

# Jerald Buckles



**\$5,000 WINNER**  
**Distribution Center #7055**  
**Gas City, IN**

I'd wake up in the morning and everything hurt. I was eating fast food every day and I had no portion control. I weighed 280 pounds and I didn't feel good. I didn't have any energy for my wife, Stephanie, and our three kids, Braedon, who's 16, 13-year-old Kylie, and six-year-old Tristan, who has autism. I'm 34 and thought, I'm too young to be sore. It was time for a change. I wanted to set a good example for my kids and be more active with them. I also wanted to go to college, improve my mind, and progress in my career.

**I downloaded the Thrive app and I started cooking.**

I eat what I enjoy — I don't like fad diets. That way I don't feel like I'm depriving myself. I use fresh ingredients and control my portions. For lunch, I might have a chicken breast sandwich. For dinner, I make soup with Italian sausage and kale. I also make fettuccine Alfredo with chicken. Everyone loves my chicken enchiladas. And I'm eating lots of veggies — I really like asparagus.

**Weekdays are hectic, but we have dinner together on the weekend.**

We talk about what the kids are doing at school. Kylie's in the choir and drama club, and Braedon talks about basketball and gaming with his friends.

**I've lost 80 pounds and I have more energy.**

I'm riding my bike and I go to the gym three times a week; I'm 100 percent committed. Now my goal is to do a pull-up! I haven't been able to do one yet! We go on family hikes — we really like Mounds State Park which has ceremonial mounds built by Native Americans. I enjoy being out in nature in the woods. I got a bike trailer for my bicycle and I take Tristan for rides, which he loves. And I take my kids out on my motorcycle, which is fun! It feels so great to be active and doing the things a father should be doing.

**In the morning, I take Tristan to school.**

He's getting applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy and learning life skills so he can be integrated and go to regular school. We have parent training and I love helping him progress. I really enjoy reading to him. Tristan is non-verbal so I'm learning sign language and we're communicating better.

**Every day I log into the Thrive app.**

It only takes a minute to pop in and grow my plant. I like the breathing Resets with calming nature videos. I struggle with anxiety so if I have a deadline coming up at work, or I'm a few minutes late for something, taking a few deep breaths helps me relax and realize we'll get everything done.



**Stephanie and I have busy schedules, but we spend time together every Saturday night.**

We'll sit on the couch and watch a T.V. show like "Shameless." Stephanie is into '80s horror movies, like The Evil Dead which make us laugh!

**Giving back makes me feel good.**

I am a ham radio operator and I volunteer with the county EMS. I'm also involved in community events like 5K runs that need radio communication.

**I'm studying for a bachelor's degree in programming and software development.**

It's amazing to be able to go to college for free through Walmart because I never went when I was younger, so I'm very grateful. I have a 4.0 GPA and my advisor is really impressed. I feel like I'm working toward something positive and I'm proud of myself. I'd love to have a career in software development — improving communications in Walmart. I think I'm able to do everything because I'm managing my time effectively.

**I'm a lot happier and a lot less stressed.**

Before starting the Thrive Challenge, I didn't have any direction — I was working for a paycheck. Now I have goals. I'm a better father and provider for the family.

**Last weekend we had a family reunion.**

I pulled Tristan to the park in his wagon, instead of driving, something I wouldn't have been able to do before. Tristan was playing with all the other kids and adjusting so well. We were eating great food — my uncle's delicious smoked brisket. We were all hanging out and running around, and life felt good. I realized I've come a long way.



THRIVE