



# **Amare is working to bring community to addicts in recovery**

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**GRANITE CITY** - Ty Bechel has a past of drugs, stealing and countless bad decisions he has written in a book "Heroin Rising."

His story, unlike many others in the nation, has a happy conclusion, however. After defeating dependency through volunteerism and community, Bechel decided he wanted to dedicate his life for helping others who have fallen into the trap of addiction. Since his recovery, Bechel has become gainfully employed at Chestnut Healthcare Systems, joined the East Alton Rotary Club and started a non-profit called "Amare," which is an Italian verb meaning "to actively love."

Amare reaches out to people in recovery as well as addicts in the intense heat of their dependencies with the goal of bringing them back to the community. Bechel said Amare works toward fixing the social and environmental conditions causing them to seek chemical addictions.

"Things don't seem like they're getting better," Bechel said. "People in recovery need to feel like they are part of a social connection, instead of being the 'other.' We focus on the social aspect of wellness, as well as environmental. People need to realize we're all in a shared environment - in the same community."

While the opiate epidemic raging through Madison County and the nation does not seem to be slowing or stopping anytime soon, Bechel said he wants to combat it through inclusion and creativity.

Besides writing a book about his experience, Bechel also wrote a play called "If I Never Wake Up," which is the harrowing tale of a high school girl who falls into the pit of heroin addiction. Since its original debut, Bechel has added a second act to it as well.

If I Never Wake Up will be performed at Collinsville High School on July 15, 2017. It will be free to attend, thanks to a grant from the Missouri-based Hope Organization.

Bechel has a goal of raising as much as \$5,000 for the purpose of future fundraising and community outreach projects. One fundraiser for that goal is a Lip Sync battle to be held at the Greater Alton Church, located at 506 E. Airline Drive in East Alton. The event starts at noon, and each contestant can pay \$20 to perform four songs solo or \$30 to perform duets.

Some of that money will also go to a scholarship to people in recovery as well.

To demonstrate its commitment to the community, Amare will be hosting a free breakfast for the community on Aug. 26. During that breakfast, addicts in recovery will

serve a free breakfast with first responders to the community. As of now, members of the East Alton Police Department, Wood River Police Department and Wood River Fire Department have expressed interest in the event.

Amare members Susan Chapel and Tracy Green have put together the Breaking Barriers Breakfast, Bechel said. They have also secured donations of bagels from Panera Bread, milk cartons from Prairie Farm and water from The Bank of Edwardsville.

Addicts in recovery and members of Amare are also part of the Adopt-A-Highway program. Four times a year, addicts in recovery and volunteers clean a mile-long portion of Route 143 in Wood River.

The staff of Amare includes Bechel as its executive director, Adele Scott as its president, Destini Lednicki as its secretary, Kyle Brown as its treasurer and Rachel Done, Amber Davidson and Ryan Wood as board members.

More information can be found on its [website](#).