# Carlos Tavarez

**$5,000 WINNER**
**Walmart Supercenter #2346**
**Toa Baja, PR**

Before starting the Thrive Challenge, I felt stagnant, tired, and really unmotivated. I wasn't spending enough time with my children and the things that I'm passionate about. It affected my mood and I started gaining weight, so I felt tired all the time. My self-esteem was also low because I didn't feel fulfilled in my personal goals.

**I saw a poster about the Thrive Challenge on a bulletin board at work, and noticed a coworker of mine, Luis Cordero, was featured.**
It caught my attention, so I read his story and approached him, and he encouraged me to get started. I started thinking about what I really wanted to change. I knew I needed to fix my diet and start exercising more, and also make sure I'm resting enough. I remember looking in the mirror of the bathroom that day and saying, "I'm starting today. I'm doing it." And that's when I downloaded the Thrive app.

**I made a goal to exercise a few times a week.**
I started with a run just once a week, and then it increased to twice a week, and then three or four times. I started going farther distances, and also added in other workouts like aerobics. I wear a watch that counts my steps, so I use it for my runs to track my progress week to week. It feels like I'm competing with myself, which encourages me to keep getting better.

**I used to eat lots of flour, sugar, and fried foods.**
I replaced a lot of that with eggs, vegetables, and salads. I also minimized how much coffee I was drinking at breakfast. Instead of toast and coffee, I'll have some lettuce with tomato and egg, and maybe a banana with some water. I feel like I have more energy now and I don't feel sleepy after meals. This has also helped with my fitness goals, since I started training for a half marathon and I achieved my goal! I would love to someday do a full marathon. In terms of my weight loss, I started at 252 pounds, and now I'm 197. I feel a lot more comfortable at this weight and I have a lot more energy.

**My family has been joining me in my marathon training.**
It's even more motivating now to have them as spectators and it gives me the momentum to keep going –– and it's great to spend that time together! I've been trying to maximize my time with my family. I've been going to sleep earlier so I can feel more alert when I'm with my kids. Now, I set an alarm for the time I want to go to bed, and I put my phone away before I go to sleep. I'm sleeping three or four more hours per night and it's made a huge difference. I'll sometimes even take a nap when I get home from work as I find it makes me more energetic and creative. Getting enough sleep has made me feel more alert and more productive both at home and at work.

**My whole mentality has changed, and I'm more positive now.**
I'm now able to reflect on situations that happen during the day and see what can be improved. I'm more optimistic and grateful. Gratitude has helped me gain perspective and feel thankful for everything I have and everything I've achieved. I have a new focus and new goals, and I'm excited to keep learning and letting go of fear.