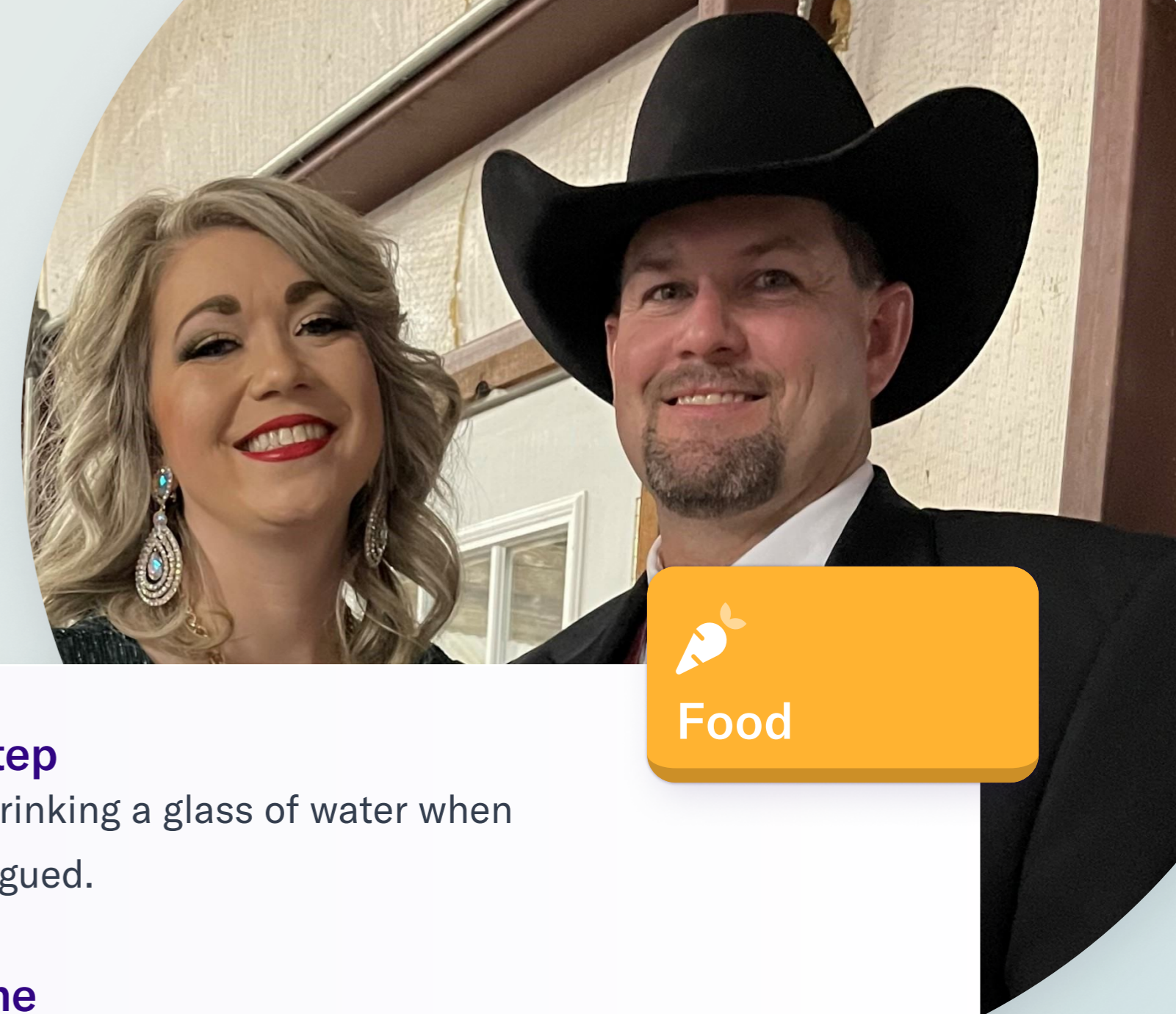


\$5,000 WINNER

Kelly Cox

**Distribution Center #9153
Waco, TX****Food****Microstep**

I like is drinking a glass of water when I feel fatigued.

**Outcome**

“I’m competing in rodeos again. I feel happy and accomplished.”

I’ve always had an active lifestyle. Before working for Walmart, I was a horse trainer, and riding is my passion. I love competing in rodeos — I’m a team roper. My wife, Jennifer, and I have a five-acre farm with four horses. But recently I’d become sedentary. I’d watch T.V. or I’d be on my phone instead of getting outdoors or spending quality time with Jennifer. I’d sleep away the weekend.

We were eating a lot of processed food.

We’d have heavy pasta with Hamburger Helper, and a lot of boxed meals. At work I’d have energy drinks, and I’d get beef sticks or potato chips from the vending machine. I weighed 240 pounds, I had chronic back pain, I was experiencing muscle spasms, and I’d get out of breath. My job is demanding, but I was always tired. My doctor wanted me to lose weight to help my back.

I saw how the Thrive Challenge helped my co-worker, Gabino Suarez, and I got started.

I educated myself about nutrition. One Microstep I took was reading food labels and learning about the amount of carbs and sugar there is in the processed food we were eating. We began buying fresh meat and veggies. I’m food prepping and do a lot of the cooking. I’ll grill chicken or tuna with squash, zucchini, and asparagus. Our go-to meals are grilled fajitas and taco bowls. Another Microstep I like is drinking a glass of water when I feel fatigued. I’m now doing much better at staying hydrated now and I don’t crave salty snacks.

I began having smaller, more frequent meals to keep my metabolism up.

I used to eat enough for two people, but now I stop when I’m full. I also avoid eating right before bedtime, which I used to do. I started losing weight and my energy increased. At work, it’s great having support from Gabino; he’s always encouraging me.

At the start of my shift I do stretches with my team and we touch our toes.

I also stretch my lower back throughout the day and I do shoulder rolls. I set myself a goal of walking 5,000 steps a day. My mid section started to feel stronger, my back loosened up, and my flexibility improved.

At home, my wife and I take our dachshund, Dally, for walks.

We’re connecting more and enjoying being active. We’re socializing with friends and having company over as opposed to being shut off. I’m enjoying doing yard work again — I’ve redone our flower beds, and I’m grooming the horses. I’m doing outdoor tasks on the farm again, like unloading 50 pound sacks of feed and stacking wood, which are excellent workouts.

The best thing is that I’m back in the saddle.

A few months ago, I was in a lot of pain when I was riding. I didn’t have any core strength, which affected my balance. Once I lost weight and began exercising, I was in less pain. I started going for longer rides, and my balance improved. I’m also in less discomfort doing farrier work (shoeing my horses).

I’m competing in rodeos again with my horse, Shorty — it’s what I love to do.

In the past, my back would have flared up, but in my most recent event, it was fine. The horse can feel your emotions and they know if something is off, but we were in sync and moving together. I didn’t win, but I felt accomplished and happy.

Since the start of this year I’ve lost 10 pounds.

My clothes fit better, I look better, and my confidence is back. I used to think losing weight was all about diets and making dramatic changes, but I’ve discovered you can succeed by making incremental lifestyle adjustments. I’d compare Thrive to training a horse: you take small steps to reach your end goal.

I realized how far I’d come the other day when I saddled up one of my horses, Harley.

We rode to a hay meadow down the street. I was enjoying the breeze, my mind was clear, I felt at peace. I grew up on ranches with my dad. Riding horses is my happy place, it’s part of who I am; I’m happy to be re-engaging with my passion.