

# Tonja Jolly

.....

**\$5,000 WINNER**

**Walmart Customer**  
**Virginia Beach, VA**

During the pandemic, I was under a lot of stress. I work in the insurance industry and my workload tripled. I'm on the road a lot, sometimes driving 200 miles a day, and I'd pick up fast food when I wasn't even hungry. My husband, Randy, and I have three kids and four grandkids and family is everything to me. I was always available for them, but I had no energy and felt disconnected and sad, which is unusual for me. My kids said: "What's wrong Mom?" Then six months ago, I said, "I don't want to live like this anymore."

**My cousin, Florice, told me about the Thrive Challenge.**

If she says something is good, I say, "Take it to the bank!" What you see is what you get with Florice — I trust her. I started with simple Microsteps: drinking more water, and packing lunch for the next day. My go-to snacks to nibble are apples, grapes, and celery.

**We're grilling instead of frying and I've fallen in love with roasted vegetables.**

Butternut squash is our favorite. Randy and I had been eating separately, and I said: "Babe, we're sitting down together." Now, we're taking our time eating and talking to each other. Then I'll go for a walk and detox from the day, which helps me sleep well. On Friday nights when we watch movies, I'll roast cauliflower, season it with oregano and we'll crunch it in place of popcorn. It's so satisfying.

**My son, Brian, is a spin instructor and I've joined his class.**

At first it was intimidating because, at 56, I'm one of the oldest people in the room. But Brian said, "Mom, it is not about keeping up with anybody else." He told me how proud he was of me and he's very motivating. Now, I absolutely love spinning to my favorite songs like Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance with Somebody." I have more stamina and can keep up with the class.



**I went from walking to power walking, and now I'm running a few days a week.**

I used to run half marathons, but had lost my drive and never thought I'd get back to it. But I gradually stopped feeling sluggish and more energetic. I'm training to do an 8K race and I'm so excited.

**Thanks to the Thrive Challenge, I'm connecting with my family again.**

I have energy for my grandkids. I can hold them, push them in their strollers, and go up the steps with them without getting out of breath. I'm very, very thankful for the warmth and love that my family brings me.

**I've always been there for everyone else; now I'm here for me.**

When I look in the mirror, I say, "I am enough." I don't get on the scale, but my pants fit. I'm lighter and more peaceful and I can't put into words how my life has changed — I start to cry talking about it. I feel like myself again. I'm happy being me.



THRIVE