

Tatiana Oxendine

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\$5,000 WINNER

**Neighborhood Market #7329
Saint Pauls, NC**

I've battled with depression for a long time. I'm 20 and live with my Mom and my nine-year-old brother, Malachi. My dad wasn't around for me when I was growing up, but I forgave him. We became close in the past few years because he had depression too and understood what I was going through. But last December, he passed away after a seizure and it's been so hard. One day I'd be fine and then the next day, "Boom!" I felt terrible and plummeted. I'd eat fast food in my room because I didn't want to be bothered with anyone. And I had insomnia. I'd been attending college before Dad died, but I couldn't concentrate so I stopped going to classes.

Alice Snow, my manager, sparked my interest in the Thrive Challenge.

She said, "Nothing will bring your Dad back, but this can help you." I started with food, meal prepping and eating with my family, which brought us closer together. We'll make pasta salad, grilled chicken and broccoli, or my brother's favorite — spaghetti.

My mom and I perform little "concerts" while we're doing laundry.

We'll sing at the top of our lungs to "I Want it That Way" by the Backstreet Boys or "We Belong Together" by Mariah Carey. We sing and dance while we're making the beds and vacuuming. It's such fun.

I take Malachi to the trampoline park and we'll jump together.

My family's big on basketball and we practice shooting hoops. We go bowling, which Malachi loves — if he wins! So I often let him win. My boyfriend, Chris, and I got gym memberships and work out together. We plan mini road trips and dates for our days off. We'll go to the beach or visit animal shelters, which is my favorite thing to do.



I made a vision board to remind me of my goals.

It has inspiring phrases like: "Be Happy" and "Clear Skin" because I have acne. I cut pictures out of magazines like hearts and cars and stick them on the board. My car has been giving me problems and I'd love a new one. I also read affirmations like: "Anything I put my mind to, I will conquer!" In the evening, I take a shower and watch a relaxing video with nature sounds. I've had some therapy and it's been great for my mental health — I feel less anxious and I'm sleeping better.

I met with an advisor about getting re-enrolled in college.

Everything's coming together and it feels like a breath of fresh air. I've always wanted to work with babies and I'd love to be a pediatric nurse. The grief still comes in waves, but I feel 10 times better. The Thrive Challenge has changed my life by helping me flip my negative habits into positive actions. Now, I want to take care of the people who believed in me when I didn't even believe in myself. And I can't wait to see what my future holds.



THRIVE