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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #2027
Lavale, MD

I'm a 37-year-old single mom and I was having a hard time trying to do too many things at once. My grandma got sick — she had mouth and throat cancer. She had a feeding tube and I was helping to take care of her. I'd go to work, come home, feed her, and give her her medicine. I was very stressed. Grandma fought for a long time, but she passed away. As well as looking after her, I was always rushing around with my 10-year-old daughter, Summer, taking her to dance class and gymnastics. We'd stop and grab a burger because it was convenient, and I gained weight; I weighed 212 pounds. Then last November, I ended a 17-year relationship, which was hard.

I bought my grandma's house, and Summer and I moved in with our three dogs.

It was time for a fresh start, so my co-workers, Donald and Sundi, inspired me to download the Thrive app. My sister, Jennifer, also works at Walmart and she's taking the Challenge with me. It's great because we support each other and we're very competitive.

I started by cutting back on fast food and soda.

I'll make chicken Caesar salad or chicken fajitas. And our favorite recipe right now is zucchini spears with garlic and parmesan cheese — they're delicious. We still have burgers and hot dogs, but in moderation, and we cook them in the airfryer.

Summer enjoys cooking with me, and it's much better than going to a drive-through.

She loves tossing a salad and stirring. We have dinner together; I always put my phone away and make sure she's off her tablet.

We go for walks with our dogs and play in the backyard.

Summer will be doing flips and cartwheels; she loves gymnastics. I try to keep up with her; I can do a cartwheel and flip around, but she's way too advanced for me! She also loves to jump on our neighbors' trampoline and sometimes I'll jump with her. It's fun. I feel like I'm a kid again, being a bit rambunctious.

Summer and I go for walks by the river.

She likes to skip rocks and play in the water. Last time we saw a huge snake! Spending time in nature is really good for the two of us. We were always on the go. We'll get together with Jennifer and her two kids and go to the park.



All my family live close by.

My Aunt Debbie lives across the street from me, my mom and dad are 20 minutes away, and Summer's daddy is five houses down; we all get along. We're enjoying cookouts together and everyone brings food. We're all suckers for zucchini and mushrooms. Aunt Debbie's fiancé, Paul, is always grilling and he smokes brisket. Everything is super delicious.

I'm working on our house.

When I bought it, we needed to do a lot of remodeling. My family has helped me gut two floors, redo the electrical, and do drywalling — the whole nine yards. Thrive is helping me get it done without getting too stressed.

I love mowing my lawn.

There are three houses on my little block and if you mow one lawn you have to do them all! So I do it for my neighbor Joe and for Jennifer. Summer helps me with yard work. We planted a bunch of pretty purple and yellow flowers.

I've lost 75 pounds in the past year.

I used to be in a lot of pain, but now I feel much better. I can tie my shoes and it's easier to move around. I bought a bikini for the first time ever and I absolutely love it. I'm much more confident. Sometimes I forget I'm almost 40!

I'm having time to myself.

When my daughter has sleepovers with her best friend, Emily, I say yes to visiting friends. We have cookouts and play volleyball. Last week I went on my own to hear a local band play because no one wanted to come with me. It was exciting to be out in the world.

Sometimes I still get down on myself, but I feel like I've come a long way.

Happy home, happy daughter — and I'm much happier. I tell myself, Jessica, you're learning so much, you're awesome, you're worth it. I feel like I'm my own rock and I'm pretty proud of myself.



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