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Like other aspects of a healthy lifestyle, TOPS started in the kitchen. In the late 1940s, a Milwaukee housewife named Esther S. Manz and three of her friends, Grace Messner, Verna Konings, and Frances Eggers, were sitting around a kitchen table grumbling about the extra pounds they gained over the holiday season. Esther suggested that—rather than go to a costly “fat farm”—they commit to meeting regularly to provide support and encouragement to help each other lose weight.

Esther had witnessed the power of mutual support while participating in group sessions designed to prepare women for childbirth. She discussed the idea of group support for weight control with her personal physician, and he encouraged her to try it. A few days later, at the now-famous kitchen table, Esther persuaded her friends to give her idea of forming a supportive weight-loss group a shot.

Their first meeting was held at a local community center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Verna Konings suggested they call their new group TOP (for Take Off Pounds). They soon had proof that a supportive environment was a crucial ingredient to helping them lose weight and achieve better health—by the second meeting the four had recorded losses totaling 28 pounds. Word began to spread and, after an article appeared in the local newspaper about this young, innovative group, so many people showed up for the next meeting that there was barely enough room for them all. In this same article, the reporter inadvertently pluralized TOPS. The ladies decided to keep the “S” which would stand for “Sensibly.” The word “Sensibly,” the involvement of a personal physician, and supportive community-minded sensibilities cemented the philosophy upon which TOPS would operate.

By the end of the second year, TOPS was so popular that new chapters were formed throughout the city. Esther found herself riding the bus all over Milwaukee carrying the TOPS scale and records, and helping to launch new chapters. In an amazingly short period of time this grass-roots effort snowballed into an international network of support groups dedicated to helping people live healthier lives.

What is perhaps most special about TOPS Club, Inc. is the fact that, in spite of its success and tremendous growth, the same principles hold true today that Esther Manz recognized in 1948: Obesity is a disease that requires lifelong vigilance. A warm hand of friendship, a caring group of friends, a little recognition, and some fun add up to successful behavior changes. Her unwavering commitment to providing affordable, effective, accessible support has touched hundreds of thousands of loyal and grateful TOPS members all over the world.

Esther Manz was ahead of her time, and every TOPS member has benefited from her vision.
Installation of Officers

Annual elections of officers are held at the first chapter meeting of March each year. After your chapter elects new officers, an installation ceremony signals the resulting change—even for officers continuing for a second year of service. The installation introduces and welcomes newly elected and appointed officers.

Using a theme for installation adds uniqueness to this special event. Former officers or the program chairman should take charge of this special meeting. Your Coordinator and/or Area Captain may be invited to do the installation honors if you desire.

A small token of appreciation representing the theme for each officer, and perhaps each member, makes the event very special. Decorating an installation table in keeping with the theme, using music that emphasizes the theme, and candles set a wonderfully special mood.

**INSTALLATION CEREMONY**

The installer could be a past or outgoing officer.

**INSTALLER:**

I remember the day I stepped across the threshold into my very first TOPS meeting. I had finally faced the fact that I needed a helping hand. I needed some extra support, lots of understanding, and caring as I attempted to change old eating and exercise habits.

- Will the Weight Recorder please come forward? You grasp the purpose for coming together each week and praise progress while encouraging those who are struggling. name:_____________________________

  The Weight Recorder records each member’s weigh-in on weight charts provided by TOPS Club, Inc., as well as maintains and files on time all necessary weight records. The Weight Recorder studies and follows all current TOPS Rules applying to weight recording.

  If you accept these duties, answer “I do.”

  Having so affirmed, accept this token.

  • Will the Treasurer please come forward? Your task is to handle chapter assets carefully. name:_____________________________

  The Treasurer handles all money received and disbursed, gives reports whenever requested at regular meetings on chapter finances and promptly forwards all memberships, maintenance fees, and other transactions to the Coordinator.

  If you accept these duties, answer “I do.”

  Having so affirmed, accept this token.

  • Will the Secretary please come forward? You clearly note all concerns and events as they occur at meetings. name:________________________________

  The Secretary keeps accurate minutes at each meeting—specifying names, dates, motions and contest rules as needed. If asked by the Leader, the Secretary reads all official communications and tends to all correspondence.

  If you accept these duties, answer “I do.”

  Having so affirmed, accept this token.

  • Will the Co-Leader please come forward? You are positioned to take over any office vacancy with confidence and enthusiasm when needed. name:________________________________
The Co-Leader helps the Leader serve the chapter, presides at chapter meetings in Leader’s absence, and fills the office if permanently vacated. Co-Leader also fills any other office temporarily until the officer returns or a permanent replacement is elected or appointed.

If you accept these duties, answer “I do.”

Having so affirmed, accept this token.

Will the Leader please come forward? You point the way, insisting that we be united in our commitment, acting as one to help all.

Keeping in mind the goals and philosophies of TOPS Club, Inc., the Leader determines and carries out the wishes of the majority of the chapter. The Leader disregards personal preference, is well prepared, starts meetings on time, seeks member participation, guides topic discussion, and enthusiastically develops helpful, inspiring topics. The Leader works with all officers and reviews the chapter’s progress regularly. The Leader notes individual progress and talks privately with those having difficulty, offering extra encouragement.

If you accept these duties, answer “I do.”

Having so affirmed, accept this token.

(Installer, address members.)

Our officers form a strong team to support us and give us a helping hand. Let’s all stand, joining with them and each other, hand-in-hand, and start out fresh today. Fellow members, if you are willing to dedicate yourselves to help your officers in the coming year, say “I do,” and let’s applaud them together in praise of their dedication to all.

You can add an element of interest to your installation by choosing a theme for the occasion. The following is an example of using a theme.

“RAINBOW OF PROMISE”
INSTALLATION CEREMONY

Supplies: Set up 5 candles of a different color with the larger Candle of Continuity. Leader - blue; Co-Leader - red; Secretary - yellow; Treasurer - white; Weight Recorder (and Assistant, if it applies) - black.

Alternately, you can use colored ribbons to illustrate the theme, with a different color ribbon for each office. The ribbons may be pinned on the new officers as well as tied around the candles.

(Narrator will light the large Candle of Continuity which is in the center of the table.)

NARRATOR:

The rainbow is a sign of love, a symbol of hope and a token of promise. As you go forth into another year of TOPS work, may you, as officers, not forget your color of the rainbow and the symbols for which they stand.
(New Leader's name)_________________, as Leader of this chapter, will you please come forward?

Your chapter has elected you to the privileged position of leading it. As such, you are a builder, a teacher, an example and a counselor. You will avail yourself of every opportunity to learn more about TOPS. It is a major responsibility that you see your chapter grow. You will lead your chapter to love TOPS and what it stands for. As a wise Leader, you will recognize the need for help of others. Remember, you can love them into cheerful cooperation. You will recognize each person as an individual. You should lead your chapter to cooperate with your Coordinator and TOPS Club, Inc. (New Leader) __________ _______________, do you accept the responsibilities of this office?

(New Leader responds "I do.")

NARRATOR:

Your color is BLUE, symbol of loyalty which you should give your chapter and TOPS Club, Inc. I hereby install you as Leader of TOPS________ _________ _______________. (state/prov.) (number) (city)

Please light your candle from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of continuing loyalty and service.

(New Leader lights blue candle and stands behind table with candle lit.)

NARRATOR:

(Co-Leader's name)________________, as Co-Leader, will you please come forward?

You will assist the chapter Leader, help direct the chapter when they are absent, and help welcome new members and explain TOPS to them. You will work in close harmony with the rules and regulations of TOPS. You can love the chapter into cooperation. (Co-Leader) ____________, do you accept the responsibilities of this office?

(Co-Leader responds "I do.")

NARRATOR:

Your color is RED, a symbol of love. I hereby install you as Co-Leader of this chapter. Please light your candle from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of continuing loyalty and service.

(Co-Leader lights red candle and stands next to Leader.)

NARRATOR:

(Secretary's name)________________, our Secretary, will you please come forward?

You will keep accurate minutes of each meeting and read the past week's minutes at each meeting; put all contest rules into the minutes; be familiar with the bylaws of the chapter and TOPS Club, Inc. so you may inform new members; and read chapter correspondence at meetings if requested. (Secretary) ________________, do you accept the responsibilities of this office?

(Secretary responds “I do.”)

