

Arvis Abban

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**Walmart Customer
Fredericksburg, VA
\$15,000 CHAMPION WINNER**

When I found out I had won the Thrive Challenge in September 2020, I was ecstatic. Improving my well-being was a gift in itself — I lost 24 pounds and paid off my credit cards. And then to be blessed with a monetary gift — oh my goodness! I'm a nurse and we're in the business of taking care of other people. But we're not always as aware of the need to take care of ourselves. The Thrive Challenge taught me how truly important that is.

Before my journey began, I was overweight, frustrated with myself and depressed.

Then, in late 2019, I heard about the Thrive Challenge from my friend, Florice Nims, who has an infectious personality and had been a winner herself. I trust Flo, so when I saw how successful she'd been in losing weight, I thought: "I can do that!" I began walking at lunchtime, which allowed me to reboot for the next leg of my shift. Then I got others to join me. I started packing lunches for work, to avoid the temptation of fast food. And I was saving money.

I'm 56 and I've never felt better.

Two years since I first began, I've kept the weight off. My husband Abraham and I usually eat at home, and my favorite go-to-meal is avocado toast. I spread avocado and mixed greens with chopped onion and pickle on whole grain bread — I could eat it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If we do eat out, we immediately ask for a box. There's always enough food for two meals.

Abraham and I are taking the Thrive Challenge together.

Our marriage has really improved. We've been married for 24 years and long relationships can become stagnant, but now we're communicating more. We're doing better at appreciating each other and we're finding new interests, like hiking. We live in a historic town — Fredericksburg, Virginia — and we explore Civil War battlefields. Also, there are no more financial arguments because we have a gameplan: we pay off our credit cards every month.

The whole family is making small changes.

We hike together with our grown sons, Kwesi and Kevin, when everyone's home. Kevin won the Thrive Challenge himself, which was so exciting. Kwesi, a college athlete, even does meal prepping while he's away at school.



I took the Thrive Challenge all the way to Africa.

We went to visit Abraham's family in Ghana this summer. I updated my wardrobe and bought new dresses, because I've gone down three sizes. My sisters-in-law in Ghana said: "Arvis, you look so young." And in my opinion, I did look very nice! We had a wonderful time and I kept doing my Microsteps, posting on Facebook, and tagging Thrive. I had peanuts and fresh coconut for snacks instead of fried food.

I work with veterans and helped to establish our COVID vaccine clinic.

Work can be stressful and I use Microsteps to stay calm, like pausing for a deep breath. Sitting at my desk with my feet flat on the floor and deep breathing for even 20 seconds helps me refocus. "Me time" is important. I pray as soon as my feet hit the ground. Every evening I have a warm bath, sip tea, and wind down for bed. I have to stay young and energetic for the grandkids I hope to have someday!

I keep spreading the word about the Thrive Challenge and people are catching on.

Everyone calls me Momma. I have a mothering personality and they see me as a mentor. I say: "I'll walk you through it. We can do this together." I've inspired about 30 people to download the Thrive app. They've inspired others too. I call it stacking, or the ripple effect: You tell one person and they tell someone else.

I've noticed a change in morale at work.

We're all smiling and taking care of ourselves, and I believe that makes the care we deliver better. It feels like a community working toward the same goal. It's phenomenal. The Thrive Challenge helped me find myself again. I've changed my mindset. I'm joyful and I want to share that joy.