

Patti King

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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Store #2326
Hornell, NY

My mom died in January this year and my world changed. She raised 10 kids and was always there for us and when she was gone, I felt like I had no one to turn to. My husband Michael and I have two kids and three grandchildren, but there was a missing link. I turned to food to dull the pain and ate candy bars all the time. I'd eat anything I could get my hands on. I couldn't walk very far because I could hardly breathe. I had high cholesterol and that scared me. A year ago, I'd quit smoking and I figured if I could do that, I could lose weight. I'm 55 and I thought I need to do it now or I'm going to get bigger and bigger.

I promised my mom that I'd take care of myself and I could hear her voice saying, "Do it!"

Kirsten Ohara, a coach at work, talked to me about the Thrive Challenge and I got started. I began walking around the pond near our house every evening with my husband, our 12-year-old daughter Lillynn, and our dog Chance. I use a 30-day cardio and strength app and I enjoy it. It gives me a routine doing exercises like jumping jacks and body curls. I've lost 27 pounds and inches around my waist.

My husband does all the cooking. He makes great chicken and roasted veggies.

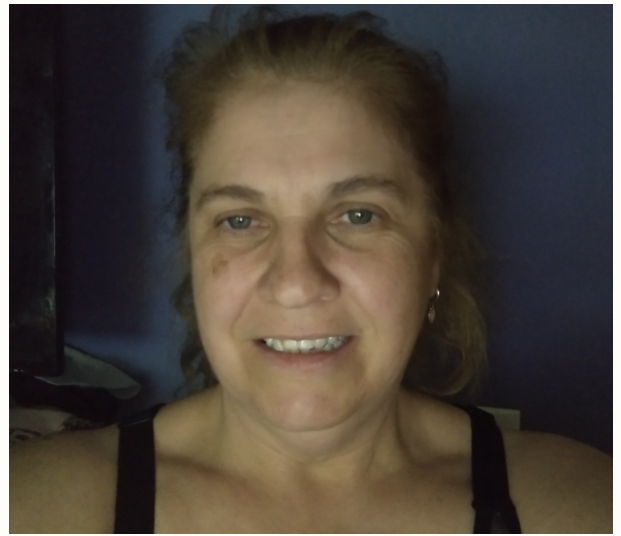
We have hamburgers — without the buns — and I've been on a kick with pickles recently. Michael also makes great chicken pizza, but I only have one or two slices instead of four. I'm not buying candy anymore and if it's not in the house I can't eat it!

I get a lot of movement vacuuming the house and scrubbing the bathroom.

That's my stress reliever — I absolutely love cleaning. I have the TV on while I'm cleaning, and I'll watch "Murder, She Wrote." I'm also a furniture changer. I keep changing everything around. My older daughter loves it when I come to her house to clean.

My 12-year-old-daughter, Lillynn, and I play on the trampoline in our yard. It's a blast.

We see who can bounce the highest and it makes me feel like a kid again. I like doing something different because if you do the same exercise all the time it gets boring and then you don't want to do it.



I swim with Lillynn and my littlest granddaughter, Emma, who are the same age.

My daughter has a pool so we're always over there in the summer. I used to wear a shirt over my bathing suit because I didn't feel comfortable, now I just wear my bathing suit and feel good. I'm actually wearing shorts again too.

I sit in my car listening to Christian music to clear my mind.

I love "Scars in Heaven" by Casting Crowns and "Jealous of the Angels" by Katherine Jenkins. It's what I call my "getting through music." It helps me go into work feeling calm and relaxed.

My dream: I would love to be a Walmart team lead.

I'd like to inspire people and show them that if you take things one day at a time, you can do anything and that it's important not to give up on yourself. I'm content and grateful now, and as long as my children are healthy and strong and we don't have to live paycheck by paycheck, I'm happy.

I have a memory box with my mom's things like her glasses and driver's license.

There's a card she always carried that says, "God's going to take me and when he does, I'll be ready." She collected lighthouses, so the box has a picture of a lighthouse memory box. I look at everything and it all brings back fond memories and brings me peace, because I know she's always going to be with me.

I'm comfortable in my own skin.

I can breathe easily. My cholesterol is lower and my doctor says she's impressed with how well I'm doing. I know my mom would be proud of me — she'd be saying, "Okay, you took my advice and you're taking care of yourself."



THRIVE