NARRATOR:

The color appropriate for your office is YELLOW, symbolizing sincerity. I hereby install you as Secretary of our chapter of TOPS Club, Inc. Please light your candle from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of continuing loyalty and service.

(Secretary lights yellow candle and stands next to Co-Leader.)

NARRATOR:

(Treasurer's name)_______________, our Treasurer, will you please come forward?

The Treasurer shall have charge of all receipts and disbursements. You will keep the Leader and Co-Leader informed and up-to-date by giving a complete report at least once a month. You will keep account of all chapter affairs and contests that involve money matters. You will see that members’ dues and chapter maintenance dues are paid up to date. (Treasurer) ______________, do you accept the responsibilities of this office?

(Treasurer responds “I do.”)
NARRATOR:
Your color is WHITE, a symbol of purity and joy in a job well done. I hereby install you as Treasurer of our chapter of TOPS Club, Inc. Please light your candle from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of continuing loyalty and service.

(Treasurer lights white candle and stands next to Secretary.)

NARRATOR:
(Name of each officer) ________________, our Weight Recorder and (Assistant Weight Recorder’s name) ________________, our Assistant Weight Recorder, will you please come forward?

Your office is an important element of our chapter. You must keep an accurate record of all weights, give a report at each meeting of losses and gains, keep record of weights for contests, and see to it that weight charts are completed correctly and sent to the Coordinator at the end of the year. Since you have contact with each member as they weigh in, you can praise the losers and give words of encouragement to the gainers.

(Weight Recorder) ______________ and (Assistant Weight Recorder) ______________, do you accept the responsibilities of this office?

(Weight Recorder and Assistant Weight Recorder respond “We do.”)

NARRATOR:
A rainbow is most beautiful when it has a dark backdrop. Only a deep color will bring out the sparkling brilliance and beauty of the colors of the rainbow. Sometimes it is through the darkness of our sorrows and trials that we are drawn together. So BLACK is the color for our Weight Recorder and Assistant Weight Recorder. It represents also the pen and ink of your office. I hereby install you as Weight Recorder and Assistant Weight Recorder of our chapter. Please light your candles from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of continuing loyalty and service.

(Both light their black candles and stand with officers.)

NARRATOR:
Please repeat with us the following pledge:
I pledge myself as an officer of TOPS ____________________________, (state/prov.) (number) (city), to perform responsibly the duties of my office, be true to TOPS, obey all TOPS rules, and help myself and my fellow members toward our common goal. I will work in unity and common concern with my fellow officers and members to encourage good will in this chapter and advance its worthy work.

NARRATOR:
Will the members of this chapter now stand?

We are happy to present to you your new officers. They need your complete understanding and cooperation during the year ahead and have a right to expect your assistance in the work they are undertaking. Do you promise to give them understanding, cooperation and assistance?

(Members say "We do." Candles are blown out and the ceremony is over.)
Rededication

A rededication ceremony is helpful whenever your chapter needs to feel renewed. Members recommit themselves to the ideals of TOPS and to the goals they had in mind when they joined the chapter. The ceremony itself should strive to revitalize, restate, and celebrate TOPS values and mission.

REDEDICATION CEREMONY

Supplies: Thirteen candles (These can be distributed to 13 different chapter members for participation or the Leader can conduct the lighting ceremony.)

Leader, or each member, as you light each candle, say:

1. This candle is for the entire TOPS organization.

2. This candle is for our chapter TOPS __________________________. (state/prov.) (number) (city)

3. This candle is for the strength needed to reach our goals.

4. This candle is for the KOPS who remind us it can be done.

5. This candle is for each one of us here tonight.

6. This candle is for the help and inspiration given through our meetings.

7. This candle is for the encouragement we can give one another.

8. This candle is for the members who are floundering—may they be successful.

9. This candle is for the new friends we have through TOPS.

10. This candle is for the hope of controlling our emotions intelligently this year.

11. This candle is for the determination we need to achieve a good weight loss.

12. This candle is for peace of mind, respect for others and happiness in life.

13. This candle is for the promise we make ourselves when we say the TOPS pledge at each meeting.

LEADER:

There are times when TOPS hearts and minds need renewal and rededication.

To the TOPS who are present, we say be of good spirit. You are special. Your time will come.

To the KOPS who are present, our hearts are full for you. You have reached your goal and we are proud of you. We ask your guidance and understanding. Be patient with us for we will return to you for TOPS love and encouragement. Please be there, for we need you.

And now we ask all of you to join in a TOPS rededication pledge. Please repeat after me.

Today as I rededicate myself to TOPS goals and purposes, I pledge:

To forget my past mistakes and work toward a healthier lifestyle.

To strive for fulfillment and attainment of my goal.

To believe in the power I have over myself and my weaknesses.

To lend a helping hand and a ready smile.

To be a better person, chapter member and TOPS friend.

This rededication symbolizes my commitment to make a new and fresh start from this day forward.

Remember to love yourself. You are one of a kind. No one else is like you. Take time for yourself—you are important. And remember always that TOPS loves you.
Chapter 3: Rededication

“SOAR WITH EAGLES”
REDEDICATION CEREMONY

Supplies

1. **Candles for each member.** Cut a slit in the center of a small paper plate and insert each of the candles halfway through the opening, leaving the bottom of the candle exposed to use as a “handle.” The paper plate will protect your hands from the wax of the melting candle.

2. **A larger candle to use as the Candle of Friendship.** Insert securely in a candle holder and place with matches on a small table centered in a large open area of the room. A nice option is a small eagle pin to give each member as a reminder of their rededication to “soar with eagles.” Check with your Coordinator for a possible source through a TOPS vendor for an affordable pin. These can be on the table for presentation at the end of the ceremony.

Members begin the ceremony sitting in a circle around the table that holds the large candle. Each member has their own candle along with a note card with the rededication.

(Note: Special thanks to author Tom Reilly for permission to quote from “The Young Eagle.”)

TWO PEOPLE MAY READ THIS, OR LEADER NARRATES:

As we circle together to recharge, rejoice and rededicate, I want to share with you the prologue from the story of “The Young Eagle” by Tom Reilly.

The nest of young eagles hung on every word as the Master Eagle described his exploits. This was an important day for the eaglets. They were preparing for their first solo flight from the nest. It was the confidence builder many of them needed to fulfill their destiny.

“How far can I travel?” asked one of the eaglets.

“How far can you see?” responded the Master Eagle.

“How high can I fly?” quizzed the young eaglet.

“How far can you stretch your wings?” asked the old eagle.

“How long can I fly?” the eaglet persisted.

“How far is the horizon?” the mentor rebounded.

“How much should I dream?” asked the eaglet.

“How much can you dream?” smiled the older, wiser eagle.

“How much can I achieve?” the young eagle continued.

“How much can you believe?” the old eagle challenged.

Frustrated by the banter, the young eagle demanded, “Why don’t you answer my questions?”

“I did.”

“Yes. But you answered them with questions.”

“I answered them the best I could.”

“But you’re the Master Eagle. You’re supposed to know everything. If you can’t answer these questions, who can?”

“You,” the old wise eagle reassured.

“Me? How?” the young eagle was confused.

“No one can tell you how high to fly or how much to dream. It’s different for each eagle. Only God and you know how far you’ll go. No one on this earth knows your potential or what’s in your heart. You alone can answer that. The only thing that limits you is the edge of your imagination.”

The young eagle, puzzled by this, asked, “What should I do?”

“Look to the horizon, spread your wings, and fly.”
(Play appropriate background music, such as “On Eagles Wings” or “The Wind Beneath My Wings.”)

LEADER ADDRESSES MEMBERS:

How far can you fly? As far as you believe you can. Like the eaglet venturing out for the first time, we need to take that first step in our journey to better health. Every step that follows will bring you closer to your dreams.

(Leader approaches the table in the center of the circle of members and lights the large candle and then continues narrating.)

This Candle of Friendship represents the fellowship of our TOPS chapter as we gather each week to support each other on our quest to lead healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives. I will light my own candle from this Candle of Friendship and pass the flame to the members on each side of me in our Circle. Each of you, please pass your flames until the Circle of Friendship is complete.

Let each of us pledge together:

(Leader and all of the members read together:)

I pledge today to rededicate myself to the purpose of good health through the support of my TOPS friends.

How high will I fly? That’s up to me.

How long will I soar? That’s up to me.

How far will I go? That’s up to me.

But I need you all here beside me to lift me when I fall. I will count on each of you as you can count on me.

