

Hope McGuire

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\$5,000 WINNER
Walmart Supercenter #2027
Lavale, MD

Four years ago I lost my husband. And as well as grieving, I was left as the sole provider for our two kids: Katie, who's now 23, and Corbin, who's 19. He has an incurable autoimmune disease, and I take care of him. I'm 46, I work full time, I go to school full time and the stress has really taken a toll on my health. I was depressed and exhausted. I was in the hospital several times over the last few years. I weighed 330 pounds, and my A1C was over 11. I knew I needed to change my eating habits.

Dieting has never worked for me, and a year ago I started the Thrive Challenge. A manager, Donald Gross, inspired me with all the changes he's made on his path with Thrive. And my first Microstep was swapping one sugary beverage for water. Now I only drink water. I have completely given up soda, which feels great.

I stopped buying fast food and started eating more fruit and veggies.

Also, instead of just grabbing a donut for a snack, I remember my Microstep about choosing a healthy option, and I'll have some fruit. I started meal prepping. We were spending \$150 a month eating out. So we're saving a lot of money.

Instead of frying my food, I'm simmering, stewing, or steaming everything. My absolute favorite meal is chicken cooked in the air fryer with Thai chili sauce, broccoli, and rice. I still eat food I really like, just smaller portions. I found that if I restricted myself, I wanted to eat that forbidden food even more. One of my best tips is sticking to meal times.

I'm a pharmacy technician and my biggest source of stress was my work. I have stepped down from my management position, which eliminated a fair amount of stress. Now, when I use a Microstep and walk away for a few minutes, I'll do some deep breathing. I take time now to reflect on things and I'm not as overwhelmed.

Because I'm less stressed, I spend more time with our patients. I can help them with insurance issues so they spend less on their prescriptions. I know a lot of our patients by name, and they ask for me. They really like talking with me and we have a good rapport.



Thrive Microsteps are helping me put my financial situation into perspective. I found myself struggling to save for things we needed. So I made a budget and after I pay all the bills, I take a look at what I have left and I make a deposit into my savings account right away. So far I have saved \$75. My goal is to be close to debt free in the next three years.

Instead of shopping online, I'm shopping in stores. When I'd shop online I'd tend to use my credit card and I was spending \$200 for tee shirts and jeans that I could get for half the price at Walmart. Also I'd buy things I didn't need. By being careful, I was able to pay off one of my credit cards, and it made me feel like I accomplished something big. Now I leave my credit cards at home unless there's something I absolutely need to buy. I just have my debit card, which has a limit.

I have more energy and motivation for my studies. I'm getting a certificate in medical coding and billing. I've been on the Dean's List twice, I have a 4.0 GPA, and I'll soon be graduating. I had quit college when my kids were little, so I feel so proud of myself. I've achieved what I set out to do.

I've lost 52 pounds. It's not a lot and I have a long way to go, but I'm determined to keep losing weight. The moment when I realized how far I've come was when the doctor told me my A1C had come down from 11 to 6.8. She is ecstatic. She reduced my diabetes medications and told me to keep the good work going. Thrive is helping me with every aspect of my life. I feel better physically and emotionally and I'm definitely more positive. I feel like I'm starting to heal emotionally, and I'm hopeful about the future.



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