

# Laura Almanza

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Distribution Center #9153**  
**Waco, TX**

I'm a 25-year-old single mother with a 5-year-old daughter, Areli, and things have been hard. I was feeling unhappy and exhausted. I love Areli so much, I'd do anything for her, but life was really stressful. It affected me physically because I felt like I didn't have time to work on myself physically and mentally. I was always on a tight schedule and I felt rushed all the time. And I was gaining so much weight, I felt uncomfortable. I kept making bad food choices, like eating fast food, and I didn't know how to stop. I joined the Thrive Challenge and I found the different Microsteps eye-opening. I didn't think that making small changes could lead to so many good outcomes!

## **Food was my first big priority and I'm eating a lot more fruit and veggies.**

I hardly ever eat out now. I started cooking with Areli, which is a lot of fun. We plan our menus together. We love making spaghetti with homemade sauce and I make it healthy by using high protein pasta. I feel lighter and I'm also saving money by not buying fast food.

## **Using Microsteps, I gradually started moving more.**

I began doing easy exercise, like walking around the park or making the time to go to the gym after work and using the stairmaster. I realized I was making progress when I found I was excited to go and work out, and I really enjoyed it. But I like walking outdoors best — I get a sense of peace and it helps me feel more relaxed. After a while, I noticed I wasn't out of breath anymore.

## **I have more energy and I'm enjoying being more active with my daughter.**

Areli and I are riding bikes together, and we go to the park. Before I started the Challenge, I would just sit on a bench and watch her play; now we both run around. I have the energy to play hide and seek and tag. We also go for walks together with our dog, Sushi.

## **I was struggling with my sleep, but now I'm more calm, and I'm sleeping better.**

One of the great things I learned on the Thrive app is to stop using electronics close to bedtime and to avoid social media when I first wake up. It has made such a difference, and just doing that puts me in a better mood for the day. At work I get more things done instead of feeling rushed and exhausted.



## **My mood has improved because I'm rested.**

I used to let my emotions get to me. But now, if something is stressing me out, I take a small break and do one of the breathing exercises, or a Thrive Reset, and I just reflect on the situation. Deep breathing helps me have more patience as a mom. It always calms me down because I end up realizing that nothing I'm dealing with is such a big deal.

## **I work nights, so Areli's grandparents help me.**

They're supporting me on my journey and helping me and my daughter make positive changes. They're making sure she goes to bed early, with no screen time before she goes to sleep. I've found that when I get her up in the morning, she's so much more rested and ready to get her school day started. We live with my parents and my little sister and brother. They're all so supportive. We're cooking together instead of going out and we're communicating more.

## **Affirmations are helping me to be nicer to myself.**

I tell myself, "I can do this, I can have a good day, I will get through everything." I'm also doing more little things to take care of myself, even if it's just getting my nails or my hair done to help me feel more confident.

## **I don't feel so tired all the time.**

My feet hurt less so I can move easier, and that makes me more productive — I feel accomplished. I'm thankful for the changes I've made and I'm ready for more Challenges so I can continue to better myself and improve our lives.



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