

Kathy Kappes

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\$5,000 WINNER

Supercenter #1547

Lafayette, IN

Earlier this year, I was recovering from an aggressive and rare uterine cancer. I'd been through surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation and had pain in my feet. I'm 61 and didn't know if I was going to make it. I'd lost my mother to the same type of cancer. Then my husband, Larry, came down with COVID and lost his job — it was a tough time.

I'm an optician and I'd give it all I'd got at work, then I'd come home and crash. I love to garden, but had no energy for my flowers. And I didn't have the strength to play with my five-year-old grandson, Joshua. I was inspired to start the Thrive Challenge by a winner I read about, Lynda Symans, who'd also lost her mother. She talked about how you can change your life one step at a time.

I started doing light 10-minute workouts.

My children bought me an elliptical bike to encourage me. I needed to build stamina, so I slowly increased my time on the bike and added stomach crunches. I do simple Microsteps, like laying out my exercise clothes in the evening. I'm back in my garden working on my roses. I'm also growing tomatoes and peppers and making lots of salsa.

I've learned on my cancer journey that sugar isn't good for me.

Now, when people are eating donuts in the break room, I'll walk away and have a protein bar and herbal tea instead. When I was sick, sometimes we'd just have a peanut butter sandwich for dinner — now we're grilling chicken and having it with broccoli, and wild rice. I make a delicious cake with a sugar-free, cherry pie topping.



I'm so happy I can play with my grandson again.

When he comes over now, he knows that "Mawmaw" (his name for me) will play croquet outside with him. We play with his Hot Wheels cars, racing them around the tracks. When I was sick, I couldn't get down on the floor at all so it's amazing to be able to do that again. Oh my goodness, I can actually pick him up and give him hugs!

At work, I'm listening more to my patients.

One lady came in who had gone through cancer and we were able to empathize with each other and connect. She needed upgraded glasses, and I took the time to show her what type of lens would be best for her. Because I've been in her situation, she trusted what I was saying.

I'm in remission, I'm cancer-free, and the future looks bright.

Larry and I have been married for 41 years, and we're enjoying life again thanks to my Better Choices. We get together with the whole family for cookouts and play games like Bingo — my grandson loves calling out the numbers. My daughter's encouraging me to do a half marathon with her. I don't know whether I'll be walking or running, but I know I will do it.



THRIVE