

Doughy Dog food truck rolls on despite bumps in the road



Donald Culley revisits the Doughy Dog Wednesday after his June graduation from the food truck's work program that is run by Arundel House of Hope. The Doughy Dog has seen some obstacles during this year's season such as a stolen power cord and broken refrigeration units but will continue to operate. The food truck is stationed at the Glen Burnie District Courthouse Monday and Wednesday and Arundel Christian Church Tuesdays from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. (By Brandi Bottalico / Baltimore Sun Media Group)

By Brandi Bottalico – Capital Gazette – August 2, 2014

There's always something happening on The Doughy Dog.

A \$700 copper power cord was stolen in May. Then it was out of service in June for maintenance. And a refrigerator and freezer unit were ruined from only running off a generator.

But the food truck rolls on, specializing in hot dogs, pit beef sandwiches, breakfast plates and hope for men and women seeking to turn their lives around.

The Doughy Dog is a 12-week work program run by the Arundel House of Hope in Glen Burnie that employs people who once lived on the street or are recovering from substance abuse. Arundel House of Hope reinvests its profit in skills training, housing and other supportive services for those workers.

This summer, it can be found Mondays through Wednesdays at the District Court building and Arundel Christian Church in Glen Burnie.

"It helped me to regain my self esteem and to want more out of life," Doughy Dog Manager Oliver Sellman said.

Sellman became homeless, abusing alcohol and drugs, and was incarcerated. He jumped at the chance to work on the food truck when the program first began in 2008.

"I promised myself upon my release I would never live that lifestyle again," he said. "The program made me find out who I truly was."

Now he is the manager of the truck and Safe Haven 2, a residential program, and works as an aide at Arundel House of Hope.

The obstacles for the Doughy Dog have helped the participants rather than hindered them, program Director Terri Alexander said.

“I think it teaches our interns and our participants how to manage in life,” she said. “It’s like problem solving in the real world, and I think that’s really good for our participants because it helps them develop really good skill sets.”

New Doughy Dog graduates will be the first to receive full tuition to an [Anne Arundel Community College](#) food sanitation course. A \$5,000 mini-grant from the Anne Arundel County Health Department paid for the training, which will help workers to go after better jobs in the food industry.

Each year about three or four participants are trained in life skills, time management and interpersonal skills in a classroom setting before being given a certificate of completion. Then the internship portion begins where they get the real world experience on the truck.

Donald Culley, who completed the program in June, said he struggled with homelessness and drinking but has been sober for 14 months. The Doughy Dog isn’t his first experience in the food industry; he worked at Red Lobster, Romano’s Macaroni Grill and Old Country Buffet.

“All different places I worked, there’s always something,” he said. “You just adapt.”

The Doughy Dog took a trip to Baltimore for [Artscape](#) in June, and Culley said they were struggling to make hot dogs for the large amount of people with the limited storage.

“It’ll make you want to pull your hair out,” he said.

But the truck made about \$9,000 in sales with about \$2,000 profit, said Mario Berninzoni, director of the Arundel House of Hope. The nonprofit is still figuring out what to do about the refrigeration and the cord, but hopes to close the food truck early this season for repairs.

Sellman said Doughy Dog workers are more motivated to overcome the challenges because the success of the business affects the recovery of people in similar situations as them.

At least that’s the reason Sellman continues to work for Arundel House of Hope programs and wants to go back to school to learn more about computers for the nonprofit.

“My goal is to become more in depth with what the Arundel House of Hope does,” he said. “I just want to stay with them after they helped me.”