

# Sherin Thomas

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**\$50,000 CHAMPION WINNER**  
**Store #2326**  
**Hornell, N.Y.**

I started 2021 by winning the Thrive Challenge and couldn't believe it when I received a \$5000 check. I was so happy, I started dancing and singing. The money went to a down payment on a brand new car — a bright orange Volkswagen Jetta. It's amazing because it means my husband, Josh, and I can drive to work and it's safe for the snow. Our old car had broken down so many times, it couldn't be fixed. Every day when I open the orange car door, there's a smile on my face and I'm filled with gratitude.

## **I moved to America in 2019 to marry Josh.**

I was an attorney in Mumbai, but don't have a license to practice in America. Josh is an artist and was out of work. Financially, it was extremely difficult and I took comfort in candies and chocolate. We were sleeping on the floor on a mattress topper, and when COVID hit, we relied on food banks. I was overeating and weighed 178 pounds — a lot for a 5-foot-tall lady! And I missed my family. I was a national karate champion in India, but I felt too depressed to exercise. Fortunately, we eventually both got jobs at Walmart. And I was inspired to start the Thrive Challenge by a winner, Sharleen Pabón Ojeda, who lost everything in a hurricane and rebuilt her life.

## **The first thing I do every morning is open the app to get inspired.**

I'll watch a motivational talk or read a quote, like: "Forget about the past and focus on what you're doing now," which stays with me all day. I love the tips and stories, which are wise and sometimes funny. Someone wrote: "I sleep with my wife — not my phone!" That reminded me to put my own phone away before bedtime. The Thrive Challenge keeps me motivated. I've lost 34 pounds and kept the weight off.

## **Josh and I are growing vegetables in our local community garden.**

We share with friends, and some of the produce goes to a food pantry for people in need. Now, it's great to be giving back because we received so much support when we were out of work.

## **Josh and I are both taking the Challenge, which is great for moral support.**

When one of us is feeling down and says, "I can't wait until our days off," the other will say, "Let's enjoy every day." We motivate others as a couple because people see how happy we are. We hike for 45 minutes after work and the fresh air keeps us healthy and energized. Our car also gives us the freedom to visit beautiful places in nature like Niagara Falls and Watkins Glen, known as The Grand Canyon of the East. We have one rule: we never stop at fast food restaurants, even though they're cheap. Instead, we bring snacks with us like homemade dried fruit bars or flat bread with peanut butter.



## **I'm staying connected with my family in India.**

I talk to a different family member three times a week, which is a lot, because each call usually lasts for one and a half hours! But it feels great to know that people care for you and wait for your call. As an Indian, cooking comes naturally and I love to make delicious Indian food like chicken tikka and vegetables, with roti and chappatis (flat bread). I'll make extra for neighbors, and take some into work for my colleagues. I've stuck to my goal of cutting out sugar, except when my neighbor, Emily — the world's best baker — brings over a treat. One of my favorite treats now is Greek yogurt with fresh strawberries.

## **Using the Thrive App, saving has become a habit.**

We started saving 50 dollars a month and gradually increased the amount. Now, we're up to \$880 a month and it goes into different funds. We're saving for a vacation to India, and some of it goes towards renting time in a studio for Josh, who is a glass artist. Our dream is to buy a house. It's a long way down the road, but you have to start somewhere. We put \$480 every month into our house fund. I was a patent lawyer in Mumbai and we put some money away for me to eventually take the exam which will mean I can practice law in America. I also have a dream of studying for a masters in food engineering. I'm excited about possible new roles for me at Walmart using my skills.

## **I use my legal skills to give back and volunteer for the law firm where I used to work.**

We're helping families in India get access to affordable COVID drugs and trying to improve people's lives.

## **At work, where I'm an overnight stocker, smiling helps me stay positive.**

It has an impact on other people, too. After completing my own assignments, I check to see if other colleagues need help. I believe the best way to motivate others is by example. So when people see me sipping my fruit-infused water, they start to do it too.

## **The seed sown in my life by the Thrive Challenge was hope.**

I'm 33 years old and we'd love to start a family someday. Now, I have hope for the journey ahead, so Josh and I can be strong and healthy for the children and grandchildren we hope we'll be blessed with! I trust that life is good and God is looking out for us.

