



FROM OUR KITCHEN TO YOURS

# Dragonfly Granola

Brooklyn, NY

In addition to being a local food entrepreneur, Susan Weseen is the Librarian at P.S. 295 in South Slope, Brooklyn. She also directs the school's garden, an Urban Harvest project of Slow Food USA.

**a**round the time when Susan Weseen was dreaming up a name for her new granola company, she drove down Brooklyn's Fourth Avenue and got inspired by a dragonfly that buzzed in front of her windshield for several blocks. She grew up in northern British Columbia, and dragonflies were one of the wild creatures that accompanied her through childhood. She was impressed by this city cousin, but not too impressed. "I said to myself, 'If this is a sign, I need more,'" Susan explains with a laugh, "Then on my drive home, another dragonfly followed me all the way back."

As a child, Susan's family lived in a rural area, surrounded by few people and a huge garden. They canned and pickled, and made many foods from scratch, including bread, yogurt, and granola. When she moved to the United States for college, her shift at the local food co-op was to bake granola.

Yet Susan's lifelong joy of making granola faced a challenge when she was diagnosed with Grave's Disease, a hyperthyroid condition. Her symptoms ranged from arrhythmia and a racing heartbeat to muscle weakness and weight loss. Doctors said her choices were either to remove her thyroid with radiation or take strong medication with serious side effects for at least a year and with a 50/50 chance of success.

Susan, however, refused to concur. She reset her body by eliminating all potential trigger foods from her diet -- gluten, sugar, nuts, etc. -- and then added them back in slowly. She learned a lot through the



*"I learned how to make granola from my Mom. We spent a lot of time together in the kitchen when I was growing up."*  
- Susan Weseen, pictured here with her mother and daughter

process, including that her hyperthyroid symptoms are triggered by gluten. Then she took her granola recipes through the same effort of exploration.

Today Susan has regained her health through an array of diet changes. Her granola has undergone a similar process, and now the Dragonfly Granola product line includes gluten-free, nut-free, low-glycemic, and original varieties. She keeps experimenting with ingredients -- replacing brown sugar with coconut sugar, for example -- and creates new seasonal fruit combinations. "This challenge became my opportunity," says Susan.

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