



\$5,000 WINNER

Yolimar Garcia Calderon

Walmart HVFC #4124
Lebanon, TN



Connection



Microstep

I started talking to people at work, and they were very friendly.



Outcome

"I'm making good friends."

In 2019, I moved to America from Colombia, and it was difficult to make friends. My English wasn't good and I was scared to talk to people because of my accent. My dad lives close by with his wife, but I missed my mom and my sister, who are still in Colombia. I'm 42 and live in a rented room in someone's house, and I felt lonely.

I downloaded the Thrive app and began with connection Microsteps. I started to talk to people at work, and most of them were very sweet and friendly. They were happy to help me with my English. I also started studying vocabulary and phonetics and my English has improved. Being part of a community makes a big difference to my life. I cook Colombian food like arepas for friends and they invite me to their homes too. I went with some friends to an Ed Sheeran concert. I've also grown to love country music here in Tennessee! I talk to my mom every day, and I go to church; praying helps me stay strong. I've been focusing on my hobbies, like photography — I take pictures of beautiful sunsets.

My other focus has been on saving money, which is helping me feel more secure. I started by making a list of all my loans and expenses. It was good to review everything and decide how I am going to pay off my debts. I stopped paying for classes at the gym, and instead I exercise with free apps. I keep away from clothes stores so I'm not tempted to buy new outfits I don't need, and I cut down on eating out. I opened a savings account and I'm managing to pay my expenses as well as send money home to my mom — and I'm putting \$300 a month away. I feel that with Thrive I have my own personal financial advisor!

For the future, my dream is to bring my mom and sister over to America. I would love a career in digital marketing at Walmart, and I hope to have enough money for a down payment on a small house in a couple of years. My other goal is to write a memoir about my experiences and what I've overcome. I've come a long way and I believe that God is going to help me make my dreams come true.