

SMALL BUSINESS

Jeff's Granola is all about the giving



Jeff's Granola founder Jeff Greim and his employee, Katherine Tapp, hold some of the granola that's made with organic, all-natural ingredients in large batches at East Baking Co. in Holyoke. (JEFF'S GRANOLA PHOTO)

Retired educator models business on Newman's Own

By STASIS HEROPOLLOS
Special to The Republican

You'd have to be nuts to give away all the money you make as a small business

owner. In fact, nuts are a key ingredient in the granola Jeff Greim makes and a reason he can donate thousands of dollars each year to charities across Western Massachusetts. Greim founded Jeff's Granola in 2012, using a recipe cooked up by a neighbor. He tweaked it here and there, using only organic, all-natu-



Jeff's Granola, founded in 2012 by Jeff Greim, of Longmeadow, donates its profits to area charities. It was recognized by the Small Business Administration of Massachusetts as its Micro-business of the Year for 2020. (JEFF'S GRANOLA PHOTO)

ral ingredients made in large batches at East Baking Co. in Holyoke. He started with a single product line and, today, has six. Solid profits eluded Jeff's Granola during its first few years in business, but by 2017 revenue hit \$11,000. That grew to \$16,000 in 2018, \$118,000 in 2019 and \$190,000 in 2020. Greim

landed two major accounts in 2018 and in 2019 debuted Jeff's Granola with Foragers Markets in its Manhattan and Brooklyn, New York, locations, which explains how his business took off. "I began selling one-ounce packets of granola to the Springfield and Providence (Rhode Island) school systems

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ROBERT NELSON, MASSACHUSETTS DISTRICT DIRECTOR, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Granola

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for use in their breakfast and lunch programs," says Greim of how it happened. Before that, Greim had relied on retail sales in 13 Big Y Foods stores and the River Valley Co-op in Northampton.

Greim was the graduate director of nonprofit studies at Bay Path University in Longmeadow when he founded his business. He wrote an academic paper on the consumer brand Newman's Own, which was established by actor Paul Newman and donates 100% of its profits to charity. Greim wanted to replicate that business model locally.

"I'm very, very lucky, and I appreciate what it is that has come my way in life," he says.



"If we all do our part, we share and come out better as a community."

JEFF GREIM, FOUNDER, JEFF'S GRANOLA

"I've known for a long time that other people don't have the benefits I have so this is just a way to give back and acknowledge we're all in this together. If we all do our part, we share and come out better as a community."

Greim donates all of his profits to local charities and relies on his customers to decide what ones share the bounty. There's a tab on his website where customers make their selections. Jeff's Granola donated nearly \$12,000, divided among more

than 50 charities in 2019 and exceeded that in 2020 with donations totaling \$18,315.

He's since retired from Bay Path and doesn't draw a salary from the business. Greim says he's not in it for money or accolades, even though the Small Business Administration of Massachusetts named Jeff's Granola its Micro-business of the Year for 2020.

"It's a pleasure to recognize Jeff Greim for creating a brand that supports the community," SBA Massachusetts district director Robert Nelson said. "Small businesses are such an integral part of the commonwealth's ecosystem and the work they do in helping to build and support vibrant communities is so worthy of recognition. We all commend Jeff's Granola and congratulate them on their path to success and on becoming an impactful household brand!"

Adding more school systems to his cache of clients, along with more retailers, is part of Greim's 2021 plan. If that happens, he thinks he can double his business and his donations in this new year.

You can learn more about Jeff's Granola online at jeffsgranola.com.



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