

\$15,000 WINNER

Jimmy Hartsfield

Distribution Center #6094 | Bentonville, AR

SPRING 2024
THRIVE CHALLENGE
GRAND CHAMPION

My wife, Kylie, and I had our miracle daughter, Lynnon, with IVF. Lynnon's 4 years old now and she's the light of my life, but our road to parenthood has been a rocky one. We spent \$25,000 on fertility treatment and wiped out our savings. Then two years ago we moved to Bentonville for my new job with Walmart. We used to live in a small town in south Arkansas where we knew everyone, and it was a struggle starting a new life. Everything felt difficult. I wasn't taking care of myself, I gained weight, and I wasn't spending enough quality time with my family.

I have three grown kids from my first marriage.

Looking back, I wasn't as present in my older kids' lives as I would have liked to be because I was so focused on my career. Now I realize how precious that time is. You blink and it's gone. I'm 47, and as an older father (and grandfather to three), this time around I'm determined to be a healthy and engaged dad.

I started the Thrive Challenge to get healthy for my family.

I knew I needed to make some changes. I began by being more active with Lynnon. After work, I pick her up at daycare. We go home and play in the backyard with her puppy, a Frenchie called Zoe, and we'll go for walks. Lynnon and I love our daddy-daughter time. She thinks she's Wonder Woman, so she likes to beat me up — in a loving way, of course! We'll do gardening together. We're growing tomatoes, cucumbers, and squash, and Lynnon likes picking the veggies.

As a couple, Kylie and I made a financial roadmap.

We began taking Microsteps like sitting down for regular financial check-ins. That led to more clarity and fewer arguments. We split things up so we both know who's responsible for what: Kylie pays for childcare and groceries, and I pay the mortgage. Little by little, we've saved \$7,000. I paid off my truck early and we're gradually paying off Kylie's nursing school student loans.

One Microstep I love is making time for activities that bring me joy.

We go for family hikes on the beautiful trails around Bentonville, like Tanyard Creek. At the Walton Family Fitness Center, they have a kiddie pool and I'm teaching Lynnon to swim. It's awesome being active together.

Bentonville is known for its biking community, so we bought bicycles.

Cycling is a great way to meet people and get moving. I began going for short rides, and at first it was hard going up hills, but I built endurance. I joined a cycling group and made new friends. Now the whole family is cycling. I'll pull Lynnon behind me in a cart or I'll take her for rides on her own little bike. I'm also going for rides with my 25-year-old son, Jimmy Jr., who lives down the road. It's great for us to have that bonding time. Recently, Jimmy and I did the 30-mile Square 2 Square Bike Ride together. It's a tradition here in Bentonville, and it felt amazing to be riding with my son, feeling healthy and fit.

Last December, I got the call saying I'd won the Thrive Challenge.

It was a big surprise! It was a motivator too, showing me I'm on the right track. Thrive has become a way of life. I feel healthier and less stressed, and over two years I've lost 35 pounds.

Now, Kylie and I are taking the Challenge together.

We're making time to connect. I tell her what I'm grateful for, like when she fixes the coffee or makes me my favorite healthy snack — yogurt and berries. In the evening, we'll turn off our devices and talk about our hopes and dreams. When I get anxious about the future, which I sometimes do, breathing exercises help me calm down. I'll watch an ocean Reset. Just hearing the waves crashing is relaxing.

At work, my leadership skills have improved.

I'm taking connection Microsteps and communicating more with my maintenance crew. We'll talk about our kids and suggest places to go for bike rides. One guy just bought a house and he didn't have a lawnmower. I had an extra one, so I gave it to him. I just received a "Commendation" certificate for demonstrating Walmart's cultural values, including respecting individuals and listening. Listening more was actually a Microstep I'd been working on, so it was a thrill to be recognized. I'm part of a mentoring circle too. I help people write resumes and give them interviewing tips. When I started my own career, I had people helping me along the way, so I love doing the same thing for others.

We're going to try for another child soon.

We'll be using IVF again, but with a new mindset. We'll be getting the treatment through Walmart's [Kindbody](#) benefits, and most of the cost will be covered. The uncertainty brings stress, but I'm doing my best to focus on gratitude. There are so many magical moments, like when I'm out on a hike watching the sun rise over the Arkansas hills, or when I'm riding my bike with my daughter singing to me. I know that whatever happens, we have a bright future ahead.