Today I will make the commitment to Dream it … Believe it … and Do it!

I know that I can Soar with Eagles!

A Rededication Creed to Live By

Don’t undermine your worth by comparing yourself to others. It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don’t set your goals by what other people dream. Only you know what is best for you.

Don’t dismiss your own dreams. To be without dreams is to be without hope. To be without hope is to be without purpose.

Don’t take for granted the things closest to your heart. Cling to them as you would your life, for without them life is meaningless.

Don’t let life slip through your fingers by living in the past or for the future. By living life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life.

Don’t give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don’t be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect. It is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don’t be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don’t shut love out of your life by saying it’s impossible to find. The quickest way to receive love is to give love. The fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly. The best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don’t run through your life so fast that you forget not only where you’ve been but where you’re going. Life is not a race, but a journey to be savored each step of the way.
Chapter 4

Chapter Winners Recognition

CELEBRATING SUCCESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
Using TOPS charms, pinettes, or links as award items to recognize members for their weight losses makes special TOPS moments even more memorable for members. Long after their presentation, charms provide members with inspiration and with a sense of pride in their achievement. Imagine the pleasure a member experiences when wearing a bracelet of charms while at chapter, in their daily lives or at Recognition Days, where charm bracelets make great conversation pieces! For the chapter, it always peps up members to have challenges for a weight loss or for service to the chapter, and then to be awarded for a job well done.

It is important to set up a good system of awards for your chapter. Meet with your chapter’s officers and together you can set up a charms program for awards. Remember, award items purchased with your chapter treasury are also an excellent way for members to benefit from their weekly chapter dues. Awards are pictured on Form L-015B and can be ordered using forms L-015 and L-017 available online at www.tops.org in the Forms and Documents section or from your Coordinator. TOPS has added a line of Italian links to the customary charms and pinettes for a fresh new look. Watch your TOPS News for introduction of new items available for recognition in your chapter.

It’s a good idea to give awards on a monthly or quarterly basis. This way the Weight Recorder or Assistant will have the time to check weights carefully and determine who is eligible. Surveys show that chapters have better weight losses when they use the TOPS charms for rewards on a regular basis.

Make your presentation special. Call the member up to the front of the room and explain why they are receiving the award, then present it to the member with a “TOPS hug.” Make the member feel special, and it will impress others. They will want to work for the same recognition.

ANNUAL CHAPTER AWARDS
The annual awards program can and should be one of the highlights of your chapter’s year. It’s an opportunity to recognize your chapter’s best losers in several categories:

• **Chapter King and Queen and their runners-up**: The first time registered KOPS in the current calendar year who used non-surgical means for weight loss and lost the most weight to goal from their highest weight recorded at TOPS Club, Inc. (as listed on the membership form either when joining as a new member or at renewal).

• **Chapter Division Winners**: Members (male and female competing separately) who have lost the most weight in their respective weight, age or surgical category in the current year.

Every January, your chapter sends a resume of its winners to your Coordinator. Once the winners have been confirmed by the Coordinator and Regional Director, the resume will be returned to your chapter, usually in February, with certificates from TOPS Club, Inc. for your official winners.

Other recognition categories that can be honored at your chapter awards program include the following:

• **KOPS staying in limits all year and TOPS**

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weighing each week without a gain

• Weight loss of 10 pounds or more for members who did not win in their division

• Perfect attendance

• Most inspirational member as voted by secret ballot by the chapter members

• Chairman and volunteer recognition

• Graduates

• Alumni KOPS

The annual awards program is the forum for recognizing the success and contributions of your members. It’s their reward for months or years of steady effort. It’s also a great way to inspire all your members by showing them it can be done!

Getting Started
Your chapter annual awards program may be as involved or as simple as you care to make it. In either case, to be sure this event is memorable and special for your winners, the officers should allow ample time to plan and prepare for the occasion.

1. Set a date that is before the Annual Recognition Days for the area.

2. Choose a theme if desired. This can provide ease of choosing small items as favors or tokens of recognition.

3. Delegate responsibilities for decorating, purchases, menu planning (if you are including a meal in your agenda), music, set-up and clean-up.

4. Determine awards for your winners which can include crowns for the Royalty; plaques, trophies or gifts for both the Royalty and the division winners; ribbons, flowers, charms and certificates as needed or desired. Your chapter bylaws should have standards in this regard.

5. Make an agenda of events to follow and print copies for each person participating as a presenter or speaker.

6. Prepare a program, with all of the honorees’ names listed, to be distributed at the end of the event. This makes a nice memento for the members and can be presented simply on a plain sheet of paper, or inserted into a large, colorful, blank note card.

7. Many members have computer skills that could also be used for the winners list and certificates as well as banners or hand-outs. Members are often pleased to be asked to contribute their skills in this way.

Once you have plans in place, announce the date to your members and make sure everyone marks their calendars to attend. This is a “dressy” affair to show respect for the honorees.

Theme ideas
Imagine the music, gifts and decorations that can liven up your event with some of the following theme ideas:

• Sailing to Success

• TOPS in the Winners Circle (racing)

• Go for the Gold (Olympics)

• TOPS Academy Awards

• Fairest of the Fair (county fair)

• Whole New World (space)

• Surfin’ Safari

• Winter Wonderland

• Through the Looking Glass

• Soars with Eagles

• April in Paris

• Magic Kingdom (Fairytale/Disney)

• Rock Around the Clock

• Country Jamboree

• Oriental Odyssey
Chapter 4: Chapter Winners Recognition

- Fiesta Days
- Sentimental Journey (music of the 40s)
- Up, Up and Away (hot air balloons)
- Tropical Paradise (Hawaii/luau)
- TOPS on Broadway (theater)
- The Heart of TOPS

These are just suggestions to get the conversation started when you gather as an executive committee to plan your event.

SUGGESTIONS AND GUIDELINES

Create Photo Memories

Assign one or more members to be official photographers. You may want to send your best shots to your local paper with a short, inspiring story of your successful members with chapter meeting information.

Royalty

Chapter Royalty should be treated as such. You could drape a regular chair(s) in a shining red tablecloth and set it/them center “stage” for your winner(s) to hold the seat of honor. With flowers, charms and the certificate presented, the grand finale of your presentation should be the crowning of your Royalty. (An order form is sent each year to the Leader for chapter crowns and winners ribbon.)

Success Story for Division Winners and Royalty

Stories can be especially inspiring. Your honorees can be asked ahead of time to submit their story or a member of the chapter familiar with the winner can be asked to speak as part of the program. Always give the winners the opportunity to say a few words, as well, following the ceremony.

Graduates

Even those who are planning to graduate at ARD/SDR/PRD/IRD can still be given recognition during your annual chapter awards program. Just remember that it’s the presentation of the diploma that constitutes graduation.

Invitations

Invitations can be designed and sent to people to attend as guests for your event. Consider:

- Family and non-member friends of the winners
- Area Field Staff
- Previous members of your chapter
- Friends of the winners from other chapters

History, Fun and Inspiration

These are elements that can add more to the program than just the act of presenting awards to the winners. If you have a chapter historian, your awards program is a great time to give the history of your chapter to those attending. Someone can be assigned to read a poem or story of inspiration. This is a joyful event, so singing is a definite plus. You could have fun with a skit or roast of all your winners.

With time, thought and imagination, you can assure that your winners will always remember this special event in their TOPS life. There is no greater gift that you can give than giving recognition, validation and honor to members who have earned it.
KOPS members didn’t just wake up one morning and find they could fit in a size small or medium. KOPS didn’t just suddenly lose their desire for chocolate cake and ice cream sundaes. They haven’t found a cure for shattered nerves when things go wrong. KOPS just worked hard, plugging along, looking only to the next TOPS meeting, where they hoped they would show the loss of another pound. KOPS’ stomachs growled from hunger pangs, and sometimes their frazzled nerves went without the formerly familiar comfort of excess food.

KOPS are overweight people who came to TOPS for help, and you gave it. Your KOPS members are your own creation, and should be loved and admired. KOPS are living proof of what each of you can do. They have sat where you are sitting, and have felt the pain of being overweight as you sometimes do. They dieted and hoped like you hope, and wished like you wish. They often watched other KOPS as you now watch them, and silently renewed their pledge to one day reach their KOPS goal.

So I say to each of you: A KOPS is your own success and living proof that someday you will share with them the title of KOPS.

