

Maria Zuniga

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

My life has been hard. I came to America from Mexico when I was 15 with my family. My father died, and right away I had to work in a bakery. I'm the oldest of nine, and we had to help our mother. Then I was a single mom who raised three kids. Now I'm 56, and in the past few years, I've not been in good health. My blood pressure was high, I was overweight, and I had no energy. I lost my self esteem. So when I heard about the Thrive Challenge, I decided it was just what I needed. I asked my co-worker, Gabino Suarez, to help me get going. He had been a winner.

I started moving more and stretching, which helps calm my anxiety.

Checking into the Thrive app motivates me to go for walks — I'm up to five miles a day. Or I ride my bike to the park. I love to feel the breeze on my face. It's like God is touching me. To relax, I go to the pool and float in the water. It costs 10 dollars, but it's worth it, feeling the water on my body.

I wanted to improve my sleep and I started a bedtime routine with Microsteps.

I stopped having my phone on my bed and I use essential oils like lavender. Thrive Resets help to calm my anxiety — I like the ones focusing on joy and nature. I'm appreciating all the animals in the world. When I'm in bed, I do some deep breathing and I've been getting the sleep I need.

Before beginning the Challenge in October, I wasn't eating balanced meals.

I was eating junk food like chips and cookies and drinking soda. Being a part of a Hispanic culture, I was raised to eat a lot of tortillas, and I'd use them to scoop up my food. I still love Mexican food, but I've cut out tortillas and I stopped eating junk food.

I eat salads, grilled chicken, avocado, fruit, nuts, and oatmeal.

I bake tuna fish with a little olive oil, and I have it with broccoli or cauliflower and quinoa — it's a delicious dinner. And I'm drinking lots of water with a splash of vinegar or lemon. It's very refreshing.

The first time I stepped on a scale after starting the Challenge was exciting.

I saw that I had lost a few pounds, and I was motivated to keep making changes that used to be so difficult. Now, I've lost 15 pounds and I feel much better.



My sister, Lourdes, is my best friend.

She also works at Walmart and we're doing the Challenge together. We support each other. We go for walks together and talk and laugh. On Sunday, we go to church and then we'll go out for lunch. We are connected like never before.

I'm a proud grandma.

German is 19 and he is in the navy; he's in Florida. Maximiano is six and sometimes comes to stay with me. I cook him food that he loves, I read to him, and I have more energy now to play with him and run after him. I put him in the seat on the back of my bicycle and we had so much fun riding around the neighborhood.

I'm trying to save money to go and see German in Pensacola, Florida.

I want to spend some time with him because we are very, very close. I raised him until he was seven years old. It would be my first-ever vacation. To save for this trip, I've cut down a lot on eating out. I used to buy clothes and other things when they were on sale. Now I say: "I don't need it."

But I did buy myself one treat because I've lost all this weight.

I bought a new pair of jeans and a very nice black blouse. And when I wear my new outfit for church, I feel like a new person.

I've got my life back.

I am so much happier. I wake up with less pain and more energy. I feel like a winner because I've won back my physical and mental health that I lost many years ago. And I have my confidence back.



THRIVE