**Food Matters (cont’d)**

During the 4 years I worked at Petco as a dog trainer, I heard countless stories from customer’s of pets with health issues. A lot of itchy skin, recurring ear infections, and urinary tract issues, to name a few. Even my own dog and 4 cats had issues. Some of which were frequent vomiting, pulling their fur out, and loose stools. All of my pets’ bloodwork tested negative for any parasites or diseases. This caused me to delve into the root of these issues.

What I discovered from my research, from becoming a certified herbalist, and the advice from a holistic vet, was that the food that I thought was the best in the store, was still inadequate for my dog and cats. I switched over to a homemade diet, approved by my holistic vet, Dr. Debbie Decker. I switched my dog over to Bil-Jac dog food(not the frozen Bil-Jac), plus he benefitted from the homemade diet for some of his meals. Honestly, I was so happy after 8 long years of intermittent, but frequent, vomiting and diarrhea, that all of his symptoms disappeared, I wanted to see how long he would live with this new diet. He lived until he was 13 years old!

Because of my experiences, I felt inspired to develop a PowerPoint presentation. I currently conduct this presentation locally as often as possible. I explain what dogs and cats require nutritionally versus what they get in processed food. I also list healthy and unhealthy choices of whole foods for pets, and handouts to take home. I even talk about how these unhealthy choices affect the immune system and what you can do to counter the negative affects it has on your pets. I realize that not everyone wants to make their pet’s food, even with the guidance of a holistic vet. Therefore, I provide a list of healthy and affordable choices. Even if you just switch to raw vegetables as treats for your dog, that is still a positive step in the right direction.

As a dog trainer, the dog has to feel good in order to respond to training. Just think how you feel when you have to go to work not feeling well! My objective in making people more aware of the food choices they are making for their dogs and cats is to help them go from a state of surviving to thriving. **FOOD MATTERS!**