**KOPS? What are you?**

You are our beacon, a radiant beam to guide us and a shining example for us to follow.

You are sensible, for you didn’t stop until you reached goal.

You are wise, for you know that fretting over yesterday’s mistakes is fruitless.

Today is a new day, and you start anew.

You are courageous. It takes all the courage you can muster to eat sensibly.

You are understanding, for you have faced the same problems we face. You conquered those problems and assure us that we can, too.

You are patient. You don’t chastise us or laugh at our excuses, though you must smile to yourselves and think back to a time when you, too, used a feeble excuse.

But you’ve stopped kidding yourselves. You know that, if you’ve gained, it isn’t the fault of the scale or the Weight Recorder.

You are Success.

With your help and love, we, too, will be able to join your select group.

**My KOPS Pin**

It’s just a little pin, nothing flashy or bright;

No precious stone does it possess, nor does it glitter in the light.

It has some gold in it, and other metals too.

And some will say it’s not worth much, but to me, it’s a priceless jewel.

It really wasn’t a present, nor did I go out and buy it.

You could say it was a “trade” for unwanted pounds and long, hard diet.

For over a year now I’ve dieted, and counted those calories.

I’ve watched and worried, and kept my goal, so I could wear this finery.

I’ve sweated weigh-ins with a prayer on my lips!

Just another gold pin you say?

WELL, NOT TO ME—TO ME IT MEANS MORE WITH EACH AND EVERY WEIGH-IN DAY!
KOPS GRADUATION
A KOPS graduation is the culmination of a period of hard work, dedication and commitment to a healthier lifestyle. KOPS may graduate only once. The presentation of the diploma is what constitutes a KOPS graduation. The graduation may be held at the chapter level, or a member may choose to graduate at ARD, SRD, PRD, or IRD. Even if a member chooses to graduate outside of their chapter, each chapter should recognize their KOPS graduates in some way. At chapter, the KOPS graduation ceremony may be as simple or elaborate as the chapter desires. This ceremony, at any level, should be impressive enough to plant an earnest desire in the KOPS to maintain their goal weight and inspire others to strive for a similar success.

(If a member chooses to graduate at a recognition event, their chapter may still honor him or her, but may not present a diploma.)

The following is an example of a meaningful, inspirational KOPS graduation ceremony.

“TOPS Tree of Life” Graduation Ceremony
Supplies: table with Candle of Continuity and other candles for KOPS attending; graduation cap, tassel, ribbon, diploma, rose and charm (if chapter provides charm); and seedling tree.

Program should be presented by Leader and five members.

LEADER:
Arbor Day is celebrated in April or May, depending on where you live. Arbor Day and TOPS becoming KOPS have similarities. TOPS chapter members will explain.

FIRST MEMBER:
All trees have solid roots to grow. TOPS roots, or ways to achieve success, are based on a solid foundation as well—a healthy lifestyle comprised of sensible eating, exercise, water, and weekly weigh-in at a chapter meeting. These roots lead to weight loss and achievement of goals.

SECOND MEMBER:
The trunk is important for a tree as well as a TOPS member. It is through the tree’s trunk that food reaches the arms or branches and leaves. So it is with KOPS and TOPS. It is the chapter membership that presents the programs, teaching and encouraging weight loss and exercise. Those same members provide support and understanding when things aren’t going so well and set us back on track.

THIRD MEMBER:
The leaves and branches grow differently for each tree. So it is with TOPS. There is no absolute way, no required road each member must take to get to goal. The route is each person’s responsibility. TOPS suggests the food Exchange System because it provides healthy, daily intake of all food groups. Some members count calories, some use other systems. As long as the tree grows to maturity, the method isn’t an issue—living long and healthy is!

FOURTH MEMBER:
We can’t forget the soil. Soil is what keeps a tree a living example. Can a tree be eroded and destroyed? Sure it can! So can a KOPS or TOPS member. Stress, family, friends, work or lack of it, and attitude can all erode a chapter member on the road to goal or staying there.

FIFTH MEMBER:
Most important, TOPS and KOPS members, like the tree, need moisture. Moisture may be a hug and a card sent for encouragement. It is the “moisture” in a chapter, the feeling of being someone for whom others care, that is special.

LEADER:
Today, we celebrate a new tree, a new KOPS. This transplant (tree) we give to (name) as a reminder of his/her goal commitment, a promise made to himself/
herself and the healthy lifestyle ahead. Water the tree and water yourself (name) by continuing to weigh in and staying for chapter meetings in order to stay in leeway. Your trunk, your knowledge of keeping weight off, will grow and you will be a visual example of what TOPS can do as you Keep Off Pounds Sensibly. Be OUR moisture—give us hugs and encouragement as we work toward goal and we will help you to stay in leeway as well.

Let’s recognize (name) as he/she begins his/her new lifestyle. At this time, would the KOPS of longest standing please come forward to light the Candle of Continuity?

(If there are no KOPS, the chapter Leader should do this. Pause for time to light the candle.)

KOPS, continue to guard this flame faithfully, a symbol of glowing hope for every TOPS. KOPS, you are a chapter’s shining hearts. Be good models of the hope ahead for each TOPS chapter member. KOPS, please come forward and light your candles from the Candle of Continuity, forming as much of a circle as you can as you do so.

It is our pleasure to drape your KOPS ribbon (if it is being presented). The ribbon symbolizes your success—the courage and determination that it took to get to goal. You’ve earned the right to be proud!

We present you with this rose, a symbol of beauty and perfection. It is the symbol of the dreams of every TOPS member to become a KOPS and your successful journey through the maze. Today, this rose represents the reality of your dream come true. It represents purity, meaning that you have kept your goal in mind daily and accomplished your desired weight by sensible eating and exercise. It also symbolizes another beauty—the beauty achieved through self-awareness and denial of excess food.

We place this graduation cap on your head as another symbol of achievement. You have attained your goal! (Pause so cap is seated on head.) The cap is an outward sign that holds the tassel, which represents the pounds that have fallen off your body.

Please accept this candle and light it from the Candle of Continuity. It represents your light—your pounds lost—at the end of a dark tunnel. It represents your goal now attained. The candle also represents a commitment to your TOPS chapter members that you will continue to be an example of what TOPS can do as you Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

It is my pleasure to present to you your KOPS diploma (charm, etc.). You have reached your healthcare professional’s prescribed goal and have been duly registered with TOPS Club, Inc. Members of TOPS ________________, (state/prov.) (number) (city) please join with me in a round of applause for your newest KOPS graduates.

(It is appropriate at this time to ask graduate to share story. It may also be appropriate to have chapter members, family and/or guests present to share memories of the graduate’s struggles as well.)

KOPS GRADUATE

May this day be the

Beginning of a million tomorrows …

Touched by the gift of rainbows …

Filled with the gift of dreams …

Blessed with the gift of love …
“KOPS Rose” Graduation Ceremony

At this time, I am pleased to present our graduating KOPS—will you please stand?

TOPS can build a bridge to success. You have crossed that symbolic bridge with the help of many hands, and have reached your goal.

KOPS come in assorted sizes and shapes—goals and ages vary. It may take a few months, a season, a year, even several years to reach that goal. It has taken willpower and determination and always will.

It is our honor today to present you with a KOPS graduation banner (or ribbon). It is a symbol of your courage and determination—a badge of success. You have earned the right to wear it proudly because of your perseverance.

The KOPS graduation pin we present you today will serve to remind you that you have attained your goal. It is the outward sign of your commitment to good health, which no one but you can destroy.

Your graduation cap is the traditional symbol of achievement and the goal attained. The tassel, which falls gently from the cap, symbolizes the pounds which have fallen from your body. You have succeeded and reached your goal. The smile we see under the cap is from our beautiful KOPS, that each and every one of us TOPS members can become one day.

As you are presented with your rose, remember how each part is a reminder of your path to being a KOPS. The five parts of the rose are:

- **The stem**—just like the support system in our chapter, and from our family and friends
- **The thorns**—our gains, our disappointment in ourselves, our hurts and our pains
- **The leaves**—each one uneven, not a smooth one to be found. Just like life, we all have rough spots. Who do you know whose life runs smoothly?
- **The petals**—all clustered around one main core, like our members and the chapter officers
- **The center core**—the nucleus within ourselves—our willpower and determination to get us through what we have to do to reach our goal and become a KOPS

The KOPS rose is a symbol of loyalty, friendship, and honest-to-goodness caring among friends. Presented on your graduation day, it is a symbol that all TOPS want to become KOPS.

