TOPS’ theme for 2011/2012 is “The Road to Success.” Use this Chapter Program to motivate everyone to share tips they have learned in the past to help fellow members continue the journey to their goal weight and have fun as they travel.

**Materials:** You can cut out road sign shapes from colored poster board. Or, the graphics of road signs used to illustrate this program are available on TOPS’ website, www.tops.org. The chapter Leader or Designate just needs to log in, select “Leader’s Corner” from the list on the left, select “Chapter Programs,” and then open Chapter Program 77.

**Readers:** In advance, Presenter should find individuals who are willing to hold up a road sign and read a small amount of information aloud to the chapter. Tape the information for each sign to the back of the sign, so the readers can easily read it when it is their turn.

**Presenters:** On the way to this meeting today, we all passed many road signs without really noticing them. These signs are so familiar that we recognize them by shape and color with little thought. The information on them is vital for safe travel. The signs provide direction, keep us from harm, and help us to arrive at our destination. We can use these familiar signs in our TOPS journey, too! Let’s start with the STOP SIGN.
STOP sign reader: To lead a healthy lifestyle, we must STOP doing certain things. We STOP mindless munching. We STOP being couch potatoes. We STOP overfilling our plates.

Presenter: What else would you add to your STOP SIGN list? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the GREEN LIGHT SIGN.

GREEN LIGHT reader: Since we’ve STOPPED some habits, let’s press the accelerator and GO toward new ones. GO plan healthy meals. GO grocery shopping only when you’re not hungry. GO grocery shopping only with a list to avoid unhealthy food temptations. GO up and down the stairs more often. GO to the TV to change channels instead of using the remote control. GO for a walk.

Presenter: What else would you add to your GREEN LIGHT list? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the YIELD SIGN.

YIELD sign reader: The YIELD sign warns us to slow down, look carefully, be aware, and proceed with caution. We often find ourselves in situations where the YIELD sign should be posted. A change of schedule, unexpected company, salad bars, buffets, potlucks and parties are circumstances requiring us to make considered choices, to be flexible, and to adapt.

Presenter: What else would you add to your YIELD sign list? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the CURVE AHEAD SIGN.

CURVE AHEAD sign reader: This is a common sign on mountainous roads. This sign warns that the road twists and meanders—sometimes sharply—and often uphill and down. The Road to Success isn’t always a straight line or a flat road. This sign reminds us to pay attention and watch where we are going.

Presenter: What are your sharpest curves and steepest hills? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the CROSSWALK SIGN.

CROSSWALK sign reader: This sign reminds us that exercise can be as simple as standing up and taking one step after another. If you are lying down, sit up. If you are sitting up, stand. If you are standing, walk around your chair now. (Pause expectantly and let members do this.) The hardest step is the first one. The journey cannot begin until you take that first step. When you are at a CROSSWALK, you must choose to cross the street and keep going—one step at a time.

Presenter: What step will you take to move more? Add it to your list. (Allow short discussion.) Next, is the TWO-WAY TRAFFIC SIGN.

TWO-WAY TRAFFIC sign reader: From time to time, we find others heading in a different direction. We need to be watchful and helpful in order for everyone’s journeys to be safe ones. Think of this in terms of belonging to a TOPS chapter. You might say that it’s a TWO-WAY street. We get out of it what we put into it. We not only receive support and encouragement, we also give it to others. The more active and involved we are, the more progress we make. We don’t want to run into each other and wreck someone’s progress. And we may need to stop and help someone who has run out of gas to get restarted.

Presenter: What do you need from others to keep heading toward your goal, and what will you offer in return? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the MERGE SIGN.

MERGE sign reader: All members need to MERGE their talents and strengths to keep the chapter convoy moving along. We need to watch out for those coming alongside. We need to make room and let them blend in. It isn’t about who gets there first; it’s about helping everyone get to where they are going safely.
Presenter: How can past officers help new officers MERGE into leadership roles? How can long-time members help new members feel a part of the TOPS journey? How can new members and officers help those who are struggling to renew their joy in the journey? (Allow short discussion.) Next is the ROUNDABOUT SIGN.

ROUNDABOUT sign reader: Who is familiar with this less-common sign? Let’s see if you can guess what it means. (Allow members a few seconds to share answers.) This means we are entering a ROUNDABOUT, a traffic circle where cars carefully enter and courteously allow others to enter and leave as exits appear on the edge of the circle. When there is too much traffic or drivers don’t understand how to navigate the circle, a person can get trapped on the inside, unable to take the needed exit and continue the journey. Or, sometimes, no opening is given for drivers to merge to allow safe passage around. This can result in logjams or fender-benders.

Presenter: I think that the plan each of us develops is a lot like a ROUNDABOUT. It allows meal planning, exercise, and good choices to enter as needed and allows flexibility to deal with other circumstances without wrecking our progress. (Allow short discussion.) Next is the NO ENTRY SIGN.

NO ENTRY sign reader: We see this sign posted to keep drivers out of an alley too narrow for two-way traffic or to warn them not to go the wrong way on a one-way street. It definitely applies to our TOPS journey. It says, “DON’T GO THERE.” We all have danger areas. It might be a trigger food that leads to a binge, a situation that leads to stress eating, or a friendly enemy who enables choices that don’t help. Each of these should be posted with a NO ENTRY sign. DON’T GO THERE. Try to avoid such circumstances. Find a different route. Travel another day. Practice saying “no.”

Presenter: What are some of your NO ENTRY areas? Let’s add them to your list and think about detours we can take when they appear in our path. (Allow short discussion.) Life throws lots of potholes, roadblocks, “bridge out” areas, and other challenges in our way. When we face these, we develop ways of coping, standing firm, saying “no,” or doing whatever it takes to overcome. That’s quite an adjustment. And it calls for another sign—a WORK AHEAD SIGN.

WORK AHEAD sign reader: We’ve got our work cut out for us. The Road to Success, by definition, is never a smooth one because the word “success” means achievement or the overcoming of obstacles. Anything worth having takes effort. To take off and keep off pounds sensibly requires effort. We can’t go the distance if we aren’t willing to do the work. But it’s worth it. It is a huge help to travel along with others who are at our side when problems arise and who can help us get back on the road. It’s the reason we’re here together each week. It’s what TOPS is all about!

Presenter: Can you define what WORK lies AHEAD for you? Whom will you choose to travel with you and help you through the challenges of the road? (Allow short discussion.)

These are your road signs to define in ways that will help you travel. As the new year begins, let’s plan to travel together the road that will lead us to success...starting today!

SUCCESS
WILL NEVER BE A
BIG STEP IN THE
FUTURE;
SUCCESS IS A
SMALL STEP
TAKEN JUST NOW.

~Jonatan Mårtensson
**WORKSHEET: SIGNS Along the Road to Success**

List chapter suggestions for each sign. Keep this worksheet as a “road map” to health and success.

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