

Denise Howard

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\$5,000 WINNER

Supercenter #4243

Clio, MI

I gained a lot of weight over the years because my marriage was falling apart, and I was stress eating. I'm now divorced and I have a great boyfriend, Tim, but I was miserable being overweight. I'd have boxes of Little Debby Cakes at two in the morning. I had high blood pressure and high cholesterol. I knew it was finally time to do something when I couldn't get down on the floor and play with my granddaughter, Paislee. I was up to 235 pounds. Then last year, we had a wedding to go to and I couldn't get into my clothes. I just thought, "That's enough!"

My boss, Jeremy, talked about the Thrive Challenge in a team meeting and how it had helped him.

I downloaded the Thrive app, and my first step was cutting out white bread and pasta. Tim does all the cooking, and mostly we'll eat whatever we want — but we just don't eat as much anymore. He'll make pork chops and salad, or baked chicken and sweet potatoes with corn on the cob. He's from Louisiana and does a lot of great Cajun food. Every once in a while, we'll have a treat and go to a great hand-dipped ice cream shop nearby.

Walking goes with my job as a personal shopper.

I started going faster around the store, pushing my cart as though I was on a treadmill and really moving my legs. I bought a Fitbit and started going for a walk in the park after work. I love the freedom of being outdoors and looking at the beautiful trees and the colors.



Tim and I are working together in the yard at his house, mowing and weeding.

We recently bought a four-wheeler, an ATV, which he taught me how to ride at the age of 57! It was so exciting. I am also doing things I love on my own, like crocheting. I am just putting the finishing touches on a sweater that I've made for myself in fall colors. It's something I never do for myself since I usually crochet for everyone else.

At work, I try to stay positive and helpful.

One customer, an older man who rides an Amigo scooter around, always searches the store for me. He'll say "Ms. Denise, can you help me?" He'll have a list in his hand, and I walk around the store with him until he has what he needs. The other day, he was looking for a putty knife and I stopped what I was doing to help him find it.

The Thrive Challenge is a new way of life for me.

I used to be size 18 and now I'm down to a 6. I bought blue jeans that look really nice, and I don't need to wear stretchy ones. I now say to myself: "You got this, girl." I can go swimming and play with my granddaughter now. I can breathe and have energy. I don't have to take cholesterol medicine anymore and my blood pressure is perfect. Life is fun. I am striving every day to keep the weight off and be happy.



THRIVE