

SALUTE

BOYD INGRAM

SPCA OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

By Becca Newell

Boyd Ingram is so invested with his volunteer efforts at SPCA of Anne Arundel County that the nonprofit's president, Kelly Brown, gave him his own business card—not a typical volunteer experience. But then again, Ingram isn't your typical volunteer.

The Glen Burnie resident celebrated his third anniversary at the organization in March. Like most volunteers, he started as a dog walker, but it wasn't long before he became involved with outreach programs, like the race team, the mobile unit, and a host of events presented by the shelter.

"I've been involved with the race team since day one," he says, explaining its mission—pairing dogs with local runners at a nearby park for a morning of exercise. "It started with two or three dogs and now we're running eight to 10 dogs almost every weekend."

The program, he says, not only gives high-energy pooches the opportunity to enjoy a morning run, it also offers additional exposure for the shelter and those pets in need of a home.

Ingram also taught himself how to drive the shelter's mobile unit—a



customized 37-foot RV—so he could take it to the organization's events to showcase adoptable dogs, cats, rabbits, and other furry friends.

"It's a big attraction," he says, with a grin. "And a source of pride, for me. I love doing it."

With a multitude of large- and small-scale events throughout the year, Ingram says he has difficulty choosing a favorite. Though they require a lot of time, the sense of accomplishment that follows a successful event, in addition to spending time with animals, is what keeps Ingram actively involved. He also likes the fact that these events introduce him to new experiences.

A prime example is Ingram's former fear of public speaking that he was able to overcome after attending one of the shelter's major fundraisers.

"At the first Puppy Plunge I attended, one of the volunteers pulled me up on stage to emcee the Dog Bikini Contest. She put a mic in my hand and said 'Here. Talk to them.' And from then

on, they haven't been able to shut me up," he says, laughing.

Ingram volunteers at the shelter most weekends—his day job as an aircraft mechanic at BWI Airport keeps him busy during the week. And although the shelter only requires volunteers to commit to six hours a month for six months, Ingram racked up more than 500 hours last year.

His reasons for his dedication are simple: the animals and the people. He says he's constantly amazed at the resilience of rescued pets and finds happiness when they find a home. He also says he's thankful to be in such good company with the organization's staff and volunteers. The friends he's made, he adds, are irreplaceable.

"I can't see not doing it, not being here," he says. "It's become a part of my life. It's where I belong."

DO YOU HAVE A VOLUNTEER TO NOMINATE? EMAIL BECCA NEWELL AT BNEWELL@WHATSUPMAG.COM