

Providing All-Natural & Affordable Pet Food

Written by Southwest Orlando Bulletin Staff



Winter Garden resident Kim Pitchford-Dannenberg, owner of Gracie's of Winter Garden, and Kodak, one

After years of thinking natural varieties too expensive, people are turning to Gracie's of Winter Garden

"Most of the food you find in the grocery or big-box stores are full of fillers, byproducts and additives," Kim

Natural food also can ward off potential health problems, which could mean fewer trips to the veterinarian.

Kim, an avid pet lover, understands the importance of feeding pets a healthy diet. One of her two Newf

"[My dog] Nykon is a walking miracle," said Kim, who was a loyal customer of the former Gracie's Bone

When Gracie's original owner decided to move out of state, she approached Kim with an offer to buy the

In November 2009, Kim [purchased Winter Garden](#), and she moved to a quaint, white clapboard house on

Gracie's can be found by looking for the big blue dog bone positioned on the exterior of the building. Ple

Pet lovers who shop at Gracie's are more than just customers to Kim — many have become her friends.

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"I try to remember the names of my customers and get to know them," said Kim, who believes it is important to know your customers.

A longtime Winter Garden resident, Kim has strong ties to Southwest Orlando and believes in the importance of supporting local businesses.

"I ask a lot of questions when we consider putting an item in the store," she said. "I want to know everything about the product."

For some, it can be overwhelming to determine the right type of healthy pet food or supplement. However, Kim's approach is simple.

"I immediately ask if the pet has any health problems or concerns, how old the pet is, and the customer's budget," she said.

Samples of food are always given at no charge. And Kim encourages clients to "try before they buy."

Kim was quick to add that she never diagnoses an animal.

"If someone describes symptoms or chronic health problems, I immediately tell them to consult a vet," she said.

In addition to dry and wet pet food, Gracie's offers raw pet food. Four large freezers contain a variety of options.

Gracie's main inventory consists of holistic food and treats; however, Kim does have an impressive offering of other products.

Since Gracie's is not a franchise, Kim has the flexibility to control what she sells.

"If I don't believe in a product, I won't put it on my shelves," she said. "My foods have no fillers, byproducts, or artificial ingredients."

"Some people think that any pet food made with grain is bad, but just like human food, there are good grains and bad grains," she said.

Gracie's is the only pet food store in the Greater Orlando area that carries Canine Caviar dog food. Canine Caviar is a high-quality, grain-free dog food.

Another product exclusive in the area to Gracie's is Flea Free. The all-natural garlic-and vinegar-based product is effective against fleas and ticks.

Kim does whatever she can to satisfy her customer's pet needs. If someone has a special request, she will do her best to accommodate it.

All first-time customers who mention the Gracie's ad in Southwest Orlando Bulletin receive a 10 percent discount on their purchase.

Gracie's holds events periodically that benefit local animal shelters and foster services. On June 18, the store will host a fundraising event.

Despite difficult economic times, Kim has continued to build a steady and loyal following.

"Getting the word out that we are here is probably the biggest challenge," she said. "Once people come in, they usually become regulars."

Gracie's of Winter Garden is located at [220 S. Dillard St. in Winter Garden](#). Operating hours are Monday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm.

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