

\$5,000 WINNER

Julian Lovell

**Distribution Center #6094
Bentonville, AR****Movement****Microstep**

Scheduling daily walks with my wife, Nanete, and our dog, Kendall.

**Outcome**

"I'm active with my family"

I felt stressed and depressed. I was eating too much, I wasn't exercising and I gained weight. I had a lot of health issues, and I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, which runs in my family. I lost some weight, but I signed up for the Thrive Challenge in February because I wanted to change my lifestyle. I wanted to run around with my granddaughters, 2-year-old Oakley and 18-month-old Josie.

My first Microstep was scheduling daily walks with my wife, Nanete, and our dog, Kendall. We've been married for 30 years and it's a great way to connect. We enjoy looking at the birds, insects, and flowers. We're also going bowling and playing mini golf.

I'm working in the yard again, which I hadn't been motivated to do for a long time. We have a lot of trees and I'm constantly picking up branches. I'm growing wildflowers and I've planted a variety of bulbs; I love seeing the beauty the flowers bring to our yard and the bees they attract.

My granddaughters love helping me. They have their own gardening gloves and plastic tools. We're growing watermelons and avocado trees from seed, and we've made a pumpkin patch. Oakley's created her own rock garden and Josie likes to find worms and roly-polies! The girls make me laugh and bring me joy. I'll make bonfires and we'll sit around with the family and just enjoy being in nature. It's good to relax and breathe.

Nanete and I are changing the way we eat, too. For breakfast, we'll have Greek yogurt with almonds, or eggs and whole grain toast. I've been having fun inventing healthy recipes like grilled fish with avocado, and cabbage and celery salad on the side.

The other day I saw my doctor and found out my A1C has gone down and I've lost 20 pounds. I'm still on medication, but he's delighted that I'm sticking to a healthy lifestyle. I feel great. I even have the energy to play basketball with my son, Alex. Best of all, at 53, I can get down on the floor to play with my granddaughters and dance with them. They'll only be little once and I'm happy that I'm not missing out on this special time.