

\$5,000 WINNER

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**Distribution Center #7561
Carrollton, GA****Connection****Microstep**

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**Outcome**

"I'm connecting with my boyfriend and my family."

Before starting the Challenge, I was stuck in a rut and was feeling very negative. I'd be glued to my phone in the evening and some nights I'd only get five hours of sleep. I was tired all the time and I wasn't connecting with the people who are most important to me. When I found out about the Thrive Challenge, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to boost my energy levels and foster a more positive outlook on life.

I started with a digital detox in the evening.

After dinner, I put my phone away so I'm not tempted to keep checking it. I play outside with my fur babies, Bree and Bailee. My boyfriend, Derrick, and I started to go for walks around the block, and I've found that moving in the evening helps me relax. In the summer, we enjoy sitting on my porch.

To unwind, I take a shower, then I'll read a magazine or do a crossword puzzle.

I've turned my bedroom into a device-free zone and I go to bed around 9 p.m. every night. Now I have a regular bedtime routine, I'm getting seven to eight hours of good sleep most nights, and I'm not tossing and turning any more.

When I wake up, it doesn't feel like I got hit by a bus! I feel rested and refreshed.

I'm ready to tackle the day. I'll make coffee, play with the dogs, go for a walk, and spend a little time relaxing on the porch watching the sun come up. At work, I've noticed I have more mental clarity and focus, and I'm present with my co-workers. My energy has improved; I'm walking around the building, and building stamina.

In my time off, I'm more active with my boyfriend.

Derrick and I play tennis — I'm not great, but it's good exercise and something we enjoy doing together. I feel motivated to try new sports now. We're going to give pickleball a try next. I just went kayaking with my friend Sierra. It was our first time and it was so much fun.

I stopped paying a gardener and now I'm doing yard work myself.

I'll be out there on days off pulling weeds, mowing the lawn, picking up leaves and pressure washing my deck. Completing simple tasks makes me feel really accomplished.

Derrick and I are bonding doing DIY projects completed around my house.

He's a get-it-done-guy and he's encouraging me to help. I have an old house that needs a lot of repairs and I have the energy to get moving and help him now. We fixed my front door, we fixed a leak in the refrigerator, and we assembled a storage cabinet. He's been a great support for me on my Challenge.

I'm connecting more deeply with my family and friends.

My mom and I talk to each other most days, and I spend a lot more time with my older sister, Ashley, going for hikes together. We love Rope Mill Park in Woodstock, Georgia, which has beautiful trails and a river leading up to a gorgeous waterfall. Ashley is very creative and artistic. She's taught me how to tie-dye and we've been making colorful T-shirts and pillowcases. I'm also babysitting my 9-year-old goddaughter, Ella, to help out her mom, who's my best friend and co-worker. Ella definitely keeps me moving.

I'm feeling grateful for my community.

The Thrive Challenge has made me realize what an amazing support system I have. I am a lucky girl. At 35, I feel energized and more connected to everyone. I know we will always be here for each other no matter what.