

Angel Swank

.....

\$5,000 WINNER

**Supercenter #0936
Effingham, IL**

For a long time, life was hard. I was eating a lot of comfort food — I'd make ham and potato casseroles with cheese in a creamy sauce, and drink sodas. I work in the bakery as a cake decorator and our chocolate chip brioche bread is so good. But after work, I didn't even have the energy to walk to the back of the store to clock out and then walk to the parking lot to get to my car. I had arthritis in my knees which made my feet hurt, I weighed 273 pounds, and I felt horrible.

A co-worker of mine, Chuck Calhoun, inspired me to download the Thrive app.

I watched how he and his wife Michelle lost weight and changed their lives. I thought, "Hey, I should do that." At the time, I really wanted to lose some weight because I had a vacation planned. I was going to Universal Studios in Florida with my 19-year-old son, John, to celebrate him graduating from high school. My goal was to be able to walk around the park and go on the rides with him.

I started tracking my calories on my FitnessPal and writing down what I ate.

I found I was losing a couple of pounds a week. For dinner, I'd cook chicken or pork in my air fryer or Instant Pot and have it with a baked potato and broccoli. I don't stress out if I eat pizza or grilled cheese sometimes, since I figure I am going to make better choices like this for the rest of my life, so I don't want to cut out anything completely.

I go for walks on my days off, and I sometimes go to the gym and work out on the treadmill.

For "me time," I also love to read fiction — mysteries with a little bit of the love story mixed in by authors like James Patterson. They take you to another world and it's like the people in the series are your friends.



At work, I get around a lot faster and have more energy.

I can fit into tight spaces a lot better, and it's easier for me to move freight and boxes. The other day on my way back to the bakery after break, I saw a lady struggling to get the heavy dog food down from a high shelf. I was able to get it into her cart for her, and she was so happy.

My trip to Florida with John was a lot of fun.

We were walking around all day and I fit on most of the rides. Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike from Harry Potter was our favorite. We are both Harry Potter fans. It was great just being able to spend the time with him and make those special memories. We're going to go back next year.

I can bend over now and reach the bottom shelves at work.

I can easily tie my shoelaces. My feet aren't hurting anymore and I'm getting out more now that I can walk around. I enjoy going with my friend Megan to the farmers market on Saturday mornings to buy fruit and vegetables. I love the Thrive Challenge because it helps me stay accountable and stay on track. I just love that I'm making better choices and that I will be around for the grandchildren I hope to have someday.



THRIVE