

# Kathy Fruge

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Supercenter #935**  
**Denham Springs, LA**

I'm 57 and I've been with Walmart for 36 years. I've been feeling very stressed. In addition to my job, I take care of my husband, Nick, who's disabled. He's an amputee; he lost a foot three years ago. I also take care of my 82-year-old mom who lives with us. Nick and I have three children; our youngest, Rebecca, who's 22, lives with us, and we have five grandchildren. I took care of everyone else and put myself on the backburner. I'd eat fast food that left me feeling tired, and I weighed 240 pounds. I decided to start the Thrive Challenge to prioritize my self-care.

## **I began cutting down on carbs and sugar.**

My new way of eating was hard to begin with, but I started to lose weight in a few weeks, and it felt amazing to be making progress. I made healthier choices for lunch at work. I found that I love, love, love what my friends now call "The Kathy Salad" from our deli. It's a chef salad made with ham, turkey, and veggies. I add blueberries, which are delicious and high in antioxidants. It's much better for me than a burger! Sometimes I'll have a Kathy Salad for dinner or I'll cook meat and veggies. One of my favorite recipes is seasoned sliced zucchini with cubed ham cooked in a cast iron pot. I had more energy and my clothes began to fit better. In the last six months I've lost 30 pounds.

## **Once I'd lost some weight, I had more motivation to get moving.**

I'm taking time to stretch and do toning exercises. During my lunch break, I go for a walk with my peers. We're taking connection Microsteps, like having meaningful conversations. We're getting to know about each other's personal struggles. It's incredible to have open discussions where we can just be real about what we're going through and where we want to go.

## **On the Thrive app, I learned how to do box breathing.**

When I exhale, I let go of all my worries and concerns. I used to get impatient and frustrated with Nick. I help him shower, I clean and treat his wounds, and I help him get up and down the stairs. I also take him to his medical appointments. To relax, I watch calming Thrive nature resets with rivers and mountains. I've found my mindset is changing and I have more patience.

## **I'm focusing on gratitude.**

I realize how grateful I am that my husband's actually here — we've been through a lot over the years. I look at things from his point of view, what he's going through. We can't go to dinner or to movies, but we're enjoying watching westerns and old T.V. shows together. He loves Gunsmoke and Lonesome Dove.



## **I've always had a passion for music and I've started going to concerts on my own.**

It's something I hadn't done for 35 years and missed. I absolutely love Christian music; recently I've been to see MercyMe, Zack Williams, and TobyMac. When I arrive at a concert I feel so proud and accomplished because it's something I've done for myself. I can't even describe the joy I feel singing along at the top of my voice and listening to the positive messages in the songs. And in the car I listen to Christian pastors on the radio.

## **At home, I'm making time for fun activities with my grandchildren.**

They enjoy science projects and math quizzes. My 10-year-old grandson, Reed, and I compete and see who can do math problems the fastest. He beats me half the time and we have a great laugh together. And for the first time ever, I'm playing laser tag with the kids. I can run around now. Rebecca and I are bonding, too. We'll play ball with her rescue dog, Gus. At night when she finishes work we'll use stargazing apps to marvel at the constellations. I'm just having fun with my family. I've learned that as a caregiver, mother, and grandma, I need to invest in my well-being — and that's what I am doing.



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