The most precious object a TOPS can obtain is the KOPS diploma—your diploma. This is given by TOPS Club, Inc. to show that you have met all of the requirements necessary to become a KOPS: you have reached your healthcare professional’s prescribed goal and have been duly registered at TOPS Headquarters as a member of the KOPS family.

Please step forward when your name is called and receive your diploma.

It is my honor to present to you this diploma as a symbol of your success. You are the light for all TOPS who are walking the same path you have walked. Let your light shine forever as the example and inspiration of what they can also achieve.

(Move tassel to other side of new KOPS’ cap, as you say …)

I am now moving your tassel as the final, outward sign of your accomplishment. Now that you have achieved your goal, you are a new person in TOPS—you are KOPS!

Ladies and gentlemen, join me in congratulating our newly graduated KOPS!
KOPS ANNIVERSARY
KOPS anniversaries are significant milestones and celebrations of these milestones serve as powerful motivation for everyone. Take advantage of the inspirational value of a KOPS anniversary ceremony: these members have lost and kept off excess weight for many consecutive months or years—a fabulous accomplishment and the ultimate goal for all TOPS members. Remember that each KOPS has valuable advice to share with fellow members. Encourage the KOPS to share this advice during the ceremony.

If your chapter has many KOPS, you may wish to honor several anniversaries at once.

PREPARATIONS:

1. Order a rose for each anniversary year. Remember that consecutive years of status in five-year increments is recognized with a special award ordered using Form S-051 through your Coordinator. KOPS may choose to be presented with this necklace (for ladies) or tie tac (for men) at their chapter, ARD, PRD or SRD.

2. Order the numeral or charm/pendant earned using Form L-017 (see the difference in these two options on Form L-015B). These may be ordered ahead of the date of the KOPS anniversary in order to be available in time for your program. Forms are available online at www.tops.org or from your Coordinator.

3. Get a copy of member’s TOPS success story.

4. Get a “before” outfit if one is still available to display or model, and/or “before” pictures to display.

5. Get “after” pictures to display.

6. Provide table with KOPS Candle of Continuity and candles for each KOPS.

PROGRAM LEADER SAY:
Recognizing the years in leeway is important to KOPS. We chapter members are pleased to honor (name) for (number) year(s) as KOPS.

For example, if you use a yellow rose, you could say:

Y et another year has passed, and
E lated we are to honor another successful chapter member.
L eeway is important to KOPS and
L ogical eating habits have allowed
O ur (name) to stay (in black/in leeway) all year!
W hat a special achievement that has been.
R oses are usual rewards for such success and yellow they should be.
O ne for each year. Let’s see, for you that means (number of years being recognized).
Savor this moment, (name).
E ach of us is so proud. What an example you have been for us.

LEADER:
Read member’s success story now if it is available and conclude the reading with “What an inspiration your story has been for us.”

Have a chapter member model the “before” garment now if it is available and conclude with “Aren’t new clothes fun to buy now?”

SAY:
Please (name) come forward and accept the roses in recognition of the years at goal. Also, we are proud to present your numeral (number) for your years of KOPS status. Let’s salute him/her with a round of applause! *(At this time, it is appropriate to ask the KOPS if they wish to speak.) KOPS, please come forward and light your candles from the Candle of Continuity once (name) has lit his/hers and join together in reciting your KOPS pledge.
KOPS REINSTATEMENT
A reinstated KOPS is a TOPS member who reverted back to TOPS status after official KOPS registration and who has now attained their goal weight a second time, and registered as a reinstated KOPS. Since there are few members who haven’t had some experience with backsliding and weight gains, special motivation can be drawn from the achievement of a reinstated KOPS. A KOPS reinstatement ceremony highlights the fact that the road to weight loss is a journey with many turns and bumps in the road along the way.

KOPS Reinstatement Ceremony
Instructions:
A Leader, Coordinator, Area Captain, or KOPS of longest standing could serve as emcee.

Ceremony will be read by the emcee. Instructions for other participants are indicated in italics.

Set up a table with a white cloth, large white candle (for the Candle of Continuity), and candle holders for small candles (one for each KOPS). For each reinstated KOPS, provide a KOPS ribbon, rose, and small white or gold candle. All other KOPS should also have a candle.

At the start of the ceremony, an alumnus KOPS lights the Candle of Continuity.

EMCEE:
After you came to TOPS, there was a change on the inside and the outside. You became a KOPS; you became a new person. You had the world at your feet. But something happened. As any KOPS knows, being a KOPS is not easy. It takes a lot of control. You started gaining weight. You lost your KOPS status and began to backslide. You knew the frustration of looking in the mirror, only to see backslid pounds. You needed hope—hope to live a normal, thin life among temptations; hope to continue the struggle to regain your KOPS status; hope upon seeing new members come and lose weight while you were gaining and hurting inside.

Even though you were a backslider, you are a special person. You never gave up. Sometimes in life we have to lose something before we discover how important it is. But you faced each day, as it came, with strength and determination. You had the hope that you would succeed. You met the challenge. You have won!

Will (name of KOPS)
_______________________________________
please come forward for his/her KOPS reinstatement. (KOPS is escorted to table and faces audience.)

We present to you your KOPS ribbon. (Ribbon is pinned on.) This is a symbol of your courage and determination and your badge of success. Wear it proudly because you have earned the right by not giving up, by not quitting, and by perseverance.

The rose you are being presented has always been a symbol of love. In TOPS, we care, share with each other, and help each other through good times and bad. That is what sets our organization apart from others. We have TOPS love for ourselves and each other.

You are now being pinned with your KOPS shield. Upon it rests your KOPS pin. The shield is a symbol to guard your KOPS status. It represents a guard against temptations that will be there for the rest of your life. By once again attaining your KOPS status, you have earned the right to again wear your KOPS pin and join other KOPS alumni.

Always remember your KOPS status is a precious jewel. Protect it continuously, not just once in a while. Reaching your goal does not give us all the answers, only a little insight on where you’ve been and how you now strive to Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

Will you now light your candle from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of your reinstatement to the status of KOPS, whose flame will burn within you? (KOPS lights
candle, places candle in holder, and returns to position.)

Members of TOPS
TOPS ________________________________,
(state/prov.) (number) (city)
please join with me in congratulating your reinstated KOPS.

Will all KOPS alumni to please come forward to light their candles from the Candle of Continuity as a symbol of their continuing dedication to the principles of KOPS.

(KOPS light candles, place them in holders, and then remain at front of audience or form a circle around the room. After candles are lit, emcee reads the following poem.)

**The KOPS Before Us**
They have succeeded in taking off pounds and keeping them off each day.
And so, as they have encouraged us,
we all would like to say—
We find you’re our inspiration,
for you have kept a goal.

When things went wrong and defeat stood close,
you reached clear down to your soul
And tried again, and cried again,
and tried when some would give in.
So here you stand, where we can stand—
if we just take your strength and begin!

**At this time, KOPS will recite their pledge.**
I am an intelligent person.
I have controlled my emotions and
not let my emotions control me.

Every time I am tempted to use food
to satisfy my frustrated desires, build up my
injured ego,
or dull my senses, I will remember—
that I am to be an example of what KOPS
can do, as I
Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

**A Tribute to Reinstated KOPS**
Reinstated KOPS have known despair but never defeat, have been overcome but never conquered. They have smiled through tears of sadness, turned the corner of self-pity and moved into the light of a better understanding of a problem.

A victory was always in sight. In their hearts they kept faith, in their minds they kept knowledge, and in their chapters they cherished the fellowship that was offered. With these things they armed themselves, looking forward, knowing that lost KOPS status was only one more stepping stone to the bridge of success.

These special people picked up the challenges with the full knowledge of what was in store for them and have proved themselves worthy. When once again they light their candles of continuity, we see the glow they carry in their hearts reflected in their eyes and know that the inspiration of their achievement will cast its glow far and wide in TOPS.

Reinstated KOPS, we salute you. We are proud of you. We honor you.

By regaining your KOPS status, you have earned the right to again wear your KOPS pin and join other KOPS alumni.

We present you with your KOPS reinstatement charm. Wear it proudly because you have earned the right by not giving up, but with perseverance.

