

# Christina Gentry

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**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Distribution Center #6014**  
**Laurens, SC**

I'm a single mom with three kids. My oldest, Joshua, is 22 and is in the Air Force, and I have two teenagers, Leyden and Olivia, at home. I've always done literally everything for my kids. I'd get up at 3:00 a.m. to go to work and when I got home I'd make sure the kids did their homework, then I'd cook something quick and easy like hamburgers or hotdogs, or we'd have fast food. I had no time for myself.

## **My mom passed away from COVID when she was 62, just after she'd retired.**

She'd had some health problems for a while. I found it so hard because we were best friends and did everything together. Since then, I've had to help my dad because he didn't know how to do anything for himself, like paying the bills or cooking.

## **I'm 46 and don't want to have health issues in my 60s like my mom did.**

I want to be here for my kids, so I started the Thrive Challenge. The first thing I worked on was time management. I figured out that if I leave work at five instead of staying late I can schedule a good hour for myself while the kids are doing their activities like cheerleading and wrestling. I started walking at the YMCA track, which I love. It clears my mind. I listen to true-crime podcasts and I get so involved in the stories, I completely disconnect from everything. It may sound crazy, but when I've been moving, I actually have more energy, even if I was tired before I started. I bought an exercise bike and I ride for 20 minutes every night. It's hard, but I push myself. I also love the breathing exercises on the Thrive app which help me to relax.

## **We live on a secluded road and I'm spending more time outdoors.**

I'll walk or ride my golf cart up and down the road. Nobody's out there but me and it's so beautiful looking at the trees now that the leaves have turned orange and bright yellow. I love listening to the birds and watching the squirrels jumping from tree to tree.

## **I'm spending time working in my yard.**

Cutting my grass is very satisfying and doesn't feel like a chore. When I've finished, I say "Wow it looks good." My 15-year-old son, Leyden, helped me build a firepit. It was great doing it together because at that age kids don't always want to be around Mama! Now, when it's cold I'll sit by the fire with a cozy blanket and a nice warm cup of coffee reading a good book. I'm enjoying Authentic Leadership by Dan Owolabi and for pleasure I loved A Virgin River Christmas by Robyn Carr.



## **My house felt dreary so I decided to brighten it up.**

I painted the walls and did all the trim work myself. I'm loving my house now. It feels clean and nice. And doing the work was enjoyable and very satisfying, the house is brighter, and I feel brighter.

## **We've changed our diet.**

We drink sparkling water instead of sodas. I do meal prepping and Olivia will jump in and help me cook. We make roast beef with potatoes, onion, and carrots cooked in the crock pot and mashed cauliflower. Or I'll make a cabbage casserole with cheese and mushrooms, baked in the oven. And everyone loves my meatloaf.

## **I took a few days off to enjoy the holiday season with my kids.**

We drove around looking at the Christmas lights. We even took a two-hour ride to North Carolina with a couple of their friends to McAdenville that's known as Christmas Town — the entire town lights up. It was wonderful. We enjoyed each other's company, and it put us all in the Christmas mood.

## **The Thrive Challenge is helping me heal from grief.**

It's still hard, but when I feel emotional, I take five minutes to breathe and remember that my mom would want to see us happy. Sometimes when I'm at my dad's house, I feel her presence and talk to her. I just tell her what the kids are doing and how life's going and of course, how much we miss her. I'm moving on with my life. This is a new me. I'm doing a degree in computer science with Walmart's Live Better U program and I feel much more optimistic about the future.



THRIVE