

## New Hampshire District Office

Release Date: April 17, 2019

Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/nh](http://www.sba.gov/nh)

Release Number: 19-16

Contact: Cheryl A. Croto

Email Address: [cheryl.croto@sba.gov](mailto:cheryl.croto@sba.gov)

Phone: 603-225-1407

### U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Announces 2019 Woman Owned Small Business of the Year, Manufacturing



#### Vivian Cubilla-Lindblom owner of Maple Nut Kitchen

**CONCORD, NH** – Vivian Cubilla- Lindblom is a long way from Paraguay, South America where she grew up. Vivian moved to the United States nineteen years ago and then to NH five years ago from Florida. She began her career in the financial industry, got her masters in finance, and thought that this was going to be her path. As time went on, she realized that deep down her dream was to become an entrepreneur. She started brainstorming and decided that she wanted to develop some type of healthy food product line but did not know where to start.

Soon after moving to NH, she heard about a small granola business up for sale and it immediately peaked her interest. Deciding to take a risk, Vivian purchased this existing business. It was very small, having only a handful

(Con't)

of customers. She liked the idea of not having to start a business from scratch and loved the products; however, she wanted to make the business her own and decided to change the company name and logo and added some new flavors. Vivian also changed the existing recipes to improve both the quality of the ingredients and the flavor profiles resulting in better tasting products. Maple Nut Kitchen now sells thirteen unique flavors of granola that are gluten free and vegan and has recently introduced a new grain free Paleo line, which has become very popular. Since Vivian started this journey over four years ago, she has grown from just a handful of accounts to over 200 wholesale customers nationwide. She hired a full-time sales person that has tremendously contributed to the growth of her company in the past 18 months. Maple Nut Kitchen has increased the distribution of their granola in places like health food stores, food co-ops, gift shops, as well as some grocery stores such as Hannaford's. In addition, the company has successfully on-boarded into six Whole Foods Market locations with plans to expand further.

"I never thought it would be possible to love what you do so much. This is the most rewarding thing I've ever done. I get calls and messages from people all over who are fans of our products, it is quite hard to believe and sometimes I literally have to pinch myself. None of this could be possible without having a good team in place. My team is so positive, hard-working, and excited to be a part of our journey. It has allowed me to have more time to focus on things such as deeper sales & financial strategy, obtaining our Non-GMO certification, as well as preparing for the next stage of growth," stated Vivian. Vivian's husband, Guy (who is part owner of the company), helped Vivian with production and operations for the first two years. He also built and renovated the new production facility. Today he acts as a consultant for the company.

When Vivian started out, she shared space in a commercial kitchen with other users. After 3.5 years, the company outgrew its space and moved into a new production facility in Swanzey, NH. This has helped increase capacity and has allowed for a dedicated gluten-free space and some much-needed office space.

Working with Nancy DuBosque from the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center (NH SBDC) has been a great experience for Vivian. "Nancy's guidance in the first two years of our journey was extremely valuable to our business. The support she offered was instrumental to growing our company. She acted as a sounding board to ensure that we made the best decisions possible in order to continue to head in the right direction and assisted with everything from helping us put together financial and cash flow statements to helping with our search for a new facility. The NH SBDC is a really great resource for small local businesses," stated Vivian.

Greta Johansson, District Director of the NH SBA stated, "We have a great network of resource partners like the NH SBDC that offer business owners sound advice when making difficult decisions like Vivian's choice to move

(Con't)

to a larger facility. Getting this outside guidance can make a real impact for both the business and the local economy.”

Award winners will be honored at an annual small business week celebration sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration – NH District Office and the NH Banker’s Association that will be held on Tuesday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Derryfield Country Club in Manchester. Visit [nhbankers.com](http://nhbankers.com) for more information and online registration.

##