

Terri Wagner

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\$5,000 WINNER
Sam's Club #8149
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I got into a terrible funk after an accident at work when I walked into our meat cooler and slipped on some ice. I fell, twisted my ankle, and tore a tendon. I had to have surgery, I was in pain, laid up and ended up with COVID. My daughter, son-in-law, and their kids live with me — we recently bought a house together. And when Jodi and Chris are still at work, I watch my grandkids: Noah, who's now three, and six-year-old Mina. But I felt sluggish and gained weight. I'm 55 and I was eating like a six-year-old: cookies and processed, boxed food like macaroni and cheese. I love cycling but couldn't get back on my bike.

My biggest concern was not being able to help out and I felt a lot of despair.

It was hard to pick up the little guy, because I was unsteady. I remember sitting in front of the television eating McDonald's burgers with the kids and Mina looked at me and said: "Grammy, you have a big tummy." I was ashamed. It brought back memories of how my mom was always on at me to lose weight when I was a kid. When I was 12, she gave my brother and sister Easter baskets full of candies, and mine just had a stuffed animal in it. I was devastated.

That shame and sadness stayed with me.

One afternoon, I was in my room, hearing my grandkids laughing in the backyard. It was a beautiful day. looked out of my window and saw them running around like crazy and rolling down the hill. I thought: "Am I going to be able to run around with them again?" I knew I needed to change. It wasn't about the weight, I just don't want to be that Grammy who's sitting in a rocker all day unable to keep up with the kids.

I started by cutting out processed food and cooking fresh chicken and veggies.

I make mashed cauliflower which tastes just like mashed potatoes. And I keep my refrigerator stocked with carrots and celery sticks, because I love the crunch! I make 'cabbage steak' — thick pieces of cabbage baked in the oven and seasoned with garlic. It's fantastic. I'm helping the kids build good habits. We still eat mac and cheese, but it's not a staple anymore. I've lost 10 pounds and I'm losing weight slowly, so I know I'll be able to maintain it.

After losing the weight and eating more veggies I had much more energy.

I was motivated to take my mountain bike out of the garage and headed to the trail. It was the first time I'd been back on my bike since my accident.



Even though it was cold and muddy, I was ecstatic. The sun was shining and I cycled by the river, which isn't frozen anymore. I love that sound of the water actually rushing — it means it's spring, and everything's coming alive. Cycling to me is freedom. It's the time I need for myself and I love to be out in the woods, connecting with nature — the wind in my hair.

Noah wanted to go to the beach the other day so we drove to the bay of Green Bay.

It's part of Lake Michigan. The water was still frozen over and we went out onto the ice. Some of the ice further out had melted and formed a little pond and we had the best time, skipping rocks — throwing flat stones and watching them bounce, then sink into the water. Noah got the biggest kick out of it and I was taking pictures. I love capturing memories with my camera but hadn't been doing it because I'd been depressed. Now I'm back to my old self, I'm smiling and joyful. To me that's progress. I plan to take the kids out hiking, biking, and swimming in the lake this summer.

Mina — who's a little blunt, like most kids — said: "When I have kids you'll be dead!"

I was like, "Oh no, I plan on being here for your kids!" She said, "Oh, that's good." My grandchildren make my heart sing. They're everything to me. I want to see who they become and be part of their lives. If they have kids, I'll be another pair of arms to help out, just like my grandma was. And I feel confident now that I'm going to be an involved and fun Great Grammy!



THRIVE