The rose you are being presented has always been a symbol of love. In TOPS we care, share with each other, help each other through good times and bad. That is what sets our organization apart from others. We have TOPS love for ourselves and each other.

Congratulations to all reinstated KOPS!

**CIRCLE OF LIGHT—Version 1**
Continuity is the state of being continuous or an unbroken series, extended or prolonged without break. The Candle of
Continuity which you are about to see lit represents the very beginning of our great organization known to us as TOPS Club, Inc.

Our Candle of Continuity represents each TOPS member who reaches out for help.

The greatest ritual in all our ceremonies used in TOPS is our Circle of Light, taking place when our KOPS are recognized. The circle is completed as newer KOPS light their candles and close the circle. KOPS presented in this ritual represent a group of persons united by common interest. Each KOPS lighting a candle should make a silent pledge never to be the one to break the circle.

May our circle forever grow larger and our Candle of Continuity burn brightly to light the way for those needing a light for direction.

______________________________ will now light the Candle of Continuity.

A circle has no end, nor does our determination to lose weight.

A circle has no sharp points but flows smoothly, and stands for our promise not to give up when we gain.

A circle is continuous, as in the pledge we say at each meeting.

A circle is not stagnant. It rotates new ideas to our Coordinators and through TOPS Club, Inc.

A circle is a ring, binding TOPS and KOPS together.

A circle goes on forever as does our friendship.

The candle has been lit to signify Our aim in TOPS shall never die. We shall continue to work and achieve A better life for all in TOPS as we believe.

Its halo of light now enhances These KOPS whom we honor today, We praise their achievement so gallantly earned.

And thank them for showing us the way.

There are many honors the world may bestow. For many talents and work we know. But honors in TOPS are special we say, Because each one of us may do the same one day,

And reach KOPS to stay KOPS forever. To know that it’s not just a dream We lit this candle, it’s flame rising true, Our hopes being inspired by its gleam.

______________________________

CIRCLE OF LIGHT—Version 2

The light of the candle illuminates the darkness, but the word “light” has other meanings which also apply to KOPS.

To light ... can also mean to cast or shed light upon something—that is, to help in understanding and clarification. KOPS share their experience and advice so that others may recognize their own problems and work toward correcting them with others who understand and care.

To be light ... means to be the opposite of heavy. It also means cheerful, graceful and nimble. A KOPS who has shed those burdensome excess pounds feels as light and graceful as a butterfly.

To be a light ... is to show or guide by making bright and clear. By their examples, KOPS show us the path to take toward achieving our goals. It’s often a rough and rocky road, but the journey is not a lonely one. TOPS members share that path, while KOPS reach back with a hand to help everyone.

A light ... is a flame or spark with which we kindle or set on fire. The KOPS in a TOPS chapter provide the sparks for our dreams and fire for the determination to fulfill those dreams.
HOW TO RECOGNIZE KOPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

1. Have KOPS say the KOPS pledge at every chapter meeting.

2. Recognize all KOPS at or below goal each week. Your chapter could present them with a tiny gold safety pin. When they have collected 10 pins, they receive a charm.

3. Recognize KOPS at or below goal for the entire month. To qualify for this recognition, they must weigh in every week.

4. Hold ceremonies to celebrate KOPS anniversaries. You might present them with a rose and charm, and present their numeral or charm (as explained on page 17, KOPS Anniversaries).

5. Hold graduation celebrations as members reach KOPS status. If they choose to graduate at ARD, PRD, SRD, or IRD, still hold the ceremony, but do not present them with their diploma. The KOPS in your chapter plan and carry out this ceremony. Ask the new KOPS to read, or tell, their success story. This is the best part.

6. TOPS members can wear a scarf/sash at chapter meetings. They are a way of displaying charms and other awards or special remembrances. Each KOPS can also wear this scarf, but in a different color, with their KOPS pin to distinguish them as KOPS.

7. Another way to display KOPS charms, numerals, etc., is to have a separate ribbon or badge of some sort, to display only KOPS awards. The rhinestone KOPS pin is a beautiful award that can be ordered for your KOPS on the L-017.

8. Always include KOPS in contests. When a TOPS has to have a loss to get points, a KOPS may have a loss, or be at or below goal to get points.

9. It is important to recognize reinstated KOPS and hold a ceremony for them also.

10. If there is a KOPS Society in your area, encourage your KOPS to join. If not, look into starting one. It could encourage a KOPS to retain their status if there were a KOPS Society they could attend. Other KOPS understand KOPS’ battles.

11. Your chapter may order the numbers on the order form L-015 and use them to recognize KOPS who have been at or below goal for a year, two, three, or whatever the case may be, or choose a charm that represents that achievement. Awards specific to KOPS are ordered on form L-017.

KOPS: What It’s All About
When you had just become a TOPS and found diets confusing,

Wasn’t it the KOPS who gave attention to your losing?

When you faltered in your efforts, and were feeling down a bit,

Didn’t they offer confidence and tell you not to quit?

When you thought you were a failure and about to give up the fight,

Didn’t they show you kindness and change your world from dark to light?

When you lacked the will to care and were ready to give up,

Didn’t they show enthusiasm, and hold out the victor’s cup?

When there were doubts and spirits lagged, and nothing seemed worthwhile,

Didn’t they understand and give a bright and cheerful smile?

And when you were successful and getting nearer to your goal,

Didn’t they recognize this fact and applaud your winning role?

And now that you’ve become a KOPS, for you the battle’s won.
But don’t forget about the TOPS and the work that must be done.

Give them your attention; listen to their silent cry.

Spare an interested moment; you can do it if you try.

Give them all your confidence and the belief that they’ll succeed.

Confidence is definitely the one thing all TOPS need.

Show your kindness often; display a warming smile.

Show them that compassion is in the true KOPS style.

Give enthusiasm—it’s a form of inspiration.

Showing that you care will fill them with elation.

Give them recognition and praise a job that’s been well done.

Applause for accomplishment is really half the fun.

Be generous with understanding, fountainhead of all you give.

It’s the all-important gift that lasts as long as you live.

It can light a thousand candles, of that there is no doubt.

And you know, as I do—that’s what KOPS is all about!

**Suggestion for TOPS Support and KOPS Incentive**

*This program is intended to motivate and inspire KOPS members while, at the same time, providing additional support and encouragement to TOPS members.*

Anyone who has reached goal weight will tell you that it is just as difficult to maintain a weight loss as it is to obtain a weight loss. With this in mind, people striving to achieve these two goals can join together for an informal activity to support and motivate each other.

For example, any KOPS member participating in this activity can partner with a TOPS member or members. It would be up to the KOPS to mentor and motivate the TOPS member(s) in various ways. Some suggestions for KOPS in this partnership:

- Make a special point to talk with TOPS member(s) about their progress.
- Talk with TOPS member(s) about specific challenges they might face.
- Share personal stories of rough times and strategies for dealing with them.
- Share recipes.
- Provide a strong shoulder to lean on and a hand to hold during the tough times.
- Be creative.

Setting a good example for TOPS members can inspire both TOPS and KOPS alike. Adding an incentive for participating and completing might also be appropriate. Some points to consider:

- How long should the program last?
- How do KOPS and TOPS get paired; i.e. draw names?
- How many TOPS members will be assigned to a KOPS at one time?
- What is the process if a KOPS needs to withdraw during the program?
- What is an appropriate reward for a KOPS participating in the program?
All KOPS have reached status through dedication and hard work. KOPS Societies give them the opportunity to meet with others who have also reached this very special status. All KOPS have the same feelings and concerns: the wonderful feeling of having achieved a goal and the constant concern about maintaining that goal.

KOPS know that even though they have reached their goal, they can’t relax. Their well-known battle of the bulge is unending, but more than worthwhile. And because they have reached their goals the TOPS way—with sensible dieting—the continuing battle will be a much easier one. At KOPS Societies, members are able to share their ideas and hopes. They can voice their opinions, ask for help, and ask others for their ideas. They can discuss KOPS rules to make sure they don’t lose their status. They can share diet and exercise tips, and their officers can encourage them to go out of their way to give a boost to others who are having a hard time.

KOPS Societies are a real incentive to all KOPS to stay with TOPS, and to help their fellow members Take Off Pounds Sensibly. KOPS have certain responsibilities to themselves and to chapter members: staying neat and healthy; looking well; taking pride in, and showing, their new look; showing TOPS members what KOPS really means; giving encouragement and sharing their success. KOPS Society members learn that only by helping others, can they help themselves Keep Off Pounds Sensibly!

