

Guadalupe Flores

\$5,000 WINNER
Distribution Center #7036
Sealy, TX

I was an hourly worker, struggling to pay the bills; I was just surviving. I'm 48 now and I have four adult kids. I went through a divorce, but my ex-husband, Chris, and I are back together, trying to make our relationship work. It was hard. I wasn't taking care of myself. I was mostly eating junk food and I didn't eat enough.

My dream was to be a Walmart truck driver.

I talked to truck drivers who told me how much they love the job. It's well paid with great benefits. But I didn't believe it was possible for me. There aren't many female truck drivers. I heard about the Thrive Challenge in a meeting and thought it could help me achieve my goals, so I got started.

Reading stories on the Thrive app was inspiring.

I dreamed that one day people would read my story. I learned that you can get what you want if you keep trying. For me, that meant resting and recharging, and focusing on what I wanted.

I decided to get my commercial driver's license (CDL).

First, I saved enough money for school. It was \$4,000, which was a lot for me. I got my license and in May 2022, I got my job as a Walmart truck driver. I was extremely happy. No family members have ever done truck driving or made as much money as I'm making now. And out of 350 drivers in our distribution center, there are only three Hispanic women. I'm so proud of myself.

I've had hard, low paid jobs all my life. Now I sit behind the wheel and drive.

I love my job. I listen to the news and to the traffic station, then I listen to country music, like George Strait and Miranda Lambert. And if I feel stressed I put on classical music.

In the truck there's a small refrigerator and I keep it full of fruits and veggies.

I also have tuna pasta and salad. I never stop for fast food. My daughter, Leslie, loves to cook and she'll make great dinners like grilled shrimp with steamed broccoli.

Financial stability has made a big difference.

I've paid off my bills and I'm focusing on paying off our mortgage in 10 years. I always put extra money towards our monthly payments.

I'm in the truck a lot, so on my days off, Chris and I walk our dog, Shadow.

We go fishing. The smell of the ocean waves is so soothing. I caught a catfish the other day — and I just put it right back in the ocean. We'll walk in the woods at Stephen F. Austin State Park. I love looking at the beautiful bluebonnets and the insects — centipedes, ladybugs, and butterflies.



We're spending time with the kids.

We all went on a trip to visit my son, Ray, who's a welder, and lives six hours away. I hadn't seen him in forever. We stayed overnight with him and his wife, Hilda, and we had a wonderful time.

I'm so proud of my daughters.

Leslie's just finished her criminal justice degree, Emily's doing a nursing degree, and Beatriz is a dental assistant. I tell my girls, "Do something you love and go for it — don't give up."

Chris and I are communicating.

Before, if I said black, he'd say white. We knew we needed to be on the same page, and now we meet in the middle. If we're going out to dinner, he'll pick Mexican food, and next time, when it's my turn to choose, I'll pick Italian or Vietnamese. We really listen to each other.

I take a little time for myself.

I meditate with candles, and I do a lot of deep breathing. I say to everyone, "Don't call me!" Sometimes I give myself a manicure and pedicure. Light peach is my favorite color.

Everyone asks me how I got my job, and I'm always willing to help and advise people.

I'm setting a positive example. One young associate, Laquendra Thomas said to me, "I want to be a truck driver just like you," and she just got her CDL — I'm so proud of her.

Thrive has changed my life.

What were the chances five years ago that someone like me would have their dream job, and be happy? I hope I'm inspiring people. They can see that if a five foot tall Hispanic woman can become a truck driver, they can achieve their goals too.

