

# Heather Trussell

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Walmart Supercenter #5727**  
**Bradenton, FL**

Growing up, life was hard. My mom raised me and my brother, and I didn't meet my father until I was 27. When I was 15, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. I'm 32 now and I've suffered from anxiety and depression. The doctors said I wouldn't be able to have children because of scarring on my ovaries, but I prayed and prayed for God to bless me with a baby and I did get pregnant. When I had my son, Ryzaylon, who is now two, I wanted to be the best mom I could be. My partner, Branden, has a nine-year-old son, Cameron, and the boys are my motivation for everything. But I wasn't taking care of myself and during COVID I gained a massive amount of weight — we were a 'take-out family.' I couldn't be active for my boys because I was always drained. It felt like nothing I was doing was working.

## **I barely had money for gas, but I was giving money away to help people.**

If someone said, "Hey, Heather, can I borrow \$50?" I would gladly give it to them. I lent someone \$25 and she never gave it back to me. Sunday Oguntoyinbo told me about the Thrive Challenge; he is heaven-sent and lifts so many people.

## **My sleep regimen was the first thing I changed.**

Instead of staying up until four in the morning, I set a bedtime of 11 p.m. I used to be endlessly binge-watching crime shows, and I've stopped. I'd spend a lot of time on social media, and I've cut back a lot. I get my eight hours of proper sleep and wake up rejuvenated. I start my mornings thanking God for blessing me with a new day. Then I do 10 minutes of stretching before I get the boys ready for school. In just a few months, the aches and pains I had before are no longer there.

## **Branden and I take turns making dinner**

I google recipes and I'm learning so much. It's exciting! I never knew what quiche was and now I love it. I just made one with broccoli and cheese. We make grilled chicken with stir fried veggies like onion, carrot, and cauliflower. I started checking ingredients and food labels and if something is packed with sugar, I stay away from it.



## **I have energy for my family because I'm not exhausted.**

My stepson would live in his room — now we get him outside and we all play soccer. We go for walks to the park or to the beach. It's a stress reliever and time for us to regroup. We have pool days when we get out the blow-up pool and we have cookouts in the backyard.

## **Everyday I take at least 20 minutes for myself.**

Branden helps with the baby, and I separate myself from everything and everyone. That's my downtime to do breathing exercises and meditation so I can clear my head and let go of all the stress from the day.

## **I've lost 25 pounds and I feel like a brand new person.**

I get compliments all the time and that makes me feel like, wow! I never wanted to go out because I felt like a blob, but now I'm excited to be with people.

## **I say out loud: "You're doing awesome... Never give up."**

My son actually gives me that look like: "Mommy, are you talking to yourself?" I've stopped being so hard on myself and my anxiety levels have gone down. I'm still on bipolar medication, that'll never go away, but I'm not depressed. I feel good about myself.

## **I want my boys to have everything I didn't have so I'm careful about money now.**

I have four classic piggy banks floating around the house. I drop change into them all the time, and it adds up. I'm being organized and writing down what has to be paid, I make a list of our everyday necessities, like food, shampoo and soap. It's still hard, but so far I've saved \$500.

## **My ultimate dream would be buying my own home.**

I want stability for the family and it will feel so good to have somewhere to call our own.



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