KOPS Society members are constantly reminded of their responsibility to maintain their goals to continue as examples of what TOPS can do.

KOPS Society Names
All KOPS Societies may choose a name for their society such as First KOPS Society of (state/province); KOPS of (city and/or state/province); White and Gold KOPS Society of (city and/or state/province), etc.

Membership
Membership is open to all KOPS. Guests may be invited to special meetings. TOPS Field Staff may attend all KOPS Society meetings, when invited, whether they are KOPS or not.

Meetings
Meetings are limited to no more than six per year. Business should be held to a minimum; meetings should focus on incentive programs, contests, recognition awards and speakers. Meeting time may vary and may include food. They may be held in restaurants, homes or the regular TOPS chapter meeting location. All meetings should encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Election and Officers
Elections are held annually. Officers include KAPTAIN (Leader), KO-KAPTAIN (Co-Leader), KORRESPONDENT (Secretary), KASHIER (Treasurer). Post-election results can be sent to Coordinators if they are not in attendance. Suggestions for other appointed positions include: Kard Keeper, Keeper of the KOPS (historian), Kontest Keeper, Kibitzer (publicity/reporter), Kamera Keeper.

Bylaws/Constitution
KOPS Society bylaws are voted upon and sent to Coordinators for approval. All bylaws must abide by TOPS official rules.

KOPS Society bylaws cannot contradict TOPS rules. They should define what makes
your Society unique. They should include name, date, time, purpose, membership, elections, officers, finances and awards. The following is an example of KOPS Society Bylaws:

NAME: The name of the KOPS Society shall be _______________________________.

DATE/TIME: Limited to six meetings a year, with or without food. Meetings will be held on _______________________________________.

PURPOSE: To help KOPS maintain their status and provide encouragement through discussion of common problems and successes. To give awards for special achievements, and encourage others to reach and maintain their goals. To promote the ideals and purposes of TOPS and be willing to act as representatives as successful TOPS members. To assist in special KOPS programs and graduations at Recognition Days.

MEMBERSHIP: Open to all KOPS. Guests may be invited to special meetings, including spouses, TOPS, lost status, Leaders, friends. A member of TOPS Field Staff may attend all KOPS Society meetings, whether or not they are KOPS.

ELECTION AND OFFICERS: KOPS Society _______________________ was organized on (date) _______________________________.

Elected officers are Kaptain, Ko-Kaptain, Korrespondent, and Kashier. The election shall be held annually on the anniversary of the Society. The installation of officers will be held at the next meeting, at which time the new officers will begin their term. All elected officers must be a KOPS Society member prior to election day, and must be present or give their written consent to be nominated or elected to an office. Other possible positions that may be appointed by the Kaptain are Kard Keeper, Kontest Keeper, Kibitzer (reporter), and Kamera Keeper (photographer). All officers will hold office for one year. The election must be written ballot with at least two nominees for each office.

Kaptain (name and phone number) __________________________
Ko-Kaptain (name and phone number) _________________________
Korrespondent (name and phone number) _____________________
Kashier (name and phone number) __________________________

FINANCES: KOPS Societies may levy dues. These are not to exceed chapter dues generally used in the area. An annual audit is recommended and sent to the Coordinator. Societies may establish a bank account (requires two signatures). Money may be used for rent, awards, postage, record books, camera, speakers, etc.

REGISTRATION: Joining fee is $_______ and will be renewed on your joining date. This is to help with the expense of the KOPS Society.

DUES: The amount of $_______ per meeting payable whether present or absent.

Finances
KOPS Societies may levy dues. The amount cannot exceed regular chapter dues. An annual audit is recommended and sent to Coordinators. Societies may establish a bank account (requires two signatures). Money may be used for rent, awards, postage, record books, a camera, speakers, etc.

KOPS Colors
KOPS colors are white and gold. These colors may be used on banners, sashes, ribbons, awards, record books, etc. The official KOPS flower is the rose; however, other flowers may be used to represent KOPS.

Awards/Ceremonies
KOPS Societies may establish special awards and ceremonies for milestones and special occasions such as:

• Status held for specific periods of time
Being under goal
Perfect attendance at chapter and Society meetings
Holding office of a chapter or Society
Graduations
Repinning ceremonies
Officer installations

Miscellaneous
KOPS do not weigh in at Society meetings. KOPS may bring report slips for validation of Society awards from chapter Weight Recorder. As role models, KOPS are to uphold positive attitudes and behaviors, and ceremonies are to be held with dignity. Always remember the “S” in KOPS. A KOPS is a KOPS and not a KOP. KOPS status is the ultimate goal in TOPS, and membership in a KOPS Society is a very special and coveted achievement.

KOPS SOCIETY OFFICER INSTALLATION CEREMONY

Golden Candle and Rose

Supplies: A gold candle and a rose are needed for each officer, and a Kandle of Kontinuity.

MODERATOR:

Officers of a KOPS Society must work together as a team, each blending their talents, ideas, and enthusiasm together. Therefore, the Society can continue to grow and become a more meaningful part of our TOPS experience. A bouquet of roses consists of each separate flower blending their unique design and splendor together that the roses form a bouquet of beauty. Thus, each of our KOPS Society officers represents a rose in our TOPS bouquet.

(Kaptain) ____________, as Kaptain of KOPS Society # ____________, ___________, please come forward. Your primary duty is to lead our KOPS Society to greater service to our TOPS chapters and to support and encourage the members of this Society. To perform this task requires the utmost commitment to the principles of TOPS and KOPS. If you feel that you can fulfill this responsibility, please accept the rose of KOMMITMENT as a symbol of your duties, and light a golden candle from the Kandle of Kontinuity.

(Ko-Kaptain) ____________, as Ko-Kaptain of KOPS Society # ____________, ____________, please come forward. The primary duties of a Ko-Kaptain are to preside at any meeting when the Kaptain is absent, and to be prepared to accept the position of Kaptain should that position become vacant. It is the loving duty of the Ko-Kaptain to be supportive and to lend help and encouragement to the Kaptain and membership. If you will fulfill these responsibilities, please accept this rose of KARING, as a symbol of your love, and light a golden candle from the Kandle of Kontinuity.

(Korrespondent) ____________, as Korrespondent of KOPS Society # ____________, ____________, please come forward. The primary responsibility of the Korrespondent is to keep accurate minutes of the meetings and to handle all correspondence as directed by the Kaptain. It is important that you be capable in all the duties that you perform. If you can fulfill these tasks, please accept this rose of KAPABILITY, and light a golden candle from the Kandle of Kontinuity.

(Kashier) ______________, as Kashier of KOPS Society # ____________, ____________, please come forward. The primary responsibility of the Kashier is to safeguard the Society’s financial resources and to be certain all obligations are paid promptly. When the Kashier makes regular financial reports to the Coordinator and the Society, we must be confident of your accuracy. If you feel you can fulfill this task, please accept this rose of KONFIDENCE, and light a golden candle from the Kandle of Kontinuity.

Each officer is represented by a rose. Each rose blends its special beauty and design together to form a bouquet of promise and
service. The officers of this KOPS Society have taken pledges to fulfill their obligations. Our KOPS Society will only be a meaningful TOPS experience if we all join our talents, enthusiasm, and ideas together to form an even more impressive bouquet of KOPS.

If you pledge your support to our new officers and to our KOPS Society, please stand.

Please pledge a new beginning by repeating this KOPS rededication with me.

I am an intelligent person.
This I truly believe.
Although at times I may lose momentum in my efforts to Keep Off Pounds Sensibly, today I re dedicate myself to remaining a KOPS.
I will not hesitate to call upon my fellow members when I need help;
I will not hesitate to give help when called upon.
As a KOPS in TOPS, I shall endeavor to uphold the high ideas of TOPS.

KOPS SOCIETY MEETING GUIDELINES
Members of the KOPS Society meet together in addition to their time in TOPS. The following list contains components of a sample agenda specifically designed to guide a KOPS Society meeting:

1. Call meeting to order
2. Keeper of the KOPS—roll call
3. Recite KOPS Pledge
4. Kashier’s report
5. Korrespondent’s report
6. Old business
7. New business
8. Meal time and fellowship
9. Program
10. Contest time
11. Announcements
12. Inspiration message
13. Announce next meeting (date, time, location)

Promotion of KOPS Societies
Send letters to chapters.

