows what she wants her south Reading neighborhood to look like.

She has a clear vision in her head: A florist down the street. Restaurants with sidewalk tables. People walking up and down the street, popping in and out of businesses.

But when the South Fifth Street resident steps out of her front door, that's not what she sees.

She sees empty streets, abandoned buildings and few thriving businesses. But once she arrived at a vacant lot in the 600 block of Canal Street on Sunday, her hopes were buoyed.

The 1.8-acre lot started its transformation into a garden and food production space by the local nonprofit group Permacultivate in partnership with the city and the Reading Redevelopment Authority.

More than 100 volunteers came to the lot to break ground, plant trees and spread dirt for what Permacultivate and the neighborhood hope is a successful revitalization project.

For Mayton, president of the South of Penn Neighborhood Association, it's proof people care about the neighborhood. She moved from Maiden Creek Township to the city six years ago, and has not regretted the decision.

"In the past, there's been lots of talk, but no action," said Mayton, 52. "We'd heard about this last year, but I never thought I'd be standing here seeing something actually happening."

Eron Lloyd, Permacultivate's managing director, hopes the site will provide not only locally grown food but also education on environmentally friendly practices.

"With Reading just being named the poorest city in the country, we think urban agriculture can be a valuable niche," he said. "We're working closely with the neighborhood to find out what they want from the project."

The Canal Street site is the second location of the group's Reading Roots Urban Farm. The first was in City Park. What is produced at the city greenhouse is sold at the Penn Street Market.

The Canal Street site, a former housing block cleared after flooding from Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972, will eventually host multiple gardens, a compost site and a community events center.

Volunteers worked under a bright October sun to plant tiny 6-inch saplings along the property, spread soil for gardens and build compost bins.

On Saturday, Mayor Tom McMahon, Councilman Francis G. Acosta and state Sen. Judy Schwank dedicated the site.

Heather Hanna, a South Fifth Street resident, said she hopes this project will light a spark for her ailing

TOWN SQUARE

- Martins Bike Shop Inc.
- Art Plus Gallery
- Woman's Exchange of Reading

[+] Enlarge. (2 pictures) - Buy This Photo



Reading Eagle: Lauren A. Little

Chris M. Rodriguez of Reading, left, and Craig L. Smith, an Albright College student, dig holes for new plants in a new urban garden Sunday in the 600 block of Canal Street.

Readership has its rewards!

READING EAGLE READER REWARDS CLUB

IT PAYS TO JOIN THIS CLUB! CLICK HERE

Vote 2010
Berks
Sports
Life
READING EAGLE
Women vets winning battle on health care

Advertise Here

Berks Game Day | READING EAGLE internet services DESIGN | Newspaper in Education

[Login](#) or [Create an Account](#)

STORMCENTER UPDATE
readingeagle.com

Sponsored Links

SMART Carpet & Flooring
1-800-526-7847 for a Free Estimate Never Pay Store Prices Again!
[SmartCarpet.com](#)

50% Off On Nail Polish
Get Free Shipping & More Than 50% Off On Beauty Supplies Today!
[Julep.com](#)

Caribbean Conferences
5 modern meeting facilities in St. Lucia. Book meeting space online.
[www.BayGardensResorts.com](#)

CNA Certifications
Find CNA Nursing Schools In Your Area. Search Now!
[www.collegesurfing.com](#)

AeroGarden® Indoor Garden
Grow Fresh Produce Year Round. Great Special Offers & FREE Shipping.
<http://www.AeroGarden.com>

neighborhood.

"The most we've been able to do in the past is put planters outside our houses," said Hanna, who helped fertilize trees. "To have someone coming in and doing something is incredible."

Permacultivate wants to start growing food on the land in the spring and sell to the neighborhood and local restaurants. Lloyd said the organization is pursuing a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to build hoop greenhouses on the site, which would allow food growth year-round.

Mayton hopes this is the first of many steps toward her vision for the neighborhood.

"There's all this negativity about poverty in the city, but clearly there are positive things happening," Mayton said, looking out at the garden. "This definitely brings some vitality here."

Contact **Erinn Connor**: 610-371-5042 or econnor@readingeagle.com.

Amazon.com

	Moneyball New \$3.99 Best \$3.99		The Help New \$3.99 Best \$3.99
	Courageous Alex Kendrick, Ken... New \$16.99 Best \$11.00		Contagion New \$3.99 Best \$3.99

Privacy Information

Select Language 
Powered by 



By posting a comment, you are agreeing to Reading Eagle Company's terms and conditions. Any comment deemed offensive by the moderators will be removed. Any comment deemed threatening or encouraging conduct that would constitute a criminal offense or violate any law will be referred to the Berks County district attorney.



Add a comment...

Comment



Cory Rhodes · Owner at Reading Rivertribe
God bless the Good People of Reading, putting in the sweat equity it takes to create Vision! "We will see it when we believe it." - Saul Alinsky
Reply · Like · October 18, 2011 at 5:19am



Jean Newman Hopper · Central Piedmont Community College
I absolutely love it! With all the vacant lots in Reading, why NOT use them for gardens?
Reply · Like · October 17, 2011 at 10:24am

You might be interested in:

- [West Reading fires 3 officers in stun-gun scandal](#) (Berks county news)
- [Tips sought in attempted shooting in Cumru Township](#) (Berks county news)
- [Thousands mourn at Old Main](#) (Berks county news)
- [Paterno gravely ill; family denies reports of death](#) (Berks county news)

Selected for you by a sponsor:

- [NFL: The Most Classless Player on Every Team](#) (BleacherReport)
- [4 risky places to swipe your debit card](#) (Bankrate.com)

recommended by [Outbrain](#) [?]

			
---	---	--	---

© 2012 Reading Eagle Company, All Rights Reserved - Serving the Berks County community and surrounding areas for over 140 years! These links are not endorsements of any products or services in such sites, and no information in such site has been endorsed or approved by this site. [Privacy Policy](#)

WEEU 830 AM | Reading Eagle Press
Reading Eagle Company • 345 Penn Street • Reading • PA • 19603 • 610.371.5000