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\$5,000 WINNER **David Glass Technology Center** **Bentonville, AR**

I moved to America from Cameroon 15 years ago. I was an hourly worker for a long time, making 16 dollars an hour. My wife, Lea, also works at Walmart, and we have three children: Farausia, who's now 12, Mathis, who's six, and one-year-old Cianna. Money was a big challenge. I was juggling credit cards and sometimes I had to wait two days to put gas in the car. I used to avoid going out with kids because they'd ask for ice cream, which I couldn't afford. As a dad, I felt terrible.

I wanted to be financially stable.

I wanted to go to college and get a better job. But getting up and doing it was the problem — I was a procrastinator. Also, I wanted to be healthy. We were eating fast food or canned food which was cheap. And our struggles put a strain on my relationship with Lea. You want to see your family happy.

I was inspired to start the Thrive Challenge three years ago by Candie Holland.

She's so supportive. My first step was to write down my goals. Then I signed up for a degree in business management and leadership through Walmart's Live Better U program. I was assigned an academic advisor who helped me get everything done. Next thing I knew, I was in the class with no time to procrastinate! I have this Mark Twain quote on my desk: "The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

Going back to school was hard, but Thrive helped me with time management.

I spread out my homework from Monday to Friday, doing a little at a time instead of doing it all at once. Thrive Microsteps are magical miracles for me. I wasn't stressed all week, and on the weekend, I had free time for my kids.

I graduated with a degree.

Better yet, I didn't stop. I got my master's degree in cybersecurity from Bellevue University — I had to pay for it myself with loans. And I now have a job that's way better paid, as a merchandising analyst. I feel valuable and valued. The power of taking things step by step really works. French is my first language, and I'd love to work for Walmart's International department and use my language skills.

On the Thrive app, I read about the importance of moving every day.

I began exercising for just five minutes. I'd go outside and stretch and do jumping jacks. Then I began walking around the neighborhood. Soon, I started going further, to the park. We all walk together now and it's brought us together as a family.



We're active as a family.

I enrolled my kids in swim classes. Swimming is super-nice when it's hot, and we're all learning backstroke. We compete to see who can stay on their back the longest. I play soccer with the boys and we all go for bike rides around the city. I put Cianna in the baby seat.

We're eating better and choosing recipes we all enjoy.

We'll have spaghetti with meatballs and veggies or chicken fajitas. We do a lot of Cameroonian recipes with plantain and greens called eru. I love that the kids are growing up with food from our culture. Every other weekend we enjoy what we call "Good Saturday Evening." We'll marinate meat and cook it on the grill and the five of us enjoy a barbecue.

I've been teaching myself about finance.

I downloaded an investing app called Stash, and I'm buying stocks and shares. My money has grown a lot. I send money back to my family in Cameroon. I have five siblings and they really appreciate my help. And knowing I can help them brings me joy.

I saved enough money to put a down payment on a house.

We moved in on June 24th. It's a blessing. That's the only way I can describe it. We just spent the entire day working in the yard and running around with the hose. We're mowing the lawn and planting flowers. Some people might say it's a small house, but to me it's a mansion. I'm 37, and three years ago I couldn't have dreamed that we'd have our own home.

I'll tell you, my wife looks at me and says, "You've really turned things around."

We often reflect back to what life would be like if we hadn't taken that first step with Thrive. I'm setting a good example for my kids and showing them how to live a good life.



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