Invite KOPS to meetings.

Invite Leaders to attend a meeting. Have a very enthusiastic program and ask the Leaders to go back to their chapters and inform members about KOPS Society. Encourage them to join.

Have each member invite to the December (holiday) meeting, a TOPS member who is close to goal. This might encourage them to strive a little harder to reach their goal.

Place an announcement of the meeting in local newspaper(s).

Call or drop notes to Leaders before KOPS meeting, asking them to announce the date time and place at their chapter meetings.

Send out reminder letters to members of KOPS Society two to three weeks before each meeting.

Example Invitation to New KOPS
Your fellow TOPS members have been supportive and encouraging while you were losing your weight. They still care, but many of them don’t realize that your fight is far from over. Now you need to keep the weight off, and you need more support than ever.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join our KOPS Society. We are KOPS Society #_________________. We meet every other month (February, April, June, August, October, and December) on the second Saturday at 11:30 am. We meet at ________________, located at _________________.

There is a $1.00 sign-up fee and our dues are just $1.00 each meeting. Join us and meet with other people who understand the challenges you have as you continue to work to Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

For further information, please do not hesitate to call me at ________. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

(name)
Kaptain
KOPS SOCIETY PROGRAM IDEAS
Programs for KOPS Society meetings will vary from those presented at TOPS chapter meetings. These programs should be specific to the needs of KOPS, who face the ongoing maintenance of their weight-loss success and the support necessary to continue their healthy, new lifestyle.

Speakers—Presenting information to Society members about health and motivation allows for a variety of guest speakers. Consider the following suggestions or come up with a list of guest speakers unique to the needs and interests of Society membership:

- Physician
- Nutritionist
- Dietitian
- Pharmacist
- Diabetic association representative
- Heart and/or stroke expert
- Cancer society representative
- Dairy association representative
- Fitness instructor/personal trainer
- State/provincial Royalty
- Field Staff
- TOPS retreatant

Discussion Groups—Break up into several discussion groups and appoint a discussion leader for each one. The discussion leader will take notes, lead the discussion, and report findings to the Society membership once all of the groups get back together. Topics may include:

- Why don’t all KOPS attend KOPS Society? What can we do to encourage them to attend?
- How can we encourage TOPS members to support KOPS members in maintaining their status?
- How can KOPS encourage TOPS in their chapter to reach their goals?
- How can KOPS help those TOPS to lose those last, difficult 3-6 pounds to reach goal?
- What types of programs would you be most interested in sharing at KOPS Society meetings?
- When a KOPS loses status, why does it often take months (or sometimes never) to reach goal again?
- Are you as enthusiastic a KOPS as you were before you reached your goal? Why or why not?
- What type of maintenance plan do you use?
- Are you happy to be a KOPS?
- What frustrations do you face being a KOPS?
- What is the function of a KOPS at chapter meetings?
- What or who inspired you to become a KOPS?

Challenges—All KOPS experience challenges in their efforts to maintain their weight loss success. Their problems are not usually unique to one person. We can all benefit from each other’s experience. The following list is comprised of relevant question suggestions.

Make up cards with questions for each KOPS to take—let them prepare their response and then share with the group. Another way to review the topics associated with challenges is to address the group with a question as a discussion starter, allowing everyone to respond who has a point of view to share.

- Do you go to chapter regularly and take an active part in it?
- Do you eat three balanced meals a day?
- Do you ride your limit or go over the top, then starve to get back in?
- Do you write notes of encouragement to your fellow TOPS and KOPS?
- How long did it take you to reach goal? Did you do it sensibly?
- Are you lighter now than you ever were?
as an adult or teenager?
• Do you weigh less than your spouse?
• Has losing your weight helped you with your family life?
• If you are a backslider, is it the first time? How much have your lost to regain status?
• How many years did you hold your status before losing it? Did you lose it by a few pounds? Why did you lose it?
• Have you ever been on medical excuse? How long? If yes, did it help you hold your status?
• If you have been on a medical excuse, did it give you an excuse to overeat?
• Did you think the doctor gave you too low a goal? Too high? Was it difficult to achieve? Did it contribute to your loss of status?
• Did you raise your goal because you had to work too hard to hold the lower goal? Did it help you or did you raise your goal again?
• Did you lower your goal because you needed to or because you wanted to say you had lost more weight? Did you feel heavy at the old weight?
• Did you raise your goal just so you could be under goal at your meetings?

Additional Topics of Focus—In addition to discussions and speakers, KOPS Society meetings might focus on some of the following topics:
• 5-, 10-, 15-, 20-year (etc.) KOPS share their “KOPS know-how” and answer members’ questions.
• Share opinions on the value of KOPS awards.
• Play get-acquainted games.
• Hold a fundraiser on occasion.
• Award a gift basket—themed to match the meeting.

• Choose pen- or call-pals.

KOPS SOCIETY CONTESTS AND INCENTIVES
One of the ways to incorporate a spirit of fun into a KOPS Society meeting is to include an occasional contest or incentive program. You might want to create your own or use this list for starters:

Adopt a TOPS Contest—charge a small fee (25¢) to participate. Decide on a length of time for the contest. Obtain the name of a backslider from Area Captain or Coordinator, or choose one from your chapter. Contact them at least once a week. A signed card with the weight losses signed by the Weight Recorder must be brought in at the end of the contest. The TOPS best loser and runner-up each receive a gift and the KOPS with the best loser and runner-up also receive a gift. This contest could end before a KOPS Society Open House so the gifts could be awarded at the Open House.

Contests—
• For chapter that brings the most guests to KOPS Society meetings
• For suggestions for a meeting (best suggestion wins—more than one suggestion may be submitted)

Incentive Gift—
• For those who were over goal but had succeeded in losing weight below by next meeting
• For those who attend their own TOPS chapter meetings for a given period
• For a lost-status KOPS who returns

Special Gift—
• For all who are below their goal at the first meeting
• For KOPS who are below goal for a designated period of time
• For KOPS who wear their KOPS pin or bracelet
**Traveling Trophy**—can be purchased to award to chapters in recognition of percentage of KOPS in a chapter, the percentage of KOPS who belong to the KOPS Society, or the number of KOPS attending a KOPS Society meeting.

**Point Contest**—

- 50 points for making and wearing your individual name tag to this meeting (include name, chapter, years/months of KOPS status)
- 25 points for attending the last KOPS Society meeting
- 25 points for wearing your KOPS pin
- 10 points for taking part in TOPS chapter activities, program, games, etc.
- 10 points for having one-calorie sheet with no more than 1,200 calories per day
- 5 points for each week of weigh-in
- 5 points for each pound UNDER goal (up to 7 lbs.)
- 5 points for contacting two or more KOPS members
- 5 points for contacting a TOPS backslider or slow loser

**KOPS Buddy Contest**—this is also a point-based contest, which should run for six weeks. KOPS draw for a partner.

KOPS receive points as follows:

- 25 points—contact buddy in writing each week
- 25 points—being at or below goal
- 10 points—being within 3-pound limit
- 10 points—staying for chapter meeting

KOPS lose points as follows:

- 25 points—failure to contact buddy
- 25 points—being out of leeway

KOPS buddies combine points and buddies with the most points win. A note from the Weight Recorder verifies weight points.

**Moneymaker**—with approval of Regional Director, KOPS Societies can have a table to sell items and raise funds at ARD, PRD, SRD or Rally. Many KOPS Societies have a drawing for a free TOPS Retreat at the event and provide the winner with the price of a Retreat. The winner comes to the event the next year and shares what they learned and encourages everyone to attend a Retreat. (This is known as a win-win situation.)

**KOPS of the Quarter Points Contest**—KOPS with the greatest number of points in the chapter is KOPS of the Quarter. They are honored at a workshop or KOPS Society if present. Those with the greatest number of points for the area will be recognized as KOPS of the Quarter and receives a KOPS Care Bear and certificate. Points are calculated beginning with the first meeting in a quarter ending with the last meeting of the quarter. Points are sent to the Area Captain to determine the winner each quarter. Scoring is as follows:

- 5 points per week—weigh in within leeway
- 5 points per week—attend chapter meeting
- 10 points bonus—attend at least 10 chapter meetings OR
- 25 points bonus—perfect attendance for quarter
- 10 points bonus—attend last quarterly workshop
- 10 points bonus—at or below goal every week while attending at least 10 chapter meetings