

# Katie Stephenson

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Neighborhood Market #4233**  
**Phoenix, AZ**

I'm a single mom with a 2-year-old daughter, Kimberly. I was in an abusive marriage and last year it got worse, because it got pretty scary. I packed what would fit in my car and drove with the baby from Montana to Arizona, where my family lives. My mom is a great support and watches Kimberly while I'm at work, but it's hard being a mom and finding time for myself.

## **I'm only 28, but I had no energy and I had pain in my knees.**

I needed to fill up my cup first so I could be the best mom and the best leader I could be. As a people lead in HR (human resources), I take care of my associates all day, but I needed to do something for myself. I decided to start the Thrive Challenge because it focuses on mental health as well as physical well-being — it's perfect for me.

## **My first Microstep was to move every day.**

I started to go to the gym on my lunch break. And at home, I do workout videos. Kimberly will try to do the workouts with me. And we do little CoComelon videos together. Also, I put on music and we dance. One of our favorite songs is "What Lovers Do" by Maroon 5, and we like Taylor Swift too. I feel so much better and I have more energy.

## **Instead of sitting on the couch, I take Kimberly to the park.**

She really likes to kick balls and go on the swing. She'll run around and say hi to other kids and blow kisses.

## **I'm eating better.**

For lunch, I'll have lettuce wraps with turkey and cheese. I've come up with simple meals like baked turkey or fish with quinoa and a side salad. Kimberly loves broccoli and avocados. My favorite dinner is a sheet pan of veggies and chicken sausage.

## **I take Kimberly to church, which helps me stay positive.**

I used to be a youth pastor so faith has always been important to me. They have activities at church for the kids, like singing, blowing bubbles, and playing with toys. And it's a good way for me to meet people. I have a great community with people who have the same interests as me.

## **I'm getting together with friends.**

We'll go for hikes and to baseball games. They have kids too and they also go to church. It's really good having that support. My friend Ann, who has four kids, comes over and we talk about our children, relationships, and life.



## **Ann and I went to Tucson on a girls' trip.**

We went hiking and fishing. I went skiing for the first time, which was really awesome. We had a fancy dinner, and it was all so relaxing, just taking time for ourselves. As moms, we sometimes forget the things we enjoyed before having kids. When I'm away, Kimberly is happy staying with her grandma. I miss her and I'm so happy when I come back, but we all need breaks.

## **One Microstep I love is having pictures at my workstation that make me happy.**

I have lots of photos of Kimberly. Another Microstep I do daily is connecting on a personal level with someone on my team. I've become really close with my store manager, Maria, who has a kid around my daughter's age.

## **In my car, I listen to podcasts by motivational speakers.**

One of the podcasts I like is Unleashed with Alexi Panos. They help me to stay positive and encourage me to try harder and push through my limits to see what I can accomplish. They also help me feel more confident.

## **I'm feeling grateful.**

I was out walking with my little girl last week, looking at the beautiful yellow spring flowers and thinking how happy I was in that moment. I am proud of myself that I got away from a really bad situation and that I feel safe and secure now.

## **My goal is to go back to school to get my bachelor's degree.**

It's important for me, and I want to show my daughter that you can still spend time on yourself and have a career, as well as being a mom. In the future, I'd love a good relationship with a man who has the same values and dreams as me.